



# MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Board Of Directors

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| Board Agenda Item # | VI C                                       |
| Date:               | 10.08.2015                                 |
| To:                 | Magnolia Board of Directors                |
| From:               | Caprice Young, Ed.D., CEO & Superintendent |
| Staff Lead:         | Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer  |
| RE:                 | 15-16' Enrollment Update                   |

### Proposed Board Recommendation

Information item, no actions needed.

### Background

#### **2015-2016' Enrollment Update**

Since May 2015, I have been working closely with some MPS school to boost enrollment for the 15-16' school year. Below I have enumerated the specific recruitment strategies that we have used and the scope of work for each specific school:

- Door-to-door recruitment campaigns: Walking around school communities and distributing school specific enrollment material such as open house postcards and door hanger school flyer.
- Community event booths: Setting up MPS booths at local community events such as a neighborhood council or Carnival event.
- Creating signage for specific schools so they can hang outside of their schools.
- Mass distribution of postcards to surrounding school community.
- Manufacture and generate media stories that speak about MPS or the individual school.
- Attending community/advocacy events to the spread the "MPS Brand"

### Specific scope of work with schools

MSA-1 Reseda: Scope of work limited to discussing MPS 15-16' recruitment strategies

MSA-2 Van Nuys: Scope of work limited to discussing MPS 15-16' recruitment strategies.

MSA-3 Carson: Scope of work limited to discussing MPS 15-16' recruitment strategies.

MSA-4 Venice: Door-to-door recruitment strategies and mass postcard distribution

MSA-5 Reseda/Los Lobos: Door-to-door recruitment campaigns, postcard distribution, and Setting up booth at Reseda Carnival event.

MSA-6 Palms: Door-to-door; Set-up school both at Neighborhood council event in Palms Elementary.

MSA-7 Northridge: Scope of work limited to discussing MPS 15-16' recruitment strategies.

MSA-8 Bell: Scope of work limited to discussing MPS 15-16' recruitment strategies.

MSA-SD: Scope of work limited to MSA-SD Archery Story that ran on local television

MSA-SA: Door-to-door; postcard distribution; Booth at Cinco-de-Mayo event,



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Groundbreaking event, OC register story, update website with school content and parent Testimonials (Greatschools.org), and school signage.

MSA-SC: Door-to-door, postcard distribution, and school signage.

As of August 28, 2015, 10 out of 11 schools are under-enrolled based on the 15-16' budgets Approved by the MPS board of directors. See enclosed chart.

## Strategies to get schools to meet targeted enrollment

Please see attached 2015-16' Recruitment strategies form created by Larson and the Outreach and communications team.

Of note, here are some of the projects we are currently working on: Revamping all the websites To boost enrollment; revamping all marketing materials including brochures and one-page recruitment flyers; monthly newsletter, creating parent ambassadors armed with word-of mouth Messaging that clearly defines what makes Magnolia special; and MPS Parent Gala.

## Budget Implications

Enrollment numbers based on Norm day reporting (Oct. 7) will have a direct impact on both the school and the CMO. Revised CMO and school budgets will be presented at the November Board meeting.

## Name of Staff Originator:

Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer

## Attachments

Updated Enrollment Chart  
2015 Recruitment Strategies

MPS Wide Enrollment Totals (2015-2016)

| School                               | Accepted | Active      | Expected Enrollments | Preliminary 15-16' Budgeted Enrollments | Revised 15-16 Budget (Board Approved) |
|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Magnolia Science Academy-1           | 0        | 541         | 541                  | 540                                     | 550                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-2           | 0        | 487         | 487                  | 495                                     | 486                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-3           | 0        | 457         | 457                  | 470                                     | 470                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-4           | 0        | 182         | 182                  | 220                                     | 220                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-5           | 0        | 148         | 148                  | 170                                     | 170                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-6           | 0        | 164         | 164                  | 180                                     | 170                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-7           | 0        | 290         | 290                  | 316                                     | 300                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-8           | 0        | 493         | 493                  | 495                                     | 495                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-San Diego   | 0        | 421         | 421                  | 438                                     | 438                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-Santa Ana   | 0        | 145         | 145                  | 250                                     | 150                                   |
| Magnolia Science Academy-Santa Clara | 0        | 101         | 101                  | 420                                     | 100                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                         | <b>0</b> | <b>3429</b> | <b>3429</b>          | <b>3994</b>                             | <b>3549</b>                           |

## **2015 Recruitment Strategies**

**Introduction.** This document provides 20 recruitment strategies Larson Communications and the outreach and communications team have developed to be competitive in securing strong enrollment numbers. These strategies are rooted in best practices in K-12 school recruitment and communications and reflect the input of MPS principals and historical MPS recruitment successes.

These strategies are also premised on the following facts:

- Parents trust parents and teachers.
- Most enrollees originate from word-of-mouth, coming from current parents.
- Prospective parents refer to school websites and online sources more than any other materials in making a decision.
- School tours are most effective when they are personalized.
- For anyone to effectively enroll new families, they need to be armed with compelling, sharable information that brings the school/MPS brand to life.
- A consistent MPS brand that allows each school to communicate within broad brand parameters ideally advances the system before all target audiences.
- Churches, realtors and feeder schools have a strong interest in school options and are influential voices in the community.
- MPS can take quick actions to rectify enrollment issues at some schools (prioritized below), and push other to longer term.
- Recruitment Strategies will commence in September 2015 and be on going until end of July 2016

Some strategies below are system-level, some school-level.

## Recommended recruitment strategies

**1. Update Greatschools.org with parent testimonials and current school information.** (Note: when a school is searched, most recent testimonials pull up.)

**2. Update website with enrollment-compelling information.**

- Upload new website content **weekly** to keep SEO high (See media calendar). Push – critical integration here) out through social media, emails, to get links back.
  - Add compelling photos and copy. (Include photos with uniforms, showing safety)
    - Who, what, when, where, why, top outcomes (e.g. kids in top colleges), grade-levels served, signs of demand.
    - “Life at MPS brochure.”
    - FAQ’s for parents and students and Admissions FAQ (e.g. see PUC <http://www.pucschools.org/parentsandfamily/faq.php>, <http://www.pucschools.org/admissions/faq.php>, see CNCA: [http://www.caminonuevo.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=268964&type=d&pREC\\_ID=599829](http://www.caminonuevo.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=268964&type=d&pREC_ID=599829).
    - Transparency-related content.
- Drive traffic to a certain enrollment landing page on website (we can then see where people are coming from).

**3. Keep MPS website search engine optimization (SEO) high.**

- Push out URLs in enrollment materials.
- Embed keywords (e.g. STEM) in website (page titles, keywords, meta tags) – ID competitor keywords via Google keyword analysis, consider embedding those words too.
- Purchase Google’s AdWords – pay-per-click advertising for keywords.
- Update content under strategy #2 above weekly.

**4. Create short video testimonials** (six 30-second pieces bringing three new brand elements to life (e.g. Relationships-Rigor-Respect), and showing what parents, teachers and students are saying).

- Conduct student contest across schools – produce a one-minute video to sell your school; winners are posted on website and reward given.

**5. Ensure other key online sources have current MPS information.**

- Google Place Page
- YahooLocal.com
- Yelp.com
- Citysearch.com
- Insiderpages.com
- Superpages.com
- Yellowpages.com
- SchoolDigger.com

**6. Weekly, generate and upload media stories** (See editorial calendar in strategic communications plan for list, including: human interest stories, signs of momentum and validation). School sites can repurpose. This new content will aid in brand amplification and overall SEO. [Home office communications director to conduct weekly calls with L.A. and San Diego Deans of Culture to get brand-amplifying potential media opportunities (including photos/video) rolled up to system-level/Larson.]

**7. Create Parent Ambassadors:** Arm them with materials and ask them to:

- Present tours of campus.
- Call and/or write personal notes to parents and welcoming them to your school.
- Call current families and asking them to provide names and addresses of those who may be interested in your school.
- Send people to website.
- Home visits; create parent partnership timeline for parents; give capacity to deans or principals on strategies on how to actively involve parents.
- Advocacy efforts around parent needs and concerns; meet with electds that represent our schools
- Mentor a new family throughout their first school year.

**8. Arm word-of-mouth originators with a clear brand and top five messages to deliver.**

- Larson developing brand now, based on principal input.
- Recommend focus grouping with ~5 parents/~5 students before launching into logo, slogan, MPS website redo.
- Create enrollment packet (also on website).
  - Brochure to bring brand to life.
  - Provide a card in your admissions package that includes the names, child grade levels, phone numbers and email addresses of your parent ambassadors.
  - FAQ's.
  - Link to videos and online portal.
- Provide internal FAQ to principals and staff so they can speak to larger MPS brand issues.
- Frame all materials and actions as a “campaign” – launch it to create excitement among all ambassadors.

**9. Also ask for referrals from: applicants, current parents, alumni and friends, faculty and staff, feeder school administrators and real estate agents.** Arm them all with enrollment materials.

**10. Create online query portal with “Interested in Enrolling?”** Drive all traffic there from all recruitment materials, capture contact info there and use that portal to trigger a follow-up process.

- Make process and timeline clear, have it up by start of school year for year after.
- Collect this online from prospective enrollees:
  - Name, Address, City, State, Zip
  - Home Phone and Cell Phone
  - Email Address

- Child's name, grade level, school, interested year
- Source of inquiry
- Have they ever visited your school?
- Do they know families at your school? Who?
- After initial query, send information packet on school with personal note within 24 hours of inquiry.
- Call one week later to discuss your school and encourage the parent to take the next step (seven days after inquiry date). Phone call should focus on:
  - Make sure information was received in the mail.
  - Encourage the family to visit.
  - Use the time to better understand the parent's needs and sell the parent on your school.
- Send hand-written note immediately after call is made.
- Send postcard to remind the parent of your school (15 days after inquiry date).
- Provide personal contact from a current parent (25 days after inquiry), e.g. use a parent ambassador from a similar grade level to connect.
- Send personal letter with another application (30 days after inquiry), explaining that the school is quickly filling up.

**11. Campus tours more effective than open houses.** A one-on-one tour when school in session better than open house after school hours. Effective school tours include:

- Tour of campus.
- Meeting with admissions director.
- Review of the enrollment process.
- Introductions to key staff.
- Connections with Parent Ambassadors.
- Special touches that will help during one-on-one tours:
  - Reserved parking space with the family's name.
  - Reception area with personalized welcome sign.
  - Name tag with printed large first name.
  - Everyone is expecting you attitude and approach.
  - Personal greeting from head of school and/or principal.
  - Tour by admissions director and current parent.
  - Handwritten follow-up note.

**12. Invite prospective families to expos, open houses, academic competitions, STEM expos, multicultural food festivals, parent trainings with parents allowed to bring parent friends.** (Principals report these events have shown a strong recruitment yield in past.) Ensure schools are clean and food is available at these events.

**13. Send school community "image" to rented mailing list** (don't expect strong response, is just a touch point) both in Oct/Nov and in Feb/March (three diff postcards at 2-3-week intervals). Replace outgoing open house notification postcards with designed postcards "showing" MPS brand, strategic photo, slogan, key fact(s), driving traffic to website.

**14. Ensure each school has signage (e.g. LED signs) that scroll top results** to build awareness in people who drive past (which is influential, per principals). Ensure signs are mobile for Prop. 39 locations.

**15. Invite feeder school administration/pastors, clergy to tour campus** and enjoy a special brunch/lunch on campus.

**16. Host a special friend's day for current students to invite their friends** to spend the day with them at your school.

**17. Line up MPS students to perform at feeder school assemblies.**

**18. When new family is enrolled, continue to send them welcoming information.**

- When new student is enrolled, the parent should receive a personal phone call from the school and personal letter of welcome. Include calendar for the new school year.
- Send welcome package also to student.
- Start sending new family newsletter, invites to special events

**19. Create data-driven MPS recruitment operation.**

- Online portal will create data from which to work in future years.
- Schools report weekly on progress to home office and vice versa so home office can meet school needs.
- Track Google analytics to see progress.

**20. Provide free swag** to real estate agents, feeder school parents, and our parents to give out.

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