San Juan Unified School District
Curriculum and Standards Committee

San Juan Unified
SCHOOL DISTRICT

☒ Mariya Babiychuk*	☐ Taylor Brown	☐ Vincenzo Cerruti
☒ Maggie Cooper	☒ Kathleen Gately	☐ Georgia Klostrakis
☒ Patsy McGavock**	☐ Mindy McIntyre	☐ Diana Noori
☒ Veronica Schwalbach	☒ Roxanne Stellmacher	☒ Anmarie Medin
☒ Catrayel Wood	☒ Susan Zimmer	

*Chair, **Co-Chair

Our Core Values:

- **Belonging:** We create a community that cultivates welcoming and inclusive environments with genuine respect for our diversity of cultures, identities and abilities.
- **Relevance:** We design experiences and environments where each learner can explore and apply skills and knowledge that align with evolving careers and workplaces.
- **Voice:** We honor and affirm all voices of our school community and encourage them to share their perspectives to help improve and shape what we do and how we do it.
- **Social and Emotional Intelligence:** We build a culture that teaches, models and applies social and emotional intelligence in all interactions with each other.
- **Resilience:** We create nurturing schools and programs that inspire each learner to continue to persevere, gain strength and develop confidence to excel beyond challenges.
- **Championing:** We support and advocate for those in our San Juan Unified community who are disproportionately impacted or marginalized by circumstances beyond their control.
- **Innovation:** Embracing and encouraging creative thinking and learning environments that transform ideas into actionable solutions.

Approved Minutes

Wednesday, February 11, 2026
Choices Charter, Room 15 at 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order/Introductions

The February 11 meeting was called to order by the chair, Mariya Babiychuk at 6:40pm. Each committee member shared a brief introduction about themselves and how long they've been on the committee.

II. Visitors' Comments

The February 11 meeting did not have any visitors.

III. Business Items:

Arts Education Update (R/D)

Program Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts & PE (VAPA), Sarah Brown, presented an overview of the district's Arts Education Program, including updates on Prop 28, before/after-school arts opportunities, and community partnerships.

The California Arts Standards encompass five disciplines—dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual art—emphasizing cultural connections and the transfer of artistic skills across academic subjects. Media arts, for example, include computer coding as a creative tool. These programs support students' social, emotional, and academic growth. The district currently employs 69 VAPA teachers, with 30% of elementary/K–8 teachers in their first or second year. To strengthen teacher retention, the department provides targeted support and instructional coaching.

Ms. Brown reported on Prop 28, approved by voters in 2022, with funding beginning in 2023–24 and implementation in 2024–25. The law requires 80% of funds to go toward staffing and 20% toward materials, training, and partnerships. To assist sites, the department offers office hours for administrators and maintains a shared FAQ document. Prop 28 funds have enabled new programs, including a theater program at Green Oaks Elementary and a music appreciation course at Mira Loma High School.

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Recruiting qualified arts teachers remains a challenge; funding levels do not fully cover a full-time credentialed position, resulting in more vacancies during the 2024–25 year. Progress has been made this year, with fewer vacancies, and the department is pursuing collaboration with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) Teacher Residency Program, which is expanding to include arts disciplines. Additionally, a state-approved waiver now allows the district to use unspent 2023–24 funds, supporting hiring, materials, and community partnerships.

Ms. Brown also highlighted Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) funding, which supports before- and after-school arts programs at 36 elementary and middle schools. Offerings include ceramics, band, and theater, with over 1,000 students participating, a 24% increase from the previous year.

She invited the committee to attend community arts events such as San Juan Sings, the Kids Art Festival, and the High School Theater Festival. She concluded by announcing the Heroes of the Arts Education Award recipients, Karen Davidson and Alma Torres, who will be honored on March 12 at The Sofia, Home of the B Street Theater.

New Courses Preliminary Feedback (R/D)
Staff Liaison, Nicole Kukral, provided an overview of the new course approval process and explained that the committee will vote on the proposed courses at the next meeting on March 4. A new feedback process, similar to the instructional materials review process, is being developed in response to questions from the Board of Education.

Ms. Kukral asked the committee to consider two questions:

1. What questions or feedback do you have about the proposed courses?
2. How can we improve the process for gathering feedback from families and the community?

So far, feedback has been collected from the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council (SPAC). Next year, the district hopes to expand outreach throughout the broader community.

Most of the proposed courses originated from Bella Vista, but if approved, they will be available for implementation at all school sites. Course letter codes reflect CSU/UC credit categories: "F" for Music and "G" for General Electives. Because these are elective courses, instructional materials are purchased by each school site rather than by the district.

The Personal Finance course will become a State of California graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2030–31. Districts must offer the course by Fall 2027. The course will go to the Board this year for approval so that curriculum adoption can begin next year, in preparation for the 2027–28 school year. The goal is to pilot the course next year, review materials and resources, and bring those materials to the Board at the end of the following school year. This is typically a two-year process.

Committee feedback emphasized the importance of supporting teachers who are developing these courses, as curriculum writing is time-intensive and relies heavily on teacher expertise. Committee members noted that Bella Vista initiated five of the eight proposed high school courses. The course packet includes an outline; the full curriculum will be uploaded to the case management portal. Additional feedback included using Thought Cloud to gather community input.

Philosophy is being proposed as an elective. It could potentially count as English Language Arts (ELA) or History/Social Science (HSS) if written to align with state standards in those areas. Members also suggested engaging the community in advocating for why these courses benefit students, including outreach to community-based organizations (CBOs), Kiwanis, local chambers of commerce, city councils, and inviting students to present how the courses would impact their learning.

The district uses several tools to gather student voice and gauge interest in courses, but the question remains: how can we better invite and encourage community participation? Members also suggested revisiting

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previously approved courses to assess their effectiveness and gather data to inform future proposals. Another idea was to distribute a survey with an attention-grabbing headline, a clear estimate of the time needed to complete it, and a description of the course, its rationale, and its connection to the Strategic Plan.

C&S Committee Orientation Materials Feedback (R/D)
Staff Liaison, Nicole Kukral, shared an orientation video created in response to Ms. McGavock's question about how committee members can best support the district. Ms. Kukral collaborated with Chief of Staff, Mr. Allen, to develop ideas, ultimately suggesting the creation of orientation materials that could benefit new C&S Committee members and other committees in the district.

After reviewing the video, the committee provided several suggestions, including emailing the video to new members, adding a "day in the life of a member," clarifying committee roles and when members are encouraged to speak, and offering a printed version of the video content. Additional feedback included reminding new members that the committee is established in the Education Code, updating the back of the nameplates, incorporating the curriculum road trip presentation into the orientation materials, and creating a C&S Committee Workshop for new members.

Approval of Minutes – January 7, 2026 (A)
A motion to approve the January 7 minutes was made by Ms. Medin and seconded by Ms. Schwalbach. The motion passed with 8 ayes, 0 noes, 1 abstention. Motion carried.

IV. Chairperson's Comments/Committee Business (R)
The Chair, Mariya Babiychuk, reflected on her early experience as a committee member, noting that the group initially felt somewhat rigid. She shared that the committee now feels more cohesive, relational, and engaging, which makes participation more appealing.

Reports to be Heard (R)
Board Liaison, Pam Costa, was not in attendance.

Staff Liaison, Nicole Kukral, shared that there is a recommendation for the Math adoption, and the committee will receive information about it over the next couple of meetings. She noted that the team is very excited about the recommendation. She also reported that the department recently met with principals regarding literacy assessment, and it was encouraging to see their eagerness to learn. The discussions were productive, and the work moving forward is very promising.

Cabinet Liaison, Kristan Schnepp, reported that the iReady Winter Assessment is wrapping up. One district goal was to achieve a 1% increase in student progress in Math. Assessment results will arrive soon, allowing principals to begin reviewing the data during their March meeting. iReady representatives will also meet with principals to help them focus on student performance as they prepare for CAASP testing. The upcoming Math adoption will further support this work.

V. Future Agenda Items (D)
Staff Liaison, Nicole Kukral, reviewed upcoming agenda items and emphasized that the March 4 and April 8 meetings are critical, as the committee must take action in order for items to move forward to the board. Board timelines depend on the committee approving these items at the March and April meetings. Without a quorum, the committee cannot vote, which would delay board approval, the arrival of new materials, and ultimately the rollout of courses to students.

VI. Adjournment
At 8:32 p.m., there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Ms. Babiychuk.