****

October 28, 2016 **Contact:** Molly O’Brien

 Larson Communications

 (703) 863 - 8773

**MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO APPEAL TO LA COUNTY AFTER LAUSD REVOKES THREE OF ITS HIGH-PERFORMING CHARTERS**

*Board members cited small technicalities as reasons for denial, but many believed larger issues, including outside political pressure, were the primary driver for revocation*

**Los Angeles –** [Magnolia](http://www.citizensoftheworld.org/) Public Schools, a high-performing network of 10 public charter schools in Southern California, announced that it will appeal Los Angeles Unified’s (LAUSD’s) denial of three of its charter renewals to the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Magnolia today submitted the paperwork to begin the appeals process. If the county denies Magnolia, this will open up the path to appeal to the state Board of Education.

“We’re hopeful that the county will recognize the clean outcomes of 17 audits, reviews and investigations over the past two years and our good faith efforts to provide thousands of pages of documents requested not only by the charter division, but also by the Office of the Inspector General—all while maintaining our high-quality academic and instructional program,” said Magnolia CEO Caprice Young. “We look forward to having a partner who values the important service we provide, supports us in our efforts and refuses to bend to political pressures that have nothing to do with educating students.”

Prior to voting, LAUSD board members raised concerns about Magnolia providing documents in a timely manner. The district never raised any questions about the schools’ strong academics.

LAUSD’s action was widely criticized as an overreaction to technical and operational issues that had either been corrected or could easily be fixed, especially since Magnolia had been the subject of 17 separate and independent audits, reviews and investigations over the last two years. All these investigations concluded that Magnolia was fiscally and operationally sound, but could strengthen the organization by tightening some controls, policies and procedures.

Magnolia’s denials came along with the denial of two other charter renewals at the same meeting—an unprecedented move for a school board that has approved 155 of the 159 renewal requests over the past five years.

“For a long time, charter schools were evaluated mostly on the degree to which they were helping students learn. Those days are over….They are judged on whether they’ve done anything to offend the peculiar and often petty tastes of the politicians who get to decide which schools live or die,” the California Charter Schools Association said in a statement after the vote. “We will continue fighting for the political environment that we know is possible — an environment in which learning is prized above all else."

On Oct. 17, the day before the vote, leaders of 64 charter organizations serving more than 90 percent of the charter students in LAUSD, submitted a letter to the board expressing their concern about the consequences of the board’s actions.

“We are deeply concerned that this month, District staff have recommended more charter renewal and material revision denials than they have in the last five years combined, none of which are based on student outcomes,” they wrote. “If the District is willing to close academically high performing schools largely because of technical and operational issues that either have been corrected or can be fixed, then who’s to say whether our own schools will be next?”

The three schools serve about 1,400 Los Angeles Unified students and provide much needed high-quality public school choices in historically underserved neighborhoods. In April, U.S. News & World Report once again recognized Magnolia’s schools as being among the best in the nation. One of the revoked charters, Magnolia Science Academy 2 in Van Nuys, was the top-ranked charter high school in Los Angeles Unified, and along with Magnolia Science Academy Reseda—another denied charter—was named in the top 100 high schools in California. Both high schools are in the top three percent of all U.S. high schools.

**About Magnolia Public Schools**

Magnolia Public Schools is a high-performing network of 10 public charter schools in Los Angeles, San Diego and Orange counties that provides a college preparatory educational program emphasizing science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Magnolia’s mission is to prepare students to succeed in college through a rigorous academic program while reinforcing core values through character development classes that cultivate respect for self and others. Magnolia’s vision is to create scientific thinkers who contribute to the global community as socially responsible and educated members of society. [www.magnoliapublicschools.org](http://www.magnoliapublicschools.org)

###