



We are writing to clarify some statements that have been circulating regarding the future of the visual and performing arts (VAPA) programs at San Diego Unified schools. -This school year, we've expanded to acquire 900 new musical instruments, new band uniforms and a new music library for increased access.

Despite the tough fiscal constraints facing the district, we have full confidence – and the personal support of district leaders -- that all four arts disciplines will continue to live within our schools. Dance, music, theater and the visual arts will continue to be taught by highly-qualified teachers at every instructional level – elementary, middle and high school.

The state of collaboration between the San Diego arts community and our schools has never been stronger. Together, we created a 5-year plan to deliver a world-class arts education to every San Diego student, because we know an arts education truly does transform lives. We understand that the current budget shortfall requires added fiscal discipline on the part of the school district.

We appreciate how engaged the Superintendent has been throughout this process. The Superintendent has made clear her personal commitment to continuing a strong arts education in our schools. It is worth pointing out the Superintendent has a strong relationship within the arts community. In fact, this week Superintendent Cindy Marten will be receiving the “Administrator of the Year” Award from the California Music Educators Association.

The San Diego arts community remains in full partnership with the district at this time. As co-authors of the district’s arts plan, we recognize that everyone has a responsibility to fully implement this incredible vision. We understand the district is making budget changes now that will allow a strong arts program to continue thriving within our district well into the future. In the meantime, we are committed to building even more support.

We have received many phone calls in the last few days from individuals who would like to do more to support a strong arts education. That is why we are thrilled to announce today that we will be working with the district to create a foundation for added arts funding in the schools. The new foundation will be headed by a lifelong arts advocate.

We will look forward to providing additional details at our next VAPA committee meeting on Monday, April 24 at 4:30pm at the Instructional Materials Center (IMC). We hope you can attend this meeting.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Christensen
VAPA Advisory Council Chair
Band Director, Mira Mesa H.S.

Russ Sperling
VAPA Director