



March 31, 2016

The Honorable Raife Gulru Gezer
Consul General
Turkish Consulate General
Republic of Turkey
6300 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 2010
Los Angeles, California 90048

Dear Consulate Gezer:

On behalf of Magnolia Public Schools parents, students, alumni and community leaders, we are writing you to express our extreme disappointment and growing frustration that the Republic of Turkey, in an unprecedented action, is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on powerful corporate attorneys and public relations firms in an aggressive campaign to undermine our 11 California public schools. This direct intervention by a foreign government is threatening our schools and our children.

Our school leaders are being forced to engage in a Sisyphean effort to combat a mobilized campaign backed by limitless financial resources to spread false information about our schools. None of the people involved in this campaign have ever visited our schools or are providing evidence to back up their claims. What do you have to gain with this campaign? Our schools are doing a great job of preparing students from historically underserved communities to thrive in college and career. The lies your representatives have been voicing have nothing to do with giving our children access to an excellent education and the opportunity to achieve their full potential. We have worked too hard to get these schools where they are today and we're not going see them undermined by outright falsehoods.

What's particularly disturbing is the manner in which the representatives you've paid are intentionally ignoring facts that are publicly available for anyone to see. Our schools have years of reviews, audits and investigations into our finances and operations that prove all of these claims are false. The State Auditor's exhaustive investigation revealed no wrongdoing and the State of California followed the audit's conclusion by approving \$17.4 million in state bonds to build a new school, among several other actions proving the authorities' confidence in our schools' operations. Standard & Poor's also gave Magnolia the highest possible lift in its bond rating after the audit's completion.

We believe the Republic of Turkey is attacking Magnolia's charters simply because some of our most veteran and valued employees are moderate Turks your president believes support his political opponents and oppose his well-documented track record of human rights violations. We are fully aware of the political discord in Turkey today driven by its president's dramatic shift toward an authoritarian government over the past several years. The government even raided Turkey's largest newspaper using tear gas and plastic bullets on its own people. The President of Turkey is also regularly prosecuting intellectuals and others opposed to his rule as "enemies of the government," while sending arms to the ISIS-backed forces in Syria. National news outlets including The New York Times, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times extensively reported on these events and editorialized on the eradication of democracy in

Turkey, going so far as to call for the President of Turkey's resignation.

But, what we still don't understand is why the government of Turkey is meddling in American public education.

MSASC Signature

We'll be blunt. There is no reason for our children here in California to be negatively impacted by the politics of a country 7,000 miles away. What we do care about is making sure our children have the best opportunity to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential. What the government of Turkey does in Turkey should stay in Turkey and not invade our neighborhoods, our children's dreams, and the excellent education Magnolia schools are providing to our kids. If you were to visit our schools, our neighborhoods, and sit down with us, you would understand how important Magnolia schools are and have been to our communities for the past 14 years.

About 80 percent of Magnolia's students are Latino and African-American and 78 percent participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program. On top of a whole host of social and economic challenges that make the acquisition of a quality education an absolute necessity for our student population, they now have to deal with yet another layer of difficulty due to the actions of the Turkish government against us? This is patently unfair.

But in the face of many challenges, our kids are thriving and more than 90 percent of our graduating seniors each year are enrolling at some of the best colleges in the nation prepared to succeed through a rigorous academic program based in science, technology, engineering and math. We have maintained a record of 94 percent or higher graduation rates in all of our schools and all but one of our high schools has maintained a record of 100 percent of students graduating eligible for the UC and CSU system with a C or better in A-G courses (the one that missed had 84 percent).

MSASC Admin Meeting Summary

We demand that the Republic of Turkey cease this morally reprehensible campaign against our schools. We work too hard, have to worry about our kids too much and struggle to make sure they have the best shot at a quality education, to have them used as pawns in a foreign geopolitical game. We will not stand by and allow these malicious and self-serving political activities to continue.

You are clearly well-resourced and powerful. We intend to speak truth to that power. We would like to meet with you in person to discuss our concerns. Come to our schools yourself and see the faces of the students whose dreams you intend to crush.

Sincerely, Parent MSA-SD Yoli Yslas Thompson

Padre de Magnolia 6 Plumas
Padre de Magnolia Belt
Parent of Magnolia Bel
MS8 Parent
MS8 Parent
Staff/Alumni MSA Reseda
Padre MSA-2
MSA 2 Parent
MSA 4 Parent (Venice)
Padre de MSA 4 Venice
MSA 3 Parent
MSA 3 Calson Parent
MSA SA Parent
MSA 7-Northridge - Parent

Padre de Magnolia Reseda
Norma C. Rangel
Padre de Magnolia Reseda
Padre de magnolia Reseda
Staff/Alumni MSA Reseda
Alumni of MSA Reseda 08
cc. Congressman Brad Sherman
MSA Reseda Alumni 14
MSA 2
Parent of MSA 4 Venice
Parent of MSA SA
MSA 7-Northridge - Parent

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