

Music Parent Coalition's Response
Regarding Charge and Composition of the
Proposed Committee to Examine the Music Program

Text of the Agenda Item - Taken from the MBUSD website:

The Board proposes to create a board subcommittee examining the K-12 Music Program in the Manhattan Beach Unified School District, with the following charges:

- Examine and discuss the Status Report prepared by John Benham and Associates for the Manhattan Beach Music Boosters
- Examine patterns in music enrollment and how to best utilize our excellent music program
- Review the structure and pathways of the music program, research best practices in other California districts with successful music programs
- Recommend ways to maintain a strong K-12 VAPA program within the confines of our budget constraints
- Submit recommendations to the Board of Trustees as soon as reasonable, but no later than December 1, 2020.

The Committee will be comprised of:

- Board Members (2)
- MBUSD Music Teachers (4)
- Music Booster Presidents (3)
- MBUTA Representative (1)
- District Administration (2)
- Site Administration (3: 1 High School, 1 Middle School, 1 Elementary School)

Text of the Music Parent Coalition's Letter to the Board Regarding the Charge and Composition of the Music Program Committee:

Dear Board of Trustees,

We are extremely grateful to see the formation of a Committee to study both Dr. Benham's Report, and the MBUSD music program, as an agenda item for the upcoming meeting on April 15th. With respect, I respectfully ask you to consider making the following changes to the proposed committee:

1. Amend charge item #3 to eliminate the word "California". The new line item would read:

Review the structure and pathways of the music program, research best practices in other districts with successful music programs

This change is appropriate because:

- * There is no compelling reason to limit best practices research to just California;
- * The fact that our district participates in a nation-wide consortium of similar districts (“Consortium 2032”, which includes districts from Minnesota, Texas, Illinois and Nebraska) demonstrates the value the Administration places on national collaboration;
- * Expanding to the national level is more comprehensive, would glean a larger base of information, and result in a more well-informed committee.

2. Amend the Committee Composition allowing for the Music Program Boosters to select their own representative. In addition, we ask that you increase the parent representation to represent all school levels. The new line item would read:

Parent Representatives (5) comprised of:

- High School Booster Representatives (3)*
- Middle School Parent Representative (1)*
- Elementary School Representative (1)*

This change is appropriate because:

- * Boosters selecting their own representative means an individual's circumstances (time, availability, etc) could be taken into account;
- * Consistent with all applicable laws, and the Statement of Parent's Rights, it is warranted to have a parent representative at each school level.

3. Amend the Committee Composition to include 5, rather than the current 4, Music teachers. The new line item would read:

Music Teachers (5)

- High School Music Directors (3)*
- Middle School Music Director (1)*
- Elementary School Music Teacher/Director (1)*

This change is appropriate because:

- * Each music teacher brings unique perspective and expertise;
- * Including both an elementary music teacher representative and a middle school music teacher representative, while preserving 3 high school music teacher representatives (one for each distinct type of music program) would ensure that the considerations and challenges attendant to teaching each school level, and within each discipline, is included in the committee's work.

Adjusting representation in the manner described above would equalize representation amongst administration (2 district representatives and 3 site administration representatives), music teachers and parents, bringing the total for each category to 5. We believe that balance and variety of expertise is what would best serve the Committee's mandate.

Finally, we ask that all cuts to the music program that occurred on 2/26 & 3/4 (Specifically: Elimination of 1st & 2nd Grade music teacher and elementary music assistants, elimination of 6th grade zero period, and 50% reduction to two high school music programs) **MUST be placed on hold** until the committee has completed its work. To do otherwise would undermine the Committee from the start.

We are happy to discuss these proposed changes in greater detail should you find it helpful to your deliberations. Thank you for considering, and hopefully implementing, these changes.

The MBUSD Music Parent Coalition