

Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

January 21, 2026 – 7 PM – in-person

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

MINUTES

Attendees: Lauren Applebaum, Deborah Berek, Cynthia Boorujy, Kim Crawford, Gine DeBaca, Janis Gabbert, Wendy Jaffa, Zina Josephs, Aimee Koeplin, Michael Mollo, Rebecca Terlizzi

District staff: Ashley Benjamin (Director, Curriculum & Instruction), Bailey Fronda (Olympic High Academic Counselor), Cynthia McGregory (Olympic High School Principal), Jim Wang (VAPA Coordinator)

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Co-Chair Janis Gabbert.
2. **Guest speakers from Olympic High School** – Principal Cynthia McGregory and Academic Counselor Bailey Fronda described the VAPA program at the school, which is now meeting in 2 buildings on the new Ocean Park Elementary School campus. There are 37 continuation school students and 13 off-campus learning center students. Individualized instruction is provided online via Subject.com. VAPA classes offered on the site include Drawing, Photography, and Music Production & Digital Media.
3. **Minutes** from the November meeting were approved by unanimous consent. (Jaffa)
4. **Administrative Co-Chair and VAPA Coordinator Dr. Jim Wang**
 - a. Music awards and recognition are being added to the school VAPA pages.
 - b. The December SMMUSD Wave publication included VAPA highlights, such as the MHS photography program.
 - c. The LMS after school musical this year is “Frozen.”
 - d. Black History Month – Jazz Reach will perform at JAMS, LMS, MHS, and also provide a clinic for the Samohi Jazz Band and MHS Band.
 - e. SCSBOA conference – The LMS Wind Ensemble will be featured in a session.
 - f. The LMS Band, Choir, and Orchestra will perform at Disneyland.
 - g. Café Samo
 - h. Samohi “Bands on the Road” benefit concert at JAMS
 - i. Samohi Orchestra “Spaghetti & Strings” fundraiser/auction
 - j. Stairway 2026 – Diamond Jubilee Concert – Ryan Roberts will be honored and will perform with the orchestra -- Volunteers needed
1 PM – Orchestras; 4 PM – Bands; 7 PM – Choirs
Barnum Hall -- tickets are free, parents get priority w/ reservations + VIP section
Hospitality/reception for VIPs; Food trucks

2nd stage events scheduled between the 3 concerts—Jazz, mariachi, folklorico, student composers, Café Samo performers, *a capella* groups, featured alumni musicians, etc.

Art Walk – A Liaison is needed -- District Art Show preview

Community Walk – Elemental Strings instrument petting zoo, SM Music Center & other music vendors, SMMPTA, both Ed Foundations, Arts-related student clubs, Theater

k. Curriculum

Dance -- New folklorico vendors (a question was raised about costumes); MS hip hop

Theater – Spring musicals

Visual Arts

P.S. ARTS “informances” at the elementary schools

Murals -- Branded Arts (a former student of Amy Bouse) – need funding

l. Measure R – Funds are being used to refurbish Samohi’s Fazioli piano and the other district grand pianos. It also funds the elementary music program for grades 3 to 5.

m. Prop 28 – Our district is unique in that we have VAPA staff. To meet the 80% funding requirement, it’s been suggested that the nonprofit arts organizations allow the district to hire their artists directly.

n. Bergmann program – This year, it will serve 159 students, with 44 students receiving 30-minute lessons, and 115 students receiving 45-minute lessons.

5. SMMUSD Arts Education Strategic Plan – Dr. Wang stated that the plan was ready to be approved when the pandemic hit. Then Prop 28 was passed by the state legislature. As a result, the proposed plan will need to be revised.

6. DAC Midyear Report – The draft report was revised by the committee and approved by unanimous consent. (Josephs)

7. Public comment regarding items not on the agenda – None.

8. Agenda planning for February meeting: Scheduling

9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.