



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

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Dr. Jim Wang Named New Coordinator, Visual and Performing Arts

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) Board of Education approved the appointment of Dr. Jim Wang as the coordinator of visual and performing arts, at its April 3, 2025, regular board meeting.

Dr. Wang is a familiar face around classrooms and performance spaces throughout SMMUSD, having served as director of orchestras at Lincoln Middle School for nine years before directing the Santa Monica High School (Samohi) orchestras for the past five years. Dr. Wang brings more than 20 years of experience in music education to his new position.

He is well-positioned to hit the ground running in his new role, as he has also held various teaching and music coaching positions, led a variety of orchestras, conducted youth bands and orchestras, and developed music curriculum and assessments, and conducted teacher field observations. He has served as a conductor for several academies and organizations. Dr. Wang led the Lincoln Middle School Chamber Ensemble to second place in the National Orchestra Festival with the American String Teachers Association in 2020.

“After 15 years of joyous music-making, I have made one of the hardest decisions in putting down my baton to take on the new role of visual and performing arts coordinator for SMMUSD, said Dr. Wang. “While I may no longer be able to make a daily impact in the classroom, I am excited to have the opportunity to make a bigger impact across ALL arts in our schools and within our immediate community.”

Dr. Wang earned a bachelor’s degree in violin performance from Biola University, graduating magna cum laude; a master’s degree in music education from USC; and a doctorate in music teaching and learning with an academic major of educational psychology from USC. His



Dr. Jim Wang

dissertation was entitled “Music Education in a Post-Pandemic World: Motivators for the Retention of Music Students.” He has published multiple papers and presented on music learning, student development, and fostering a sense of belonging to educator and music education groups and organizations. He maintains affiliations with the Southern California School Band & Orchestra Association, California Orchestra Directors Association, American String Teachers Association, National Association for Music Education, and League of American Orchestras.

Dr. Wang is multi-lingual, describing himself as a native in English; distinguished listener, superior speak and intermediate reader and writer of Mandarin; and an intermediate listener, novice speaker and writer and advanced reader of Spanish.



Board members, Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Stacy Williamson, outgoing VAPA coordinator Tom Whaley with Dr. Jim Wang

“I would like to welcome Dr. Wang to his new leadership role in the district,” said Superintendent Dr. Antonio Shelton. “His demonstrated site leadership, dedication to student success, and exceptional experience make him a great addition to our management team.”

Dr. Wang is replacing Tom Whaley who has worked as the visual and performing arts coordinator for 24 years, with 38 years total in education. Mr. Whaley is retiring at the end of this school year.

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