

# Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

September 25, 2019 – 7 PM

Board Room, SMMUSD District Office, 1651 16th St., Santa Monica

## AGENDA

7:00 PM – **Call to order and welcome** -- Co-Chairperson Janis Gabbert

Welcome to Annie Azzariti – Appointed to the VAPA DAC on 6/27/19

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

7:10 PM – **VAPA facilities update** – Steve Mazzeti, Bond Program Manager, Consultant

*From Carey Upton, Chief Operations Officer:* The modernization of the Music Building at John Adams Middle School is deferred while we determine the next steps. Here is where we are and how we got here:

- The initial estimate to replace the JAMS music building (similar square footage) was \$4.4 million. This exceeded the budget. At the time, we had a discussion with music faculty and determined a modernization would still support learning. The estimate at the time of 95% design development to modernize was \$2.3 million. The decision at the time was to modernize the music building rather than replace it.

- When the bids came in for the entire performing arts center, the costs for the theater and rehearsal room were about 25% above the design estimates. This increase can be attributed to the increase of construction in the region and scarcity of labor, general inflation on materials and specifically tariffs on materials. **The Board approved this increase in the budget to construct the theater, rehearsal room, choir room, and backstage.**

- The music building modernization, which has not yet been approved by the Division of State Architects (DSA), priced out at \$4.6 million. This is twice the estimated amount. The costs were driven up due to increased requirements by DSA that included extensive seismic, mechanical systems and accessibility upgrades. These additional requirements along with the about 25% increase due to factors listed above doubled the costs. This increase was definitely beyond the budget.

- We went back to the architect and contractor to price out a building replacement again. The estimate came back as \$5.5 million. There is a rule of thumb in school construction that goes if the cost of modernization is more than 50% of the cost of replacement, you should replace. The \$4.6 million to modernize is more than 50% of the cost to replace.

· **We recommended to the Board that we put this part of the project on hold.** We are in the process of determining the priorities for Measure SMS expenditures. The replacement of the Music Building will be put into the mix for funding. It is also possible that the project will be deferred to the next bond.

7:20 PM -- **P.S. ARTS** – Rebecca Cardenas

7:30 PM -- **Administrator Co-Chairperson** -- Dr. Jacqueline Mora

7:40 PM – **Staff Liaison and VAPA Coordinator** -- Tom Whaley

8:00 PM -- **Board of Education Liaisons** –  
Dr. Maria Leon-Vazquez and Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein

8:10 PM – **Calendar review**

1. **DAC meetings** – **Oct 16, Nov 13, Jan 15, Feb 19, April 22, May 13**
2. **Upcoming Board of Ed meetings** – October 3 and 17  
Agendas: <http://www.smmusd.org/board/meetings.html>  
Board Notes: <http://www.smmusd.org/BoardNotes.pdf>
3. **VAPA calendar** i i <https://smmarts.net/> or  
<http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/calendar.html>  
Elementary Instrumental Music Backi toi School Nights:  
September 4 – JAMS; September 5 – Malibu; September 11 – Lincoln MS  
September 10 – Elementary Mariachi program began at Edison  
September 17 – Middle School Mariachi began at Virginia Avenue Park

8:20 PM – **Discussion/action items** (per the DAC charge)

1. **DAC Charge for 2019-20** (approved by the Board of Education on 9/5/19)  
**Visual and Performing Arts DAC**

Administrator Co-chairperson: Dr. Jacqueline Mora, Asst. Supt. for Ed Services

Voting Co-chairperson: Janis Gabbert

**Draft Charges for 2019-20:**

- Support a comprehensive preK-12 arts education program as an integral part of the core curriculum offered at 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 matter 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.

## **2. Draft 6-Year Arts Education Plan (2019-2025)**

### **3. Media coverage (see below)**

SMMUSD News Releases: <http://www.smmusd.org/news/index.html>

8:50 PM – **Public comments regarding items not on the agenda** -- Public Comments is the time when members of the audience may address the District Advisory Committee on items not scheduled on the meeting’s agenda. The Brown Act states that Committee members may not engage in discussion of issues raised during Public Comments, except to ask clarifying questions, make a brief announcement, make a brief report on his or her own activities, or to refer the matter to staff.

8:55 PM – **Agenda planning for September meeting**

9:00 PM – Adjournment

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### **Media coverage:**

#### **“JAMS Breaks Ground on New Performance Center”**

8/30/19 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*

<https://www.smdp.com/jams-breaks-ground-on-new-performance-center/179153>

“In August of 2014, John Adams Middle School (JAMS) Principal Steve Richardson received a phone call informing him the school’s then 80-year-old auditorium experienced earthquake damage. Richardson was given an estimated restoration time of three months.

"It's been a long three months," said Richardson. Five years later, Santa Monica College (SMC) and the Santa Monica – Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) officially broke ground on a brand new JAMS Performing Arts Complex (PAC). "It's been worth the wait, I will say that," Richardson added.

The complex will feature a large stage, 750-seat theatre, choir room, backstage support facilities, rehearsal room and an expansive courtyard. HGA architects, located in Santa Monica, designed the PAC. Wilshire Boulevard's Bernards Brothers Construction is currently building the complex.... Funding for the project originated from voter approved measures. Measures ES (passed in 2012) and SMS (passed in 2018) paid for the project, in addition to a \$20 million contribution from SMC....Ribbon cutting for the PAC is scheduled for early 2021."

**"Music Participation Is Linked to Teens' Academic Achievement -- Music students have higher academic exam scores than their non-musical peers."**

6/25/19 – *Psychology Today*

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201906/music-participation-is-linked-teens-academic-achievement>

"Students who participate in music-related activities between grades 7-12 achieve significantly higher scores on science, math, and English exams in high school than non-musical classmates, according to a new large-scale study. This research by Peter Gouzouasis and colleagues at the University of British Columbia (UBC) involved a cohort of 112,916 public school students in Canada. These findings (Guhn et al., 2019) were published on June 24 in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

"Students who learned to play a musical instrument in elementary and continued playing in high school not only score significantly higher but were about one academic year ahead of their non-music peers with regard to their English, mathematics and science skills," Gouzouasis said in a statement. These exam-based statistics were consistent across the board, regardless of socioeconomic background, gender, ethnicity, or prior learning in science, math, and English.

The authors sum up the educational significance of these findings in their impact statement: "This large-scale study identified evidence of positive relationships between school music participation and high school exam scores in English, mathematics, and science. The findings suggest that multiyear engagement in music, especially instrumental music, may benefit high school academic achievement. In light of this study (the largest of its kind to date), as well as supporting evidence suggesting music learning in childhood may foster competencies (e.g., executive functioning) that support academic

achievement, educators may consider the potential positive influence of school music on students' high school achievement."

### **"SMMUSD Committees Offer Suggestions for Next School Year"**

6/25/19 – *Santa Monica Daily Press*

<https://www.smdp.com/smmusd-committees-offer-suggestions-for-next-school-year/176725>

"Visual and Performing Arts District Advisory Committee -- The committee is advocating for high school graduation requirements to include one year of visual and performing arts in addition to one year of foreign language. The committee is recommending expanding dance classes to more grade levels at elementary schools and adding district-funded dance classes at Lincoln, Malibu and SMASH Middle Schools, as well as Malibu High School. It also wants to add district-funded theatre classes during the school day at John Adams, Lincoln and SMASH Middle Schools. The committee is asking the district to explore reinstating the technical theater class at Santa Monica High School and to fund art classes at SMASH Middle School. It's also looking to provide more summer school, morning and evening arts classes to meet demand from students with packed daytime schedules...."

### **"Music Engagement and Achievement Predicts Higher Grades in Math, Science, and English" -- *The Conversation***

<http://theconversation.com/music-engagement-and-achievement-predicts-higher-grades-in-math-science-and-english-119066>

"What does maturing mean after elementary school? Here's one thing it shouldn't mean: dropping music at school. My colleagues and I at the University of British Columbia studied over 110,000 public school students. We learned that students involved in extended music engagement (between grades 8 - 12) do one full year better academically than non-music peers, particularly when engaged in instrumental music sustained over years of schooling. Also, music achievement predicts academic achievement in math, science and English. Music matters for its own sake, but also because, as our study shows, **music engagement sustained from childhood into adolescence – particularly instrumental music that begins in elementary school – is significantly related to better high school achievement...."**

### **"Middle School Music and Theater Students Get Better Grades"**

2/12/19 – *Pacific Standard*

<https://psmag.com/education/middle-school-music-and-theater-students-get-better-grades?fbclid=IwAR3-MLVVk089ykzdKSSMZT0QL293zm9o76gxaidgd0ieo-QGrUeRy9LkE9c>

"Does your middle schooler want to study music, theater, or dance? Do you fear it will be a distraction from academics and put their grades at risk?"

A rigorously designed, decade-long study of more than 30,000 Florida students suggests the exact opposite is more likely. It found students who took an elective arts class in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade had significantly higher grade point averages (GPAs), and better scores on standardized reading and math tests, than their peers who were not exposed to the arts. This held true after the researchers took into account "all the ways that students who did and did not take the arts in middle school were initially different."

While much research has suggested music and arts training confers academic benefits, the chicken-and-egg question has made definitive declarations difficult. At least one major study concluded music students do better at school largely because smarter, more capable kids are more likely to choose to study music.

**The new study, in the journal *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, addresses that issue by following a large group of low-income students from kindergarten through eighth grade.** This allowed the researchers to create a baseline level of each youngster's academic accomplishments, and determine if arts classes boosted their achievement level.

The short answer is they did. The research team, led by George Mason University psychologist Adam Winsler, focused on middle school, reasoning it is both a key period for brain development and "the first time students can choose to take full elective arts courses, and they can still enroll in these arts-related classes with limited skills." Using data from the Miami School Readiness Project, **the researchers tracked the progress of 31,322 ethnically diverse, primarily low-income students.** They noted each child's level of school readiness at age four, including cognitive, language, and social skills, as well as their scores on standardized math and reading tests in fifth grade.

They then recorded whether the student had taken a dance, drama, music, and/or visual arts class in grades six, seven, or eight. Forty percent had done so; of those, 65 percent took such a class for only one year. Finally, the researchers looked at how those kids then did academically. Not surprisingly, they found students who chose an arts elective "not only had better grades in elementary school," than their peers, "but also showed stronger social, behavioral, language, motor, and cognitive skills seven years earlier in preschool." This supports the aforementioned thesis that more capable kids are more likely to gravitate to the arts.

However, even after taking into account any advantages enjoyed by the arts students, the researchers found a clear pattern of positive results. **"Those who experienced arts**

**electives in middle school went on to earn significantly higher GPAs and higher standardized math and reading scores, and were less likely to get suspended from school, compared to students who were not exposed to arts classes,"** they write. "These are meaningful, important, and ecologically valid measures of actual student performance."

Given these findings, **access to arts education "can be seen as an issue of social justice,"** the researchers write. They note that, in their sample, black students were less likely than white or Latino students to enroll in an arts class, for reasons that are unclear but should be explored. Winsler and his colleagues conclude that "we need to protect and enhance" kids' access to arts education. As previous research has shown, **arts and music training can sharpen developing brains, bolster creativity, and teach kids how to work together to achieve a goal—all of which contribute to successful outcomes, in school and beyond."**

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**Resources:**

VAPA DAC email -- [vapadac@gmail.com](mailto:vapadac@gmail.com)

VAPA DAC web page -- <http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/vapaDAC.html>

VAPA Calendar -- <https://smmarts.net/> or <http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/calendar.html>

VAPA Facebook page -- "Santa Monica-Malibu USD Visual & Performing Arts" --  
<https://www.facebook.com/Santa-Monica-Malibu-USD-Visual-Performing-Arts-499014126917622/> OR <https://tinyurl.com/y9m7hr8d>

VAPA on Instagram -- <https://www.instagram.com/smmusd.vapa/>

VAPA on Twitter -- @vapa\_smmusd aka VAPA SMMUSD

VAPA Department web site -- <http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/>

VAPA Faculty -- <http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/faculty.html>

VAPA Glossary -- [http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/pdf/DAC\\_VAPAGlossary.pdf](http://www.smmusd.org/vapa/pdf/DAC_VAPAGlossary.pdf)

National Core Arts Standards -- <http://www.NationalArtsStandards.org/>

DAC Application Forms -- <http://www.smmusd.org/DAC/pdf/DACappEngSP.pdf>

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**"A Threeo Pronged Approach to Excellence through Equity" – 8/25/17**

<http://www.smmusd.org/lcff/pdf/Three-ProngedApproachEthruE.pdf>

- 1) Create a Culture of Shared Accountability through a Systems Approach
- 2) Teach Crossi cultural and Socioi emotional Skills – *"The ways in which students learn and think are deeply influenced by their cultural identity and heritage, and that to teach a diverse student population effectively requires educational approaches that value and recognize their cultural backgrounds."*
- 3) Engage in Constant Self reflection around Issues of Equity