

Visual & Performing Arts District Advisory Committee (VAPA DAC)

April 28, 2021 - via Zoom

MINUTES

Attendees: Annie Azzariti, Deborah Berek, Rebecca Cardenas, Janis Gabbert, Linda Greenberg, Zina Josephs, Lydia Muraro, John Redfield, Tom Whaley

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by Co-Chair Janis Gabbert.
2. **Minutes** – Minutes from the February meeting was approved by unanimous consent. (Muraro)
3. **P.S. ARTS** – Rebecca Cardenas reported on the transition back to in-person instruction. She's competed two proposals to the district for the 2021-22 school year, one for 15 weeks of instruction (like this year) and one for 20 weeks. She was also asked to submit a proposal for the Malibu elementary schools, which did not use P.S. ARTS this year.
4. **Administrator Co-Chairperson** -- Dr. Jacqueline Mora was unable to attend the meeting.
5. **Staff Liaison and VAPA Coordinator** -- Tom Whaley
 - a. The Elementary Music teachers can only see 3 cohorts per day, so as of the Wednesday after the school re-opened, they're seeing each cohort for 30 or 40 minutes every other week.
 - b. The district has issued a press release re SMMUSD winning the annual NAMM Best Communities for Music Education Award for the 19th consecutive year.
 - c. Tom has been visiting the various school sites to observe the resumption of in-person instruction. It's complicated, but teachers are making it work.
 - d. Elementary dance instruction in 2021-22 will be socially distanced, i.e., no couple dances.
6. **Board of Education Liaisons** -- Dr. Maria Leon-Vazquez and Dr. Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein spoke about the reopening of the schools, the unification hearing on April 17, the upcoming budget review, and a special meeting on April 29 re future projects at Malibu and the elementary schools. Discussions of summer school options and middle school art instruction are scheduled for the May 6 meeting. If the enrollment continues to decline, it will lead to a decrease in staffing.

7. **DAC End-of Year Report to the Board of Education** – Suggestions included the following:

- a. We hope that increased donations to the Ed Foundation will allow P.S. ARTS programs to return from 15 weeks to 30 weeks of instruction in Santa Monica. We are also concerned about apparent lack of arts instruction in the Malibu elementary schools, other than the district Music program in grades 3-5, during the 2020-21 school year.
- b. The Arts have to be part of core curriculum. The district’s high school graduation requirement that can be met with only one year of a foreign language, OR one year of CTE classes, OR one year of VAPA classes, does not reinforce that concept.
- c. Despite everything that happened during the pandemic, VAPA instruction in the district went forward. Since the return to in-person instruction, teachers and students have adjusted to the various public health directives, and the programs continue to thrive.
- d. The Arts Education Strategic Plan got shelved again during 2020-21. The VAPA Coordinator updated the plan, which includes social justice, aligning with district goals, and meeting the needs of diverse learners, and included it in the Board’s Friday packet. We urge the Board to discuss and adopt the plan in 2021-22.
- e. Maintain current staffing for the Elementary Music program.
- f. Provide equal access to Visual Arts instruction in the middle schools. Despite the vast difference in total enrollment, JAMS, Lincoln, and Malibu middle schools each has only 1.0 FTE art instructor. As a result, JAMS had 23 students on the wait list for art in Fall 2020. Meanwhile, Lincoln had 67 students on the wait list in Fall 2020, plus no 7th grade art class.
- g. Re summer school, our understanding is that in addition to “credit recovery,” the only class to be offered at Samohi this summer will be Geometry. Students interested in “get ahead” classes will have to go to SMC.
- h. If total enrollment continues to decrease, there will be a lot of competition for students in the middle/high school electives classes. Many private schools have a 7-period day, so students can take 2 electives. Consider the feasibility of alternative schedules, such as a cascading block schedule for Samohi, and their budgetary implications.

8. **Public Comment** – None

9. The meeting adjourned at 9:27 PM. (Berek)