

Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

<https://www.smmusd.org/community/district-advisory-committees-dac/visual-performing-arts>

Wednesday, September 24, 2025 – 7 PM – in-person

Board Room, SMMUSD District Office, 1717 – 4th Street, Santa Monica 90401

AGENDA

VAPA DAC roster for 2025–265 and when terms expire:

<https://www.smmusd.org/community/district-advisory-committees-dac/visual-performing-arts/vapa-members> --

(Michael Mollo and Rebecca Terlizzi are missing. Zina's end-of-term is out of date.)

Annie Azzariti – June 2025 (needs to re-apply)

Aimee Koeplin – June 2025 (re-applied but didn't hear back)

Deborah Berek – June 2026

Janis Gabbert – June 2026

Domenic Piturro – June 2026

Zina Josepfs – June 2027

Michael Mollo – June 2027

Rebecca Terlizzi – June 2027

Applicants who never heard back:

Lauren Applebaum (February 2025)

Kim Crawford (Spring 2025)

Jenna Guggenheim (August 2025)

Emily Senchuk (May 2025)

Sarh Jane Barney(?)

7:00 PM -- **Call to order and welcome**

7:05 PM -- **Approve minutes** from May meeting

7:10 PM -- **Calendar review**

- Board of Ed meetings: October 7 and 23
<https://www.smmusd.org/board-of-education/board-meetings>
- VAPA DAC meetings: Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 19, Jan 21, Feb 18, April 29, May 20
<https://www.smmusd.org/community/district-advisory-committees-dac/visual-performing-arts/vapa-meetings>

REPORTS

7:15 PM -- **Staff Liaison and VAPA Coordinator** -- Dr. Jim Wang

7:45 PM -- **Board of Education Liaisons** – Maria Leon-Vazquez and Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (per the DAC Charge)

8:00 PM – **VAPA DAC charge for 2025–26:**

- *Support a comprehensive preK–12 arts education program as an integral part of the core curriculum offered to all SMMUSD students, with dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts taught as discrete disciplines and integrated into other subject areas; as we align with and promote the Excellence through Equity Plan, which includes teaching cross-cultural and socio-emotional skills.*
- *Serve as a conduit for parents, teachers, students and community members to inform and make recommendations to the Board of Education on matters related to equitable access and successful participation in comprehensive, sequential, standards-based preK–12 arts education, while comparing the district's curriculum, scheduling, staffing, instructional materials, equipment, and facilities with National and State standards and frameworks; as we align with and promote the Excellence through Equity Plan.*
- *Maintain the Board and District commitment to the adoption of a new 6-year SMMUSD Arts Education Strategic Plan. Review and advise this Plan to align with and promote the Excellence through Equity Plan.*

1. DAC End-of-Year Report -- Included in the July 15 BOE agenda. Janis Gabbert presented the report.

2. VAPA DAC vacancies

- a. Discuss strategies for recruiting new members
- b. Discuss strategies for getting DAC applications processed
- c. DAC application form (new URL): <https://www.smmusd.org/community/district-advisory-committees-dac/dac-application>

3. Visual & Performing Arts Department

<https://www.smmusd.org/departments/visual-performing-arts/home>

Our Mission

Equity, access, and excellence in arts education for every student in every school.

Our Vision

Through the arts, we inspire students, teachers, and families to see themselves as life-long learners and creative contributors to our school communities. By teaching the whole child, we prepare every student for a fulfilling life and future career, treating the arts both as stand-alone disciplines and as powerful partners to academics.

Our Values

Belonging, curiosity, diversity, equity, inclusion, and empowerment.

SMMUSD Visual and Performing Arts Programs



Dance

Current program: The Santa Monica College Dance Academy offers dance instruction to all 4th and 5th-grade classes during P.E. The Santa Monica Education Foundation (SMEF) supports the Robert Gilliam dance program, providing weekly instruction during P.E. at John Adams, Lincoln, Malibu, and SMASH Middle Schools, as well as Malibu High School. After-school Ballet Folklórico is offered for students in grades 3-8 at various campuses across the district. Santa Monica High School offers "for credit" dance classes.

Performances: Dancing Classrooms presents an annual showcase, and Santa Monica High School presents winter and spring dance showcases each year.



Music

Current program: All 3rd grade students are taught General Music once a week for 40 minutes. All 4th and 5th graders choose either choir, string instruments, or wind instruments and are taught 40 minute classes twice a week during school hours. The 10 elementary music teachers are credentialed and are funded by the district. A wide range of music classes are offered at all the middle and high schools. SMEF, the Gail Dorin Music Foundation, and the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation fund the Dream Strings, Dream Winds and Dream Voice programs at the four Title I elementary schools and at two of the middle schools to support students whose families cannot afford additional music instruction. Nearly half of all K-12 students participate in the district's music program!

Performances: In addition to winter and spring concerts at all schools and the annual district wide "Stairway of the Stars" concert, Malibu High School and Samohi also present choral "Masterworks" concerts, and the Samohi Viking Marching Band participates in competitions and tournaments.

Honors: Many of the middle and high school music ensembles participate in adjudicated festivals sponsored by SCSBOA and SCVA. Many SMMUSD middle and high school students are selected each year for honor choirs, orchestras, and bands on the regional and state levels by ACDA, CAJ, CBDA, CODA, SCSBOA, and SCVA. District students have also been chosen as finalists and grand prize finalists in the LA County Music Center "Spotlight" Awards, and have been selected for the ACDA national honor choirs, the ASTA National High School Honor Orchestra, the National Youth Orchestra of the United States, and the GRAMMY High School Jazz Band and Jazz Choir.



Theatre

Current program: The Morgan-Wixson Theatre provides opportunities for elementary students to attend theatre performances. Santa Monica Playhouse offers workshops for students and classroom teachers. SMEF and PTSAs fund after-school "non credit" drama programs at John Adams and Lincoln

Middle Schools that put on spring musicals. Malibu Middle, Malibu High, Olympic High, and Samohi offer classes in acting and stagecraft technology.

Performances: John Adams Middle School and SMASH, Lincoln Middle School, and Malibu Middle School present an all-school musical each year. Malibu High School and Santa Monica High School each perform a play in the fall and a musical in the spring. In addition, Santa Monica High School presents the cabaret-style "Public Domain" in the spring.

Honors: Samohi students participate in the Drama Teachers of Southern California (DTASC) annual Fall Festivals and Shakespeare Festivals.



Visual Arts

Current program: P.S. ARTS provides visual and performing arts instruction for all TK-5 students. A wide range of "for credit" art classes is offered at the middle and high schools, including drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography, film/video and digital design. John Adams Middle School students have participated in an international mural exchange project with a school in Kyoto, Japan. Lincoln Middle School students have participated in MOCA's Contemporary Art Start Program. Samohi students have participated in the MOCA Teen Internship program.

Exhibits: Samohi features several art shows during the year, including the "Day of the Dead" exhibit (also featuring art by JAMS students), the AP Art Show and the Senior Art Show. Student artwork from all the district middle and high schools is featured in the Districtwide Visual Arts Show at Santa Monica Art Studios. Malibu Middle and High School students participate in the Malibu Music and Arts Festival.

Honors: Malibu High School and Samohi offer AP art classes, and students from both schools have competed successfully in the LA County Music Center "Spotlight" Awards. Samohi photography students have participated and placed in the annual *New York Times* student photography contest.

4. Media coverage

"SMMUSD's Music Education Program Receives National Recognition"

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District has been honored with the "Best Communities for Music Education" designation from the National Association of

Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. This marks the 23rd consecutive year for SMMUSD to earn this honor.

5/13/25 -- *SMMUSD newsrelease*--

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1748464588/smmusdorg/a4xnrthacu7q6kgid39u/pr-nammaward051325.pdf>

"Lights, Camera, Action! Samohi is hosting its 22nd Annual Santa Monica Film Festival"

5/13/25 -- *SMMUSD news release*

<https://www.smmusd.org/cms/lib/CA50000164/Centricity/domain/2939/2024-25/PR-SamohiFilmFestival051325.pdf>

5. Calendar of upcoming performances and arts exhibits

March 14 -- Stairway of the Stars Concerts -- Barnum Hall

March 26 -- Santa Monica Art Show -- Roberts Gallery at Samohi

April 23 -- Malibu Arts Show -- Malibu HS

May 16 -- Magico Mexico -- Samohi

June 3 -- Kiwanis performances -- JAMS PAC

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

8:45 PM – **Public comments regarding items not on the agenda** -- Members of the audience may address the DAC on items not on the meeting's agenda.

The Brown Act states that Committee members may not engage in discussion of issues raised, except to ask clarifying questions or to refer the matter to staff.

8:50 PM – **Agenda planning for October meeting**

8:55 PM – **Announcements and adjournment**