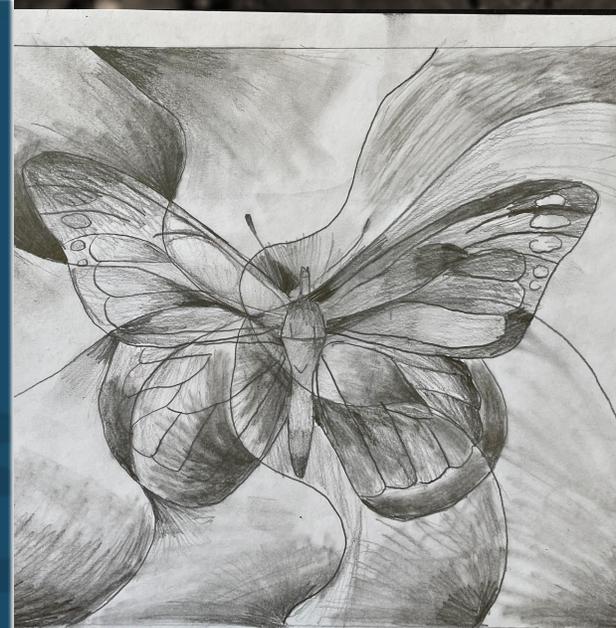


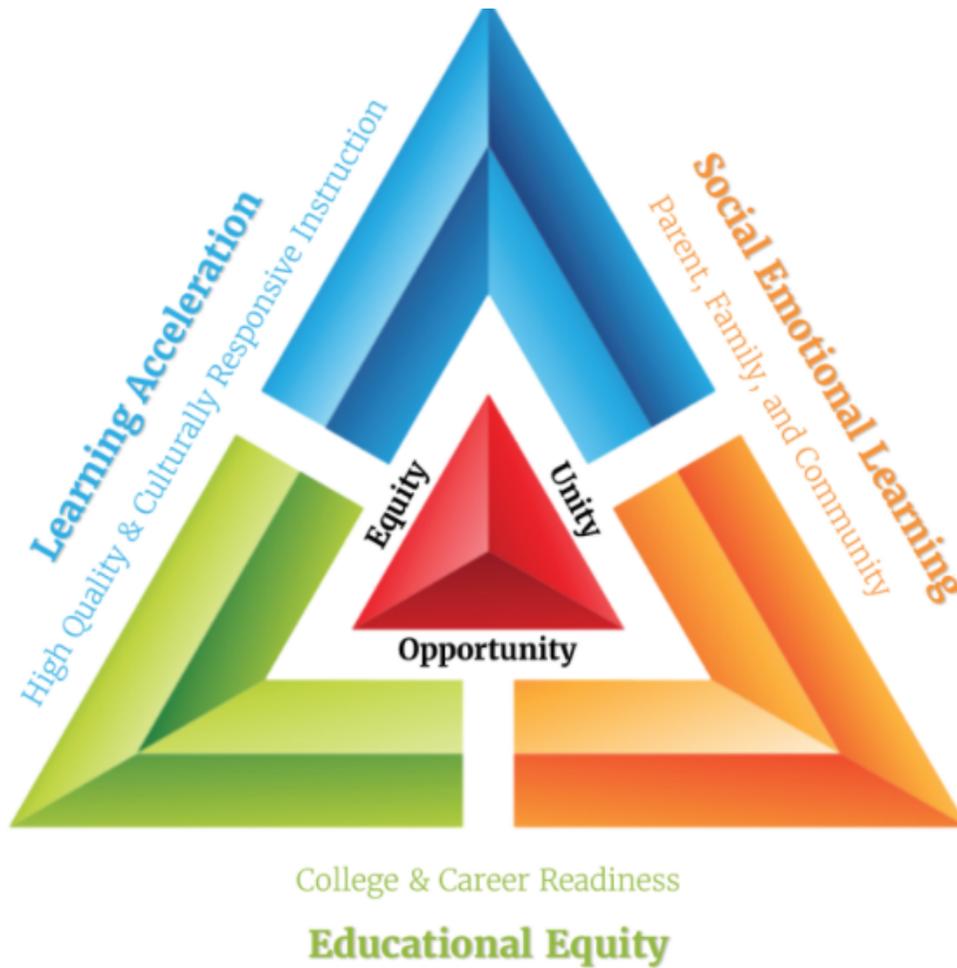


MT. DIABLO

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)
Strategic Plan:
Arts Equity for All Students
2023-2028





This overarching vision for the success of all Mt. Diablo Unified School District students created a frame for the arts planning.
CORE VALUES: Equity · Unity · Opportunity

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mt. Diablo Unified School District takes pride in ensuring that every student experiences a comprehensive and well-rounded education. Our district is able to provide this due to the support and value that our community, staff, and the Board of Education have for arts education. The last few years have been challenging for the education field and families in our communities. However, the arts in our schools have served as a beacon of continuity and self-expression for students. Unfortunately, COVID-19 put a tremendous strain on the arts programs in our district.



To minimize the impact of COVID-19, MDUSD created a new position called Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum Specialist and hired Kellie Hoover in the summer of 2023. The goal was to re-invest in and restructure arts programs to ensure equitable access to arts education. A significant outcome was the creation of the MDUSD Strategic Planning Team who worked collaboratively to create Mt. Diablo Unified's *Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Strategic Plan*.

I am proud of the members of the Strategic Planning Team who worked over nine months on this project. Each stakeholder represented a unique yet equal voice and perspective that culminated into a chorus of coordinated goals and student outcomes in the arts. The vision elements and strategic direction goals outline a TK-12 arts experience that aligns with the California Arts Standards (2019) and Arts Frameworks (2020) to provide a coordinated and sequential arts education across our district.

I thank the Strategic Planning Team and the MDUSD Board of Education for developing and approving this Strategic Plan as it champions sequential and coordinated arts education. This investment in arts education is a direct reflection of our community.

Special thanks to Susan Hartwig, MDUSD Curriculum Specialist, Peggy Burt a Strategic Arts Consultant at Mindful Strategies as well as all of the educators, parents/guardians, students, and the members of the art community who served on the committee.

The arts are critical in developing cultural literacy and cultivating global citizens. Our global community requires a workforce with skills in networking, creativity, collaboration, empathy, and independent thought.

Dr. Adam Clark, Superintendent

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

The team was composed of members of the school community including educators, administrators and students. The School Board was represented, as were community arts organizations and philanthropic organizations, parents and community members. The full list of team members is listed here:

Dr. Adam Clark Superintendent	Sally Anderson Choral Music Teacher	Rachel Hallquist Visual Arts Teacher
Keisha Nzewi Board President	John Litten Drama Teacher	Mary Gray Mt. Diablo Ed Foundation President
Cherise Khaund Board Trustee	Bonnie Shea General Music Teacher	Moa Vang Drama Teacher
Jennifer Sachs Chief of Ed Services	Jorge Jimenez Instrumental Music Teacher	Sagrario Ibarra Ballet Folklorico
Susan Hartwig Curriculum Specialist	Joan Miller Mt. Diablo Music Ed Foundation President	Julia Dozier Mt. Diablo Ed Foundation
Ernie DeTrinidad Mt. Diablo Ed Foundation Board Member	Celeste Graybill Principal - Wren Ave.	Alexis Rogers Parent
Kelly Cooper Principal - Northgate HS	Peggy Burt Strategic Arts Plan Facilitator	Noah Telles Instrumental Music Teacher
Bruce Rockwell Choral/Instrumental Music Teacher	Clare Kim Student	John Alecca Young Audiences of Northern California Executive Director
Joffria Whitfield Instrumental Music Teacher	Carolyn Moore Visual Arts Teacher	Kellie Hoover Parent
Josie Bromley Instrumental Music Teacher	Stephanie Canulli Parent	



Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Strategic Plan: *Arts Equity for All Students* Executive Summary

Mt. Diablo Unified School district is in eastern Contra Costa County, with a student population of nearly 29,000. There are five high schools, nine middle schools, thirty elementary schools, and a number of alternative and adult education facilities. The district covers 150 square miles, including the cities of Concord and Clayton; as well as most of Pleasant Hill and portions of Walnut Creek, Pittsburg, Lafayette, and Martinez; and unincorporated areas, including Pacheco, Clyde, and Bay Point.

In 2018, a leadership team comprised of disciplinary team captains and secondary department chairs was formed to address a number of arts objectives. One of the early successes of this initiative was the implementation of the MDUSD Creative Arts Honor Roll, a program which recognizes students who stay in creative arts classes for all of their high school years. Modeled after the State Seal of Biliteracy, this program has awarded over 500 students annually with a recognition that can be used on college applications, and an honor cord to wear at graduation commencement ceremonies. VAPA teachers have universally reported that this program has motivated higher rates of retention.

Among other recent accomplishments of our leadership process has been the successful advocacy for VAPA-led professional development in-service days, which provide crucial opportunities for collaboration around best practices, and calendar coordination. Our vocal and instrumental music programs have grown and we have implemented IB at multiple elementary and secondary sites. Courses of study have been written in the visual arts to include college level articulation and dual enrollment opportunities at the local community college. We have a partnership with the Academy of Arts San Francisco to provide two students with a presidential scholarship.

The most important work has been the VAPA leadership committee as it initiates the groundwork for a strategic arts education plan for the district. The visual and performing arts at MDUSD have a long, diverse history, and some programs have a strong tradition of excellence. In 2023, the district hired a Curriculum Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts to help lead the work of the Strategic Arts Plan.

In the following VAPA Strategic Plan, we are elevating key strategies to build a system of excellence with respect to the TK-12 administration and instruction in standards-aligned, articulated arts education. We want to ensure that all students, irrespective of socioeconomic or demographic factors, have access to high-quality instruction in the creative arts disciplines, and that our district administration demonstrates and upholds the value of all of our VAPA programs. In an effort to inform the collaboration for developing a strategic arts plan, we offer up the following brief summaries of the different VAPA programs at MDUSD.



ELEMENTARY GENERAL MUSIC

Students in grades 1-5, including Tk and K if full day programs, receive weekly instruction (~30 minutes) in general music. This is taught as a primary prep period, by itinerant elementary music teachers. There is a supplemental curriculum for General Music, with the expectation of following a sequence of instruction, and standards alignment.

Staff will continue to work on music educator pipelines and explore alternative staffing solutions for the single subject music educator shortages that have been present in the educational system for the past several years.

CHORAL MUSIC

Although there is a high demand for offering choral music at all district schools, relatively few schools offer choir programs. The lack of student access to choral music education is particularly acute for students in the Monument Corridor and the town of Clayton.

Healthy choir programs rely on a strong starter system in the upper elementary grades. In our elementary schools however, there is currently no system in place to offer an equitable and standards-aligned choral curriculum. A small handful of elementary schools have choirs that are taught by General Music teachers, sometimes in lieu of General Music, and sometimes as a pull-out. The contracted workload of General Music teachers has become a critical barrier to offering more choirs in the elementary schools.

Three of our middle schools offer no choir program at all, while others offer choirs only marginally either by offering just one period of choir for all three grade levels, choir classes that are not available to all grade levels, or choirs that are only offered in some years, and not in others. Currently only Foothill MS offers a sequential choir program in accordance with best practices.

College Park and Northgate High Schools have sustainable and sequential choir programs. Concord HS offers some vocal music. Neither Ygnacio Valley HS nor Mt. Diablo HS have choir programs.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Currently there are six elementary instrumental teachers. These teachers do not provide prep coverage for classroom teachers as the General Music team does. Instead, they employ a “pull out” model for students that opt in to the Elementary Instrumental Music program.

All district middle schools have sequential band programs, and most have sequential string programs as well. Many middle schools also have a jazz band program. Most high schools have band, jazz band and orchestra programs, with some being exemplary. Elementary, middle school, and high school instrumental students participate in various all-district festivals, area pattern showcase concerts, and the like. Most of the high school instrumental programs, and some in the middle schools, have booster groups to assist in fundraising, organization, and advocacy efforts. Over the next five years, the pull out model will be

addressed and other options for delivering Elementary Instrumental Music programs will be explored to match prevailing wisdom in regards to equitable access to the programs.

During the 2009-2010 recession, the elementary instrumental programs were eliminated in response to the extreme budget shortfalls. Out of that situation, the Mount Diablo Music Education Foundation (MDMEF) was created to help sustain these programs. Five years later, funding for elementary instrumental music was restored, allowing MDMEF to shift into other priority areas. The 4th grade program existed until 2022. At that time, the program was scaled back to serve only fifth grade students.

THEATRE/DRAMA

Elementary school students participate in a number of dramatic plays and musicals in both curricular and extracurricular capacities. These opportunities lack coordination, however, and opportunities are inconsistent across student populations.

In the past, some middle schools offered drama through a 6th grade elective wheel. As of 2023, there is no evidence of drama offered through the wheel. As of fall 2023, 2 middle schools have more than one section of drama opportunities. While the other seven middle school sites have no drama sections available.



Two high schools currently offer full drama sections options throughout the school day including stagecraft and video. These sites also conduct drama productions which are produced as an extra-curricular experience, and the drama teacher receives a co-curricular stipend for directing. Some high schools offer a single drama class. Northgate High School and College Park High school offer a full slate of drama offerings, including stagecraft and video production coursework along with standards aligned theater courses. The other 4 high schools offer one or zero drama sections on their master schedule.

DANCE



Dance instruction at MDUSD is intended to be embedded into PE at the elementary school level. Currently there are no elective dance offerings at the Middle School level, however, dance is covered as a unit in PE.

Sequential dance programs at some high schools are an option, and students are allowed to take dance for PE credit. One section of dance is offered at Mt. Diablo High School. College Park and Northgate High Schools offer multiple levels of dance. No dance is currently offered at Concord or Ygnacio Valley High Schools.

VISUAL ARTS/DIGITAL ARTS

Parent funded programs in visual arts have created inconsistent offerings at the elementary level. Over the next five years, a move toward more consistent staffing with classified or certificated staff would elevate the visual arts offerings to become standards-aligned, sequential, and equitable across sites. In addition, professional development for classroom teachers in visual arts could bring more visual arts integration into other content areas.

At the middle school level, staffing drives the availability of visual arts, and a variety of courses are offered on the middle school rotation wheel. All of the high schools currently offer visual arts opportunities, many with the ability to obtain a variety of credit options. At the high school level, select courses of study have been written to incorporate dual enrollment opportunities with the local community colleges so that students can earn credits.

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."
- Pablo Picasso*

WREN AVENUE ELEMENTARY

One of the Title I schools, Wren Avenue Elementary, is an arts magnet school, and strives to provide an arts-rich curriculum for its students. Wren Avenue offers multiple partnerships with the community to bring arts education experiences to serve the students. This site brings innovative curriculum and professional development that is specific to the arts.

MT. DIABLO HIGH SCHOOL

Special mention should be made of Mt. Diablo High School, the high school with the lowest income demographic in the district. Students at MDHS, as well as at some of the elementary and middle schools in its feeder pattern, have some of the lowest levels of access to arts education, particularly in the area of performing arts.



THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In March of 2023, the Arts Planning Team, with the leadership of Superintendent, Dr. Adam Clark, Board Member Cherise Khaund, and Susan Hartwig, TK-12 Curriculum Specialist for ELA, Social Studies, Visual and Performing Arts, and AVID, brought together a diverse team of constituents to envision the way forward for increased access and equity in arts education for all Mt. Diablo Unified School District students from TK-12th grade. The team met in person for three full days from March through the end of June, and the diversity of voices, perspectives and lived experiences provided a brilliant, rich tapestry of collaboration.

The team voiced a deep commitment to:

1. Provide more equitable access to arts for all students TK-12 (regardless of zip code);
2. Dedicate resources to overcoming barriers to equity in the arts;
3. Offer inclusive, expanded access for all students in the arts – including, but not limited to, students with Special Needs, Multilingual Learners, and Focal Scholars



"The most significant learning occurs when emotions are integrated with instruction because all body systems are united. The arts are strongly linked to emotions, enhancing the likelihood that students will remember something."

- Eric Jensen, author and educator, Brain-Based Learning

A Vision for the Arts in Mt. Diablo Unified School District Ensuring Arts Access for All

Mt. Diablo Unified School District envisions a future where the arts are at the heart of every student's educational journey. **We are committed to inclusivity and ensuring that all students, regardless of background or ability, have equitable access to high-quality arts education.** We aim to instill in our students a lifelong love for the arts, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to be informed and engaged members of our community throughout their lives. Our vision is guided by the belief that the arts are not only essential to the human experience but also instrumental in nurturing well-rounded students who are prepared for their future. Our arts programs empower our students to embrace creativity, excel academically, and build compassion and empathy for others while enhancing the cultural fabric of our community. We will inspire every student to create, explore, and express themselves. We strive to create a vibrant arts community within our school district that fosters personal growth, social emotional wellbeing, artistic excellence, cultural responsibility, and a deep appreciation for the arts in all its forms.

The team was asked to envision, "What would you like to see in place in the arts for all students in the Mt. Diablo Unified School District over the next 3-5 years?"

The team worked together to craft the following Vision Elements:

Content: Arts Teaching & Learning

- Equitable & inclusive, sequential curriculum for all;
- Multi-disciplinary, multi-faceted, engaging arts professional development;
- Scheduling that supports and amplifies arts opportunities.

Infrastructure: Resourcing the Arts

- Excellent, shareable dedicated arts facilities;
- Robust, targeted equitable staffing;
- Leadership support that prioritizes the arts.



Sustainability: Inclusive, Diverse Equity through Communications and Engagement

- Diverse, motivating, collaborative community engagement and cross-cultural family engagement;
- All encompassing collaborative communication that unites and ignites.

The Pillars of the Plan

The following **Strategic Directions** provide the Goals, Strategies and Examples of Actions Steps that will lead the way for transformative arts education to happen throughout the district.

VAPA STRATEGIC PLAN: Arts Equity for All Students

Strategic Directions and Goals

Strategic Direction #1: Content: Arts Teaching and Learning

- **Goal 1-1: Curriculum:** Provide inclusive, immersive, consistent and coherent standards-based arts education for all students
- **Goal 1-2: Theatre:** Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.
- **Goal 1-3: Dance:** Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.
- **Goal 1-4: Visual Arts:** Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.
- **Goal 1-5: Music:** Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.
- **Goal 1-6: Professional Development:** Provide multi-disciplinary, multi-faceted, engaging arts professional development



Strategic Direction #2: Infrastructure: Resourcing the Arts

- **Goal 2-1: Facilities:** Assure there are dedicated arts spaces for teaching, performing and displaying district-wide.
- **Goal 2-2: Leadership:** Prioritize, support, fund and encourage the arts for all students
- **Goal 2-3: Staffing:** Create a cohesive system for intentional hiring to retain/maintain/grow staffing

Strategic Direction #3: Sustainability: Inclusive, Diverse Equity through Communications and Engagement

- **Goal 3-1: Engagement:** Increase Community and Family Engagement to Uplift and Connect to the Arts
- **Goal 3-2: Communications:** Foster and Nurture Arts Communications that honor all voices

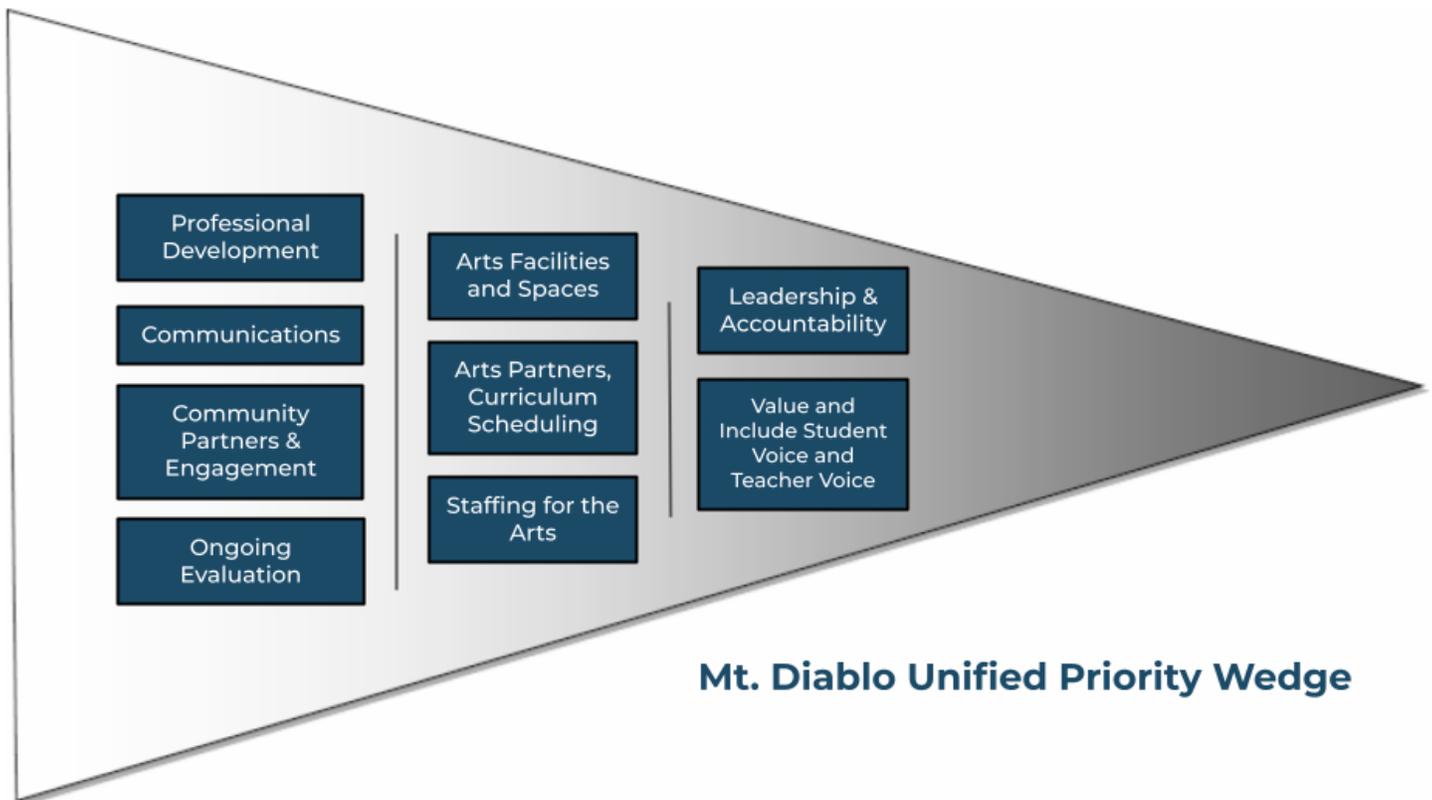
ARTS TEACHING AND LEARNING

Goal	Strategies	Examples of Action Steps
<p>Goal 1-1: Curriculum: Provide inclusive, immersive, consistent and coherent standards-based arts education for all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a comprehensive TK-12 scope and sequence for the arts ● Teams develop courses of study 6-12 ● Teams prioritize standards in all arts disciplines ● Explore curricular options aligned to California Arts Framework and Standards based on scope and sequence and courses of study developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet by discipline to review and revise courses of study and prioritize standards ● Horizontal and vertical alignment of standards by discipline ● Develop scope and sequence in grade bands
<p>Goal 1-2: Theatre: Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a program to bring theatre to elementary/middle school students ● Survey high school drama/theatre teachers to assess needs and determine opportunities for growth ● Explore relationships with community groups to expand drama focused opportunities for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite community groups to collaborate, teach, and perform for students. ● Explore secondary student performances for elementary/middle schools
<p>Goal 1-3: Dance: Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Launch a dance program at the elementary level through a variety of staffing approaches ● Utilize existing staff to provide integrated dance education at the elementary level ● Utilize dance for creative expression and skills development through elective choices at the middle school level ● Create multi-level intensive dance training to be competitive for college and careers post secondary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve dance units within PE classes ● Provide a standards-aligned movement library ● Explore and integrate relevant dance styles that resonate ● Create sequential pathways for dance electives 6-12th grade.
<p>Goal 1-4: Visual Arts: Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore methods of instruction and increase access to visual arts by utilizing community partnerships ● Create stand alone (elective) middle and high school visual arts alignment ● Increase and provide equitable access to all MDUSD high school students to specialized art classes ● Increase and implement stand alone visual arts for grades 1-5 weekly where possible ● Implement grade level standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase access through mini-residencies, synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid internships ● Create community partnerships ● Vertically align visual arts TK-12 ● Create opportunity for an Art ToSA and/or arts leads at each site

	<p>based TK-K visual arts curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a program with a visual arts specialist/teacher for each elementary school site • Provide opportunities and resources for grade-level standards based arts integration with visual arts and other content areas grades 1-12 with the guidance of a visual art ToSA or Lead. 	
<p>Goal 1-5: Music: Students are provided with a sustainable, standards-aligned arts education TK-12th grade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to music education at the TK-3 grade levels through considering scheduling options and more integration • Explore options beyond the pull-out model to expand access for all students, including historically underserved students, to ensure opportunities for music for all 4th-5th grade students district wide • Expand access for music in 6-8th grades to build sequential music pathways through 12th grade • Provide sequential access for music classes in 9-12th grades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore different scheduling models for instrumental/choral music at the elementary level • Consider ways to extend lesson times for TK-3rd • Work to restore music offerings at MDHS • Identify appropriate spaces and facilities for instruction, rehearsals, and performances
<p>Goal 1-6: Professional Development. Provide Multi-disciplinary, multi-faceted, engaging arts professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teacher support and professional development for all Visual and Performing Arts teachers TK-12 • Consider artist residencies: Bring community arts professionals into our classrooms to provide professional development and advance arts knowledge of teachers • Identify opportunities where arts professional learning can be incorporated into professional development days for elementary general education teachers • Create and provide professional development to support arts integration for elementary general education teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development for culturally responsive teaching practices • Set up partnerships with community arts partners (ex. Young Audiences, Diablo Ballet, etc.) • Provide Social Emotional Learning (SEL) professional development • Offer more resources to general ed classroom teachers to integrate the arts
<p>Goal 2-1: Facilities: Assure there are dedicated arts spaces for teaching, performing and displaying district-wide.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify appropriate dedicated arts classroom spaces at each individual elementary school site • Investigate equipment needs and appropriate disposal of unusable instruments and instructional materials • Explore the use of portables to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make an arts and music teaching space a priority at every site • Develop plan for piano disposal for unusable pianos throughout the district • Look into portable options to lease, build, or borrow

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop more dedicated arts classrooms • Make the arts more visible on campuses across the district • Identify spaces in the community that could showcase student work in performance and exhibition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create appropriate spaces for exhibition for visual arts • Explore shareable performance space through feeder area school sites
<p>Goal 2-2: Leadership: Prioritize, support, fund and encourage the arts for all students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to ongoing support of arts priorities with district funds • Develop a plan for the state funding: Arts and Music in Schools (Prop.28) • Arts Leadership Committee to meet quarterly to review Strategic Plan actions. • Continue to work strategically with parent and booster groups to supplement arts programs for all students • Continue to fund and support TK-5 General Music and 5th Grade Instrumental Music programs. • Explore creating and/or revising job descriptions for arts positions • Fostering arts integration at the elementary level may lead to additional electives in arts offered in the arts at the middle school level over the coming years • Dedicate funds for curriculum adoptions/development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with school site principals to develop a plan for the district Prop. 28 funding • Continue to support district funded arts programs at the current level • Create regular space for student voice • Work with labor unions to negotiate as needed • Continue to survey students and parents for interest in arts electives • Strategize for hiring new arts teachers, classified staff and teaching artists
<p>Goal 2-3: Staffing: Create a cohesive system for intentional hiring to retain/maintain/grow staffing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a recruitment process to make open positions more visible and an on boarding process that supports new hires • Write/revise job description for elementary music teachers • Increase and maintain consistent staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit arts teachers • Representation at regional and state arts conferences to recruit potential hires • Review current job descriptions • Connect with local colleges/universities
<p>Goal: 3-1: Engagement: Increase Community and Family Engagement to Uplift and Connect to the Arts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a diverse roster of arts partners designed to collaborate with teachers as equal partners • Expand resources for students and guidance counselors to understand college and career options in the arts • Promote and develop cross-cultural family engagement in and through the arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop arts opportunities for family engagement • Provide multicultural arts opportunities • Explore connections with local artists/community members to share experiences

<p>Goal 3-2: Communications: Foster and Nurture Arts Communications that honor all voices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more internal communication throughout the district to increase engagement • Increase communications to and from the community to increase engagement • Adopt Board Resolution for more equity in arts learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen communication to community for engagement in arts experiences • Provide culturally responsive communications
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A Priority Wedge is a tool that allows the Planning Team to see “At A Glance” the overall priorities that surfaced throughout the planning process. It encourages members of the team to think about creating the conditions for success with the plan and focus on “first things first”.

*Artwork and photography submitted by students from Pleasant Hill Middle School, College Park High School, and Mt. Diablo High School

*Photos feature Valley View Middle School’s Strings, College Park High School’s Drama and Instrumental Music students, Mt. Diablo High School and Pleasant Hill Middle School’s Art students