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## **LONGTIME FINANCE EXECUTIVE SELECTED TO LEAD MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD**

*Noël Russell-Unterburger, VP of Finance and IT for YWCA of Greater Los Angeles and Magnolia parent, to continue to strengthen organization's operations*

**Los Angeles, CA** – Magnolia Public Schools announced today that successful business and financial executive and Magnolia parent Noël Russell-Unterburger was unanimously voted the new chairperson of the board for Magnolia Public Schools, a network of 10 high-performing public charter schools that serves close to 4,000 students throughout Southern California.

Russell-Unterburger's immediate goals are to ensure that the organization's operations and existing systems stay strong. An accounting and finance expert, she has worked on developing and strengthening internal controls at different organizations throughout her career.

"I have watched Magnolia go from an organization that started out on multiple QuickBooks accounts to one that is now operationally strong and with systems in place to ensure accountability and transparency," said Russell-Unterburger, who has served on Magnolia's board since 2012, and has had two children attend its schools. "I'm proud and excited to now serve as board chair of a school network that has such committed teachers, staff and families, and to work with the leadership team to support these amazing schools into our next level of growth and success."

The nine-member Magnolia board mostly includes engineers and finance experts, but Russell-Unterburger will make it a priority to continue to diversify the board. They are actively searching for two new board members to bring in new and different backgrounds, perspectives and expertise.

"Noel's experience will be a tremendous asset to our organization, helping it strengthen and grow, as we work to meet the growing demand for our program," said Caprice Young, CEO of Magnolia.

Russell-Unterburger brings 18 years of financial management, leadership and advisory experience to the board. Before taking on the role of Vice President of Finance and IT at the YWCA Greater Los Angeles in 2013, she served for eight years as CFO for People in Progress, Inc., one of the city's leading providers of substance-abuse treatment plans.

"I strongly believe in the importance of having people with different skillsets to not only lead, but be a part of our board," said former board Chairman Umit Yapanel, who as a

board member will continue to support the search for two new board members. “As an organization, we have to evolve in order to be able to grow and meet the needs of communities looking for high quality public schools.”

In April, U.S. News & World Report recognized Magnolia’s schools for the fifth year in a row as being among the best in the nation. 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, 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.

An outside analysis recently revealed that Magnolia Science Academy (MSA) Reseda was 14th among all Los Angeles high schools for its UC acceptance rate—with 29.82 percent of its seniors being accepted to UC schools.



### **About Magnolia Public Schools**

Magnolia Public Schools was founded in 2002 to graduate students who are scientific thinkers that contribute to the global community as socially responsible and educated members of society. Magnolia currently operates 10 public charter schools across California. Magnolia’s educational approach is based on the conviction that science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education is essential in improving our modern society’s knowledge base and adaptability to the fast pace of ever-changing technological advancements. Visit [www.magnoliapublicschools.org](http://www.magnoliapublicschools.org).

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