

Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

February 18, 2026 – in-person

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

MINUTES

Attendees: Sarah Jane Barney, Deborah Berek, Cynthia Boorujy, Kim Crawford, Gina de Baca, Janis Gabbert, Jenna Guggenheim, Wendy Jaffa, Zina Josephs, Aimee Koeplin, Michael Mollo, Emily Senchuk, Rebecca Terlizzi, Jim Wang

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Co-Chair Janis Gabbert.
2. **Minutes** from the January meeting were approved by unanimous consent. (Jaffa)
3. **Administrative Co-Chair and VAPA Coordinator** – Dr. Jim Wang
 - a. P.S. ARTS Family Nights at Edison, McKinley, and Rogers
 - b. Musicals -- Malibu Middle School musical “Shrek”; Samohi musical “Hello Dolly!” (one of few high schools that has a pit orchestra rather than an audio track). Wendy commented that hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into the production. Rebecca suggested that SMAPA could start collecting volunteer hours, which can be considered “in-kind donations.”
 - c. Stairway of the Stars – The concert hours were adjusted due to an SAT test on the same day. Free seats are reserved for parents, 240 seats in the balcony sold as VIP tickets, plus live streaming. Michael Mollo will coordinate the second stage. Jim will meet with the Art Department regarding the Art Walk. He has digitized recordings of past Stairway concerts to create an archive.
 - d. Curriculum – The L.A. County Arts Ed Collective will help update the Arts Education Strategic Plan starting in the fall. Jim is currently updating the Elementary Music curriculum. Measure R funding is being updated for next year, including grand piano maintenance. Jim is still adding more students to the Bergmann program from the waiting list, while also evaluating the administrative structure and looking at other districts.
 - e. DAC meeting time – According to Sarah Wahrenbrock, we can change the time next year. Gina suggested using an OWL system for hybrid meetings, as PNA does.
 - f. Budget cuts – Rebecca reported on the non-re-election process for temporary or probationary teachers.
4. **Board of Education Liaisons** – Neither was able to attend the meeting.
5. **DAC Midyear Report update** – Scheduled for the March 3rd Board of Ed meeting as an Information Item.

6. **Scheduling VAPA Classes in Middle and High School** -- “The Value of Access to Engaging Electives in Every Year of Secondary School and Impediments to Participation – PTSA report (24 pages) – Aimee noted that it’s important to have continuity. In freshman year, it’s almost impossible to schedule a VAPA class due to UC requirements, etc. There are other schools and other district that have solved the problem. The value of “access” in is the first step in opening the discussion. There is less enthusiasm on the current PTA Council. But it’s also an equity issue – some families can figure out how to pay for summer school, but it’s inaccessible for other families.

Wendy asked how SMMUSD could pay for a 7th period. Jim replied that SMMUSD and Beverly Hills are “basic aid” districts because property tax revenue exceeds state funding. SMMUSD is currently in deficit mode because when universal TK went into effect, other districts got more funding, but not the basic aid districts. The district also receives no additional funding when out-of-district students enroll.

7. **General public comments** – None.
8. **Agenda planning for April 29 meeting** – End-of-year Report; Change time of DAC meetings in 2026-27 (4 to 6, 4:30 to 6:30, 5 to 7)
9. **Adjournment** -- The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Zina Josephs, Secretary