

Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

Wednesday, April 29, 2026 – 7 PM – in-person

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

AGENDA

VAPA DAC roster for 2025-26 and when terms expire:

June 2026: Deborah Berek, Janis Gabbert, Domenic Piturro

June 2027: Lauren Applebaum, Cynthia Boorujy, Wendy Jaffa, Zina Josephs, Michael Mollo,
Rebecca Terlizzi

June 2028: Annie Azzariti, Sarah Jane Barney, Kimberly Crawford, Aimee Koeplin,
Emily Senchuk

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

7:05 PM – **Approve minutes** from February meeting

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

- Board of Ed meetings: May 7 (Malibu), 13, and 19
<https://www.smmusd.org/board-of-education/board-meetings>
- Next VAPA DAC meeting: May 20
<https://www.smmusd.org/community/district-advisory-committees-dac/visual-performing-arts>

REPORTS

7:15 PM – **Administrative Co-Chair 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

2. A Statement from Dr. Antonio Shelton on Proposed VAPA Curriculum Changes

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1776973539/smmusdorg/vqepb7dz0jwwskfrw9xi/DrShelton-MusicCurriculum042326.pdf>

- 3. Elementary Music Curriculum update** -- Discussion of a proposal to expand the Elementary Music program to TK-2 while reducing staff, despite Measure R and Prop 28 funding; eliminating both 4th grade instrumental music and the Elementary Honor Orchestra and Elementary Honor Band that perform at Stairway of the Stars. The SMMUSD music program was used as the model music program in the state when Prop 28 passed.

4. Measure R update

5. Prop 28 update

6. Visual & Performing Arts Department website:

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

7. Media coverage

SMMUSD Students Perform in 2026 All-Southern Honor Groups -- (Feb. 17, 2026) – “Student musicians from the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District were selected to perform in the 2026 All-Southern Honor Groups presented by the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association. The honor groups are part of the annual SCSBOA Professional Development Music Conference and include more than 1,000 of the top student musicians from across Southern California....”
SMMUSD news release

Student Musicians Excel: Local Kids Selected to 2026 All-Southern Honor Groups -- 3/5/26 – The Argonaut

https://www.argonautnews.com/news/students-musicians-excel-local-kids-selected-to-2026-all-southern-honor-groups/article_6cedf79e-e2f5-4e9b-9784-603e531204b4.html

75th Annual “Stairway of the Stars” Expands into Districtwide Arts and Music Festival -- (March 4, 2026) – “The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District will celebrate a milestone year of student performance and creativity as the 75th Annual “Stairway of the Stars” expands into the first SMMUSD Arts and Music Festival on Sat., March 14...Nearly 900 elementary, middle and high school students will perform in Barnum Hall...Between performances, a second outdoor stage near the Samohi cafeteria will feature dance teams, folklorico, mariachi ensembles, jazz bands, original student compositions, a cappella groups and an alumni band...[plus] a preview of the upcoming district art show in the Roberts Art Gallery featuring secondary students....” *SMMUSD new release*

SMMUSD Celebrates 75th Annual “Stairway of the Stars” and Inaugural Arts and Music Festival -- (March 19, 2026) – “The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District marked a milestone celebration of student talent and creativity with the 75th Annual “Stairway of the Stars,” expanded this year into the district’s first Arts and Music Festival on March 14 at Santa Monica High School. Nearly 900 elementary, middle and high school students performed throughout the day in Barnum Hall, showcasing the strength and continuity of SMMUSD’s music programs. Orchestra, band and choir performances highlighted the progression of student learning from early foundations to advanced ensemble work...a vibrant, daylong celebration of visual and performing arts....” *SMMUSD press release*

8. Calendar of upcoming performances and arts exhibits

May 1 – Samohi Orchestra Pops Concert

May 1-3 – JAMS//SMASH Spring Musical – “Seussical”

May 1-3 – MHS Musical -- “Mamma Mia!”

May 16 -- Magico Mexico – Samohi

May 20 – JAMS Orchestra Concert

May 20 – Samohi Jazz Concert

May 21 – JAMS Band Concert

May 21 – LMS Choir Concert

May 21 – MMS/MHS Orchestra Concert

May 22 – Samohi Choir Concert

May 26 – SMASH Concert

May 28 – JAMS Choir Concert

May 28 – LMS Band Concert

May 28 – MMS/MHS Band Concert
May 28-30 – Samohi Theatre -- Public Domain
May 30 – Samohi Orchestra Senior Gala
June 2 – Samohi Band Concert
June 3 -- Kiwanis Finalist Performances
June 4 – LMS Pops Concert
June 4 – MMS/MHS Choir Concert

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 May 20 meeting** – End-of-year Report

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