

APPROVED



## Magnolia Public Schools

### Minutes

#### Regular Board Meeting

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**Date and Time**

Thursday June 26, 2025 at 5:00 PM

**Location**

Home Office: 250 E. 1st Street, Suite 1500, Los Angeles, CA 90012

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**Board Members:**

Mr. Mekan Muhammedov, Chair  
Ms. Sandra Covarrubias, Vice-Chair  
Dr. Umit Yapanel  
Dr. Salih Dikbas  
Ms. Diane Gonzalez

**Student Board Member:**

Naim Bayraktar

**CEO & Superintendent:**

Mr. Alfredo Rubalcava

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**Directors Present**

D. Gonzalez, M. Muhammedov, S. Dikbas (remote), U. Yapanel

**Directors Absent**

S. Covarrubias

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**Guests Present**

J. Lara

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## I. Opening Items

### A. Call the Meeting to Order

M. Muhammedov called a meeting of the board of directors of Magnolia Public Schools to order on Thursday Jun 26, 2025 at 6:06 PM.

### B. Pledge of Allegiance

Board, staff and guests conducted the pledge of allegiance.

### C. Record Attendance and Guests

Refer to attendance information recorded above.

### D. Approval of Agenda

D. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

S. Dikbas	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
U. Yapanel	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye

### E. Public Comments

M. Craig, Principal at Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-San Diego announced that received WASC accreditation finalized and received full six (6) year recommendation and thanked staff, students and board for their support.

### F. Announcements - CEO & Superintendent, Board, Student Board Member

No announcements were made at this time.

### G. Approval of Minutes from MPS Regular Board Meeting - June 18, 2025

D. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the minutes from Regular Board Meeting on 06-18-25.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

#### Roll Call

U. Yapanel	Aye
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**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez Aye  
M. Muhammedov Aye  
S. Covarrubias Absent  
S. Dikbas Aye

**II. Student Board Member Elections**

**A. Approval of 2025-26 Student Board Member**

A. Rubalcava, CEO & Superintendent, thanked all the student board candidates for this year. M. Muhammedov, Board Chair, congratulated all of the students who took part of the process. He announced that Sofia Perez from Magnolia Science Academy-1 will be the 2025-26 Student Board Member. Sofia Perez expressed excitement for the opportunity. J. Lara, Board Secretary, informed the other students that staff will be keeping them in communications with future plans along with the Student Board Member. M. Wittek, Director of Student Services, congratulated Sofia and the students. M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve Ms. Sofia Perez as the Student Board Member for the upcoming school year. The terms of service will begin July 1, 2025 and end on June 30, 2026.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias Absent  
D. Gonzalez Aye  
M. Muhammedov Aye  
S. Dikbas Aye  
U. Yapanel Aye

**III. Closed Session**

**A. Public Announcement of Closed Session**

M. Muhammedov, Board Chair, announced that the Board will be going into closed session to discuss conference with legal counsel on anticipated litigation, conference with real property negotiations, and public employee performance evaluation for the CEO & Superintendent.

**B. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation**

Item was discussed in Closed Session.

**C. Conference with Real Property Negotiations (§ 54956.8)**

Item was discussed in Closed Session.

**D.**

**Public Employee Performance Evaluation (§ 54957) - Title: CEO & Superintendent**

Item was discussed in Closed Session.

**E. Report Out of Closed Session**

M. Muhammedov, reported at 8:13pm that the Board will continue the closed session discussions, but will take a break to commence the Special Board Meeting.

J. Lara, Board Secretary, announced that the Regular Board Meeting will pause to commence the Special Board Meeting which would be using the same teleconferencing information.

J. Lara, Board Secretary, announced at 8:30pm that the Regular Board Meeting will resume. M. Muhammedov, Board Chair, announced the same closed session items and that the Board will resume discussions and will report back once ready.

M. Muhammedov announced in Open Session at 9:45pm that the Board discussed conference with legal counsel on anticipated litigation and Board took no action and directed staff to take actions on certain matters. Additionally, Board discussed conference with real property negotiations, which he reported that Board took no action and directed staff on next steps. Lastly, Board discussed the public employee performance evaluation for the CEO & Superintendent, which he reported that the Board voted to table the approval of the CEO Contract to the July Regular Board Meeting. He added that he moved the motion and was approved by D. Gonzalez, S. Dikbas and U. Yapanel.

**IV. Consent Items**

**A. Approval of 2025-26 Board Calendar and Committee Calendar**

D. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Regular MPS Board Meeting Calendar and the Board Committee Calendar.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Dikbas	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
U. Yapanel	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**B. Approval of the LCAP Federal Addendum for MSA-Orange County**

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve the LCAP Federal Addendum for Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
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**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias Absent  
S. Dikbas Aye  
U. Yapanel Aye  
M. Muhammedov Aye

**V. Information/Discussion Items**

**A. Customers Bank Presentation**

Representatives from Customers Bank, Yenssy Noverola, SVP Group Director, and Judi Prejean, Executive Director, from Customer's Bank introduced and presented the partnership and collaboration between them and MPS. They added that Customers Bank has worked with other schools and non-profit organizations and detailed the services they offer to benefit MPS. Board Members questions were addressed by staff and the representatives.

**B. Intra Company Loan Repayment Schedule**

S. Budhreja, Chief Financial Officer, detailed the using of reserves to move forward with the expansion to the new schools in Orange County. A. Rubalcava, CEO & Superintendent, added that this item was approved by the Board in March 2025 and added that the loan repayment schedule is a follow-up from the request of the Board as an informational item. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

**C. 2024-25 CEO Metrics & Strategic Plan Update**

This is a continuation from the June 18th Strategic Plan presentation. D. Yilmaz, Chief Accountability Officer, reported on behalf of the Accountability Department. Outlining the metrics as it relates to the LCAP, progress, goals met and further preparations. F. Cristerna-Adame, Senior Project Director of Growth & Expansion, reported on behalf of the Impact Department. She outlined the goals such as the renewal of Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-1, MSA-2, and MSA-3. She also reported on CSP, CSGF and grants received from advancement efforts. Additionally reported on the media placements, the community school work and efforts at the school sites and the expansion in Orange County. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

**D. MPS' Progress on Meeting Local Performance Indicators on the CA School Dashboard**

D. Yilmaz, Chief Accountability Officer, reported on the local indicators stating that this must be reported annually along with the LCAP adoption. He defined the priorities and detailed the process which included self reflection and parent and family engagement. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

**E. Enrollment Update**

F. Cristerna-Adame, Senior Project Director of Growth & Expansion, provided updated enrollment numbers for each school site. She detailed the schools target goals and actuals. She also reported on the current enrollment status for the new Orange County schools. Board Members questions regarding the need of more efforts to increase enrollment at the new schools in Orange County were addressed and discussed. More updates will be given and Board directed staff to pursue further actions to increase the enrollment.

#### **F. Facilities Project Updates**

The Facilities Department consisting of M. Sahin, Project Manager, and K. Jimenez, Assistant Project Manager, provided extensive updates on the various facilities projects across the school sites. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

### **VI. Public Hearing**

#### **A. Public Hearing for Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP) for All MPS**

D. Yilmaz, Chief Accountability Officer, presented the Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) for the public and Board. He presented detailed information of the overview, process, historical process and requirements for context. He detailed the goals and actions and how the state priorities is measured in the LCAP as well as the reflection process, feedback gathering and educational partners involvement and updates. He added that the plans also contains each school sites individual LCFF budget overview for parents. Each school sites plan was included. A period for public hearing was held. No questions or comments were raised from educational partners. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

#### **B. Public Hearing for 2025-26 Budgets for All MPS**

S. Budhraja, Chief Financial Officer, presented the budgets for all MPS school sites and the Home Office. He detailed each individual school sites and the Home Office budget including expenditures, revenue and enrollment alignment. He also added the breakdown of expenses from staffing such as benefits and salaries, services and operating expenses, and books and supplies. He added further information of the monthly cash flow for 2025-26. A period for public hearing was held. No questions or comments were raised from educational partners. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

### **VII. Action Items**

#### **A. Approval of MPS Board Officers**

U. Yapanel, Board Members & Chair of the Nominating/Governance Committee stated that they will be electing the board officers. He stated his recommendation which is to keep the current structure with M. Muhammedov being the Chair and S. Covarrubias being the Vice-Chair as both members greatly support the big areas the MPS is pursuing

at this time which is facilities completions for the students and ground work and school site visits.

U. Yapanel made a motion to appoint Mr. Mekan Muhammedov to serve as the MPS Board Chair, Ms. Sandra Covarrubias as the MPS Vice Chair, Ms. Jennifer Lara as the MPS Board Secretary, and Dr. Steve Budhraj as the MPS Board Treasurer starting June 27, 2025.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

U. Yapanel	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent

**B. Approval of MPS Board Committee Composition**

U. Yapanel, Board Member & Chair of the Nominating/Governance Committee, stated that an update to the committee structure was needed to account for the departure of E. Eldem-Tunc from the Board. In addition, the change to the structure would include S. Dikbas, Board Member, to serve on the Academic Committee.

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve the 2025-26 MPS Board Committee structure to take into effect starting on June 27, 2025.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
S. Dikbas	Aye

**C. Approval of Local Control and Accountability Plans (LCAP) for All MPS**

D. Yilmaz, Chief Accountability Officer, reported that the item was presented during the public hearing. He added that the the draft plans were shared for feedback and posted on the website. Additionally he thanked the school leaders for having such an inclusive LCAP development process with their educational partners and staff for their support to the school leadership teams throughout the entire process. This is to formalize the approval of the LCAP plans and would be submitted to authorizers.

D. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) for all MPS.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez Aye  
M. Muhammedov Aye  
S. Covarrubias Absent  
U. Yapanel Aye  
S. Dikbas Aye

**D. Approval of the 2025-26 Adopted Budgets for All MPS Sites and Home Office Management Fee Policy**

S. Budhraj, Chief Financial Officer, reported that the presentation and the information was presented during the public hearing for the budgets is the same for this item. He added there is a projection of a balanced budget. Board Members questions were addressed by staff and to keep a close eye on spending.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Adopted Budget as reviewed and presented and the Home Office Management Fee Policy for the 2025-26 fiscal year.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez Aye  
S. Dikbas Aye  
M. Muhammedov Aye  
U. Yapanel Aye  
S. Covarrubias Absent

**E. Approval of MPS Annual Master List of Contracts for 2025-26 Fiscal Year**

S. Budhraj, Chief Financial Officer, presented the master list of contracts which he went over the list of vendors and service agreements that will be utilized during the upcoming fiscal year. He added that per the MPS Fiscal Policies and Procedures, contracts that exceed \$90,000 were included. He also noted that the Finance Department added all contracts that exceed \$50,000 for the interest of transparency. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the Annual Master List of Contracts for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias Absent  
M. Muhammedov Aye  
S. Dikbas Aye  
U. Yapanel Aye  
D. Gonzalez Aye

**F. Approval of Revised MPS Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual for 2025-26**

S. Budhreja, Chief Financial Officer, reported on the revisions made to the fiscal policies and procedures manual. He added that the incorporation of specific language was added to state that MPS does not charge in excess of 15% per school for the CMO fee. He added that this was to also meet the requirement from MPS authorizers to include. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the revised MPS Fiscal Policies and Procedures Manual for 2025-26. The revised policies and procedures for the upcoming year remain largely unchanged with one exception which is the inclusion of language that caps the annual CMO fee to a rate of no more than 15% per year.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias	Absent
M. Muhammedov	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye

**G. Approval of Resolution for Intra Company Loan between Magnolia Science Academy-8 & Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation (MERF)**

S. Budhreja, Chief Financial Officer, presented the intra company loan which is to provide Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-Orange County with capital to support the launch of the school and initial operations of the two MSA-Orange County school sites which will open August 2025. He added that the funding would support facility preparation, staffing and additional expenditures prior the the receipt of public funding. Furthermore, he added that the transaction would allow Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation (MERF) to use existing reserves from Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-8 which would save money on interest expenses and would incorporate a repayment schedule. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the Resolution for an Intra Company Loan between Magnolia Science Academy-8 (MSA-8) and Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation (MERF) in the amount of up to \$2,500,000 to support the start-up of Magnolia Science Academy – Orange County (MSA-OC).

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias	Absent
D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**H. Approval of 2025-26 MPS Employee Handbook**

F. Del Carpio, Chief People Officer, presented the changes to the employee handbook which include language under the at-will employment definition, language under criminal background checks, language under the policy prohibiting unlawful harassment, discrimination and retaliation, language under health, safety and security policies, language under artificial intelligence policy, update of holiday dates, language under sick leave, language under FMLA/CFRA, the addition of grandparents-in-law as an immediate family under the funeral/bereavement leave, and language under employment references/verifications. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

D. Gonzalez made a motion to approve the 2025-26 Employee Handbook as presented with an effective date of July 1, 2025.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Dikbas	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
D. Gonzalez	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**I. Approval of Updated MPS School Site Classified Employees' Pay Raise Schedule for 2025-26**

F. Del Carpio, Chief People Officer, presented the updated pay raise schedule. She reported that the salary levels reflect each employee's salary adjustments and presented classified employee's average rates. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the updated MPS school site classified employee's pay raise schedule for 2025-26 fiscal year effective July 1, 2025.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**J. Approval of Board Resolution for Magnolia Science Academy-2 for Creation and Elimination of Positions for the Improvement of Educational Programs for Students**

F. Del Carpio, Chief People Officer, presented the resolution for Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-2 single principal model. She added that through discussions, greater support was needed in the area of student services, around behavioral support, campus culture, and student engagement. Thus it will introduce a new Dean of Students role.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the board resolution for creation and elimination of position(s) for Magnolia Science Academy-2 to improve the school educational programs for students effective immediately.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
U. Yapanel	Aye

**K. Approval of Charter Renewals Board Resolutions for Magnolia Science Academy-4 and Magnolia Science Academy-5**

A. Zarnich, Director of Charter Petitions and Reporting, detailed the resolution to authorize the filing of the charter renewal petitions for Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-5 and MSA-4. He added that every five (5) years a charter school is required to renew its charter and submit a charter renewal petition demonstrating academic achievement and a strong academic program. Both schools are approaching their last year of their approved charter petition term.

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve the board resolutions that authorize the filing of the Charter Renewal Petitions with the Los Angeles Unified School District for Magnolia Science Academy-4 and with the Los Angeles County Office of Education for Magnolia Science Academy-5, and give authority to the CEO & Superintendent to serve as the Lead Petitioner.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Covarrubias	Absent
M. Muhammedov	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye

**L. Approval of Magnolia Science Academy-Orange County Anaheim and Placentia Yorba Linda School Safety Plans**

M. Wittek, Director of Student Services, presented the school safety plans for the newly established schools: Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-Orange County (Anaheim and Placentia-Yorba Linda). She outlined what the school safety plans contain to detail the elements of safety. She added that the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) also engaged in the process and served as a space to receive feedback for further evaluation. She also reported that the approval would encompass updating the safety plans to include the Instructional Continuity Plan as it is the next item for approval.

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve the School Safety Plan (SSP) for the 2025-26 school year for the following schools within Magnolia Public Schools: Magnolia Science Academy OC – Anaheim, Magnolia Science Academy OC – Placentia-Yorba Linda.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
M. Muhammedov	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye

**M. Approval of MPS Instructional Continuity Plan**

M. Wittek, Director of Student Services, reported on the new state requirement under Senate Bill 153 which amended California Education Code Section 32282 which would require all local educational agencies to develop an Instructional Continuity Plan. The plan is intended to ensure that all students have continued access to instruction during a natural disaster or emergency and must be incorporated into the school's safety plan. Additionally she added that the approval would grant her permission to update the school safety plans to align with the new Instructional Continuity Plan once it is adopted. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve Magnolia Public Schools (MPS) Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP) and for staff to proceed with updating School Safety Plans to reflect the new policy.

M. Muhammedov seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
S. Dikbas	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**N. Approval of Purchase and Sale Agreement for the Real Property Located at 1115-1125 Lillian Way, 6331-6363 Santa Monica Boulevard, 6325 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA**

P. Ontiveros, General Counsel & Director of Facilities, presented the approval to purchase a property to allow for the relocation of Magnolia Science Academy(MSA)-4 and MSA-6 to a permanent private facility for the merging of both schools. He added that they are currently on a Prop 39 space at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) sites. He provided background of the property, the due diligence conducted and the timeline for the purchase and development of the site. Board Members questions were addressed by staff.

U. Yapanel made a motion to approve (1) the execution by MPS Staff of a purchase and sale agreement for the property located 1115-1125 Lillian Way, 6331-6363 Santa Monica Boulevard, 6325 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA (APN: 5533-007-036, 5533-008-011, -012, -014, -022, -023) (the "Property") by and between East 8th Highland Holding Company, LLC, as seller (the "Owner"), and Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation, as buyer, for the benefit of Magnolia Science Academy-4 and -6, a draft copy of which is attached Exhibit A with such changes as MPS Staff may deem necessary, appropriate and in the best interests of MPS and (2) a deposit of Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) as a good faith deposit but applicable to the purchase price at the close of escrow.

D. Gonzalez seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

M. Muhammedov	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
S. Dikbas	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent

**O. Approval of CEO Comparable Compensation Data**

M. Muhammedov, Board Chair, reported on the comparable compensation data received from legal counsel YM&C and EdFuel which he added provided a lot of information on the comparable data from other charters. He added that that contract for the CEO & Superintendent will still be tabled until July Regular Board Meeting, but the Board will approve the data compensation as this meeting.

M. Muhammedov made a motion to approve the compensation and benefits survey data for the CEO & Superintendent.

U. Yapanel seconded the motion.

The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

**Roll Call**

S. Dikbas	Aye
U. Yapanel	Aye
D. Gonzalez	Aye
S. Covarrubias	Absent
M. Muhammedov	Aye

**P. Public Read Out of CEO Compensation**

This item requires no action, but is the formal read out of the CEO compensation which would be announced at the July Regular Board Meeting due to the Board voting to table the CEO Contract which was announced during the the reporting out of closed session.

**Q. Approval of CEO Contract**

This item was tabled during the reporting out of closed session.

## **VIII. Closing Items**

### **A. Adjourn Meeting**

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. Muhammedov