SMB:
SARATOGA MUSIC BOOSTERS

A 501(c)(3) organization supporting music programs in the Saratoga Union School District and Saratoga High School

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Regular Meeting in-person on February 10, 2026

Attendance: total number of attendees = 21

Attendees

Executive Board

Name	Role
Alicia de Fuentes	President
Tista Kapoor	Co-VP Donations
Sneha Melkote	Treasurer/ Pancake Breakfast Treasurer
Srividhya Balakrishnan	Co-Recording Secretary
Rupert Josh	Parlamentarian
Mrudula Prashant	Co-VP Donations

Music Directors

Name	School
Michael Boitz	SHS
Shelley Durbin	SHS
Jon Jow	RMS
Isabel McPherson	RMS
Jason Shiuan	SHS

Booster Members

Name	Role
Richard Aochi	Controller
Dongni Chen	SHS Band / Publicity
Lily Chow	Cookie Dough Co-Chair
Beryl Liu	SHS Band / Publicity
Isabel Oh	Member
Oliver Su	SMB Student Webmaster
Vivian	SMB Student Webmaster
Thea Widmer	SMB Webmaster
Amanda Wroblewski	Member
Joyce Koh-Fernandez	RMS Orchestra Liason

Alicia calls the meeting to order at **7:07pm**

Welcome & January Minutes Approval

Alicia: First up for approval are the January meeting minutes that were circulated over the weekend. Does anybody have any comments about the January meeting minutes?

Josh makes a motion to approve the January 2026 SMB meeting minutes, **Joyce** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

January Financials

(presented by Sneha Melkote & Alicia de Fuentes)

Budget vs Actual

Sneha: We have been receiving donations and allocations for the core programs that are currently active. These include the **Japan Program, 2 RMS Programs & percussion**.

At this point, we still need to clean up how the income and allocations are reflected across the programs. Some donations were assigned entirely to one activity even though they were intended to support multiple activities. Because of that, a larger amount of funds is currently showing under one activity, while other activities that those donations also support are not fully reflected.

I will be sitting down with Alicia to review these items in detail. Together we will go through the donations and reallocate them appropriately so that each program accurately reflects the funds that belong to it.

The key point is that **the funds are there and the total amount is correct**. What we need to fine-tune is the **distribution of those funds across the different activities and programs**.

PayPal Reconciliation

We also noticed some discrepancies in PayPal totaling approximately **$2,000**. We are currently waiting for PayPal records to be updated so that we can reconcile those amounts properly.

Duplicate Check Deposits

I mentioned that we identified a couple of situations where checks we issued were deposited twice.

In these cases, the recipient first deposited the check through a mobile or phone deposit and then, about two months later, deposited the same check again at a bank branch.

We have two such cases:

- One for **$200**
- One for **$1,800**, which dates back about five years

I raised this with our contact at Bank of America. The **$200 check is expected to be reversed within a couple of days**. For the **$1,800 check**, the bank is reviewing the situation. They have not promised that it can be reversed, but we are hopeful they will be able to address it.

It appears that Bank of America has systems that can flag duplicate deposits through check imaging. However, if the check is deposited through another bank, such as JP Morgan, that bank may not always detect that the check was previously deposited.

In any case, we have flagged both transactions with the bank and are following up on them.

Get smarter responses, upload files and images, and more.

January Budget vs Actual:

January 2026 Budget vs Actuals

Sneha: On the balance sheet, we have good income and are continuing to pay program expenses, particularly as we prepare for the upcoming Japan trip/program. Does anyone have any questions on the balance sheet?

Transaction List

Sneha: Next is the transaction list. If anyone asks the right question today, you'll get a standing ovation from me. Any questions?

(Pause)

I'll give myself a standing ovation then. If you look at the sequence of check numbers, you might notice a missing number.

When I took on this role, Alicia had given me a printer cartridge that had already been in use for several years. Later, the printer started printing blank checks with no amount or payee. One check printed that way and had to be voided.

Alicia: Recording secretary, please note that **check number 1744 was voided** due to a printer cartridge malfunction that printed a blank check.

January Balance Sheet

January 2026 Balance sheet
Voided Check

Transaction Approval

Sneha: The transactions presented for approval are **checks 1729 through 1764**, totaling **$50,664**.

Mrudula Prashant makes a motion to approve the January Financials and Transactions Lists # 1729-1764 as presented, **Josh Rupert** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Pancake Breakfast Update

(Presented by Lily Chow)

Lily: Yes, we just have two quick updates this evening.
First update: The committee is having another meeting this Thursday, and that's when we will review the numbers and then take a vote on whether to do the price increase.
Second update: Thanks to our purchasing team, Joyce and Suzie, we were able to secure a sausage donation again, pretty much confirmed for this year. We told them we'll give them more details this week after this meeting, and to thank them for the second year of donations, Tina and I talked about having a banner for them.

Tax Filing Update

(Presented by Richard Aochi & Alicia de Fuentes)

Alicia: As you know, we have a new accounting firm, SD-Mayer, that will be handling our tax filing. Richard is coordinating the collection of all the necessary documents, and I want to thank the donations team for working closely with him to provide everything requested by the accounting firm. At this point, it looks like we are in good shape to complete the filing on time once again. Every finance year, they ask for a complete list of every donor who has contributed more than $5,000.

Saratoga High School Orchestra Grant Request

(Presented by Michael Boitz)

Michael: So this is really the result of great work going on at the middle school, thanks to Izzy and Jon. We have a really large freshman orchestra this year, and it looks like it's going to be similar next year.

When students come to Saratoga High, the biggest group comes from Redwood Middle School since it feeds directly into the high school. But this year we also have 11 students coming from Fisher Middle School or private schools. In addition, about three or four students attended Redwood but were not in the orchestra while they were there.

So altogether there are roughly 15–18 students who were not in Izzy and Jon's classes before coming here. That means we now have a wider range of experience than we used to.

There's actually a cost–benefit situation here, and overall it's very positive. Because of the way Izzy and Jon are starting students in sixth grade, it's much more accessible for students to join music. Before orchestra and band were not offered during the school day, students typically needed private lessons and would join a beginning orchestra or band that met respectively in the evening after school or in the early in the morning before school. If you didn't do that, it often felt like music wasn't really an option.

Jon has really helped change that. Now there's a much wider spectrum of students participating, which means more kids are involved in music.

The challenge is that students now arrive with very different levels of technical ability. What we're discovering is that we need to spend more time on technical training than in the past—things like shifting and making sure students are doing it correctly and consistently.

So the request is to increase the number of method books we have. The goal is for each class to have three different method books instead of just one or two, with class sets available. This allows us to combine different types of exercises—for example, technical exercises from *High Tech for Strings*, sight-reading chorales from *Fine Tuning*, and tone production or intonation work using a Bach chorale.

This is extremely valuable for freshmen, but also for older students. Reviewing fundamentals is important—it's like going back to the basics, and students improve from there.

The request is for roughly $2,800. It will probably be less, since I tend to over-budget. The goal is to retool our method book sets so each orchestra class has access to them. After that, we won't need to purchase them again. Students would only pay if they lose a book.

So that's our orchestra request in a nutshell.

Alicia: Mr. Boitz, what is your urgency to proceed? The question is whether we should do an e-vote, since we have not circulated the request for funding with a least 48hrs per our bylaws or if it's okay to make a motion next month at our SMB board meeting?

Michael:I think it's fine to wait until next month.Either way works. It's not time-sensitive.

Alicia: We will approve it at the next meeting.

SMB Insurance renewal update

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Alicia: I just want to note that the booster organization now has its insurance. That's a policy every school booster or club needs in order to operate safely.

Nomination Committee Update

(Presented by Josh Rupert)

Josh: For those of you who have responded to the emails that went out, I really appreciate it. We've received a lot of different responses, so I created some color coding.

If your name is highlighted in green, that means you're currently going forward unopposed. If the colors aren't showing clearly, the darker yellow means you're willing and able to do the job but would be happy to let someone else take it if they're interested. Both of our recording secretaries marked that option. Realistically, though, if you're in that category you may end up moving to green. Red indicates an executive position that currently doesn't have anyone filling it. Donations

is a good example—we'll definitely need at least one person there. And of course we traditionally have a parliamentarian. Further down, the lighter yellow or gold indicates liaison positions that are still TBD. We do have a few continuing, but not many people have responded about the fundraising committee yet, or they've said they won't be continuing.

So my main request is: please respond if you haven't already. Just let me know whether you will or won't continue. By next month, if positions aren't filled by people who are ready or willing, we'll need to start actively looking for volunteers.

I can't quite remember who was supposed to be on the nominating committee. I thought Mrudula might have been with me, but I know she's leaving. If anyone wants to be on the nominating committee, there actually isn't much to it—I'll be doing most of the work. If the bylaws don't require it, I can just be a committee of one. Our goal is to have everything identified by May. Since we plan to vote in May, we need to have all positions identified by April. So again, if you know someone who might be interested, please let me know. Some roles—like recording secretary and parliamentarian—really need to be filled.

Japan Cultural Exchange update

(Presented by Michael Boitz)

Michael: Mrs. Hasegawa sent out the flight assignments, so everyone can now check their group and see which flight they're on. Each traveler is listed under a group (A, B, C, etc.), with color-coded flight details at the top.

We still have a few loose ends—mainly people who haven't responded to JTB Air Travel about flight deviations. We're hoping to finalize that soon. Mrs. Hasegawa leaves for Japan tomorrow, and Mr. Shiuan leaves Thursday, so please review your information when you have time.

I also sent a long email over the weekend with an updated itinerary. The biggest change involves the school visits. Because our group is so large, we couldn't fit in some locations, so we'll now split orchestra, band, and choir across three different schools during the exchange visits. The updated itinerary lists those schools and more detailed information.

If you haven't looked at it yet, please take a moment to review it.

Josh: Are families going to be seated together on the flights?

Michael: Seat assignments can be tricky. If you share a last name, you'll likely be seated together. If not, once Mrs. Hasegawa returns, she and Mr. Yamada from JTB will work with the airline to accommodate requests. Since we're working directly with the airline rather than a travel company, it should be easier. As long as we submit requests by March 1, it should be manageable.

The kids are already asking about sitting with friends. We saw this last year on the Atlanta trip—students trying to swap seats on the plane, which can sometimes inconvenience other passengers. So we'll try to arrange seating ahead of time as much as possible.

Room sign-ups:
We were about to have students sign up for rooms, but we paused after realizing the hotels we're staying in have different room configurations. Some rooms fit three or four people, which is different from past trips where it was mostly two per room.

So we asked Bravo Music to confirm exactly how many triples and quads each hotel can provide. That information should simplify room assignments and reduce stress for students and organizers. We requested that information by the end of this week, so hopefully students can sign up when we return from break.

Overall, things are looking really good. The team is working on PR and advertising for the concerts, and everything seems to be coming together. Now we just have to get to April with no flight changes—and given how unpredictable things can be lately, we're keeping our fingers crossed.

SMB Complaint Update:

Alicia: In June, Jen Vandenberg, President of the Teachers Union, accused SMB of using its influence to get their way. That's not true, what I signaled to SUSD administration was that the proposed schedule for 2025-2026 academic year would cause a $60,000 hit to SMB's budget. The administration looked at it right away and said, 'Okay, let's see what we can do.' I said if nothing could be done, SMB could absorb the hit for this year, but that wouldn't be sustainable for the future. I also offered through multiple email outreaches, after the damning remarks made at the June 4th, 2025 SUSD board meeting, to sit at the table and discuss this openly—like adults—with all the key players because I know SMB has nothing to hide and I know full well how I have worked successfully with SUSD admin until the damning comments were made but only the music directors and I accepted to have this clarifying meeting. Others (Jen Vandenberg, Ken Geisick and not one trustee has returned the call to sit at the table for clarification) declined. That speaks volumes about who is willing to act in good faith.

From June to September of 2025, I repeatedly reached out, trying to resolve this. I explained the confusion, assured everyone it could be fixed, and emphasized that it shouldn't impact teachers or students negatively. Eventually, I had to speak directly to the trustees at a public board meeting. RMS Parents approached me after seeing me advocate with a serious concern They understood that an uncleared coach with an alleged criminal history was interacting with their children. I took time to confirm their reporting and once confirmed I promised I would advocate for them concealing their identity as they feared retaliation. This resulted in an immediate Third Party investigation given the clear and severe safety breach. So, there is now a retaliation campaign against me because I believe there are some SUSD people who feel uncomfortable that I have brought parent concerns to light revealing what appears to be a lack of standard protocol put in place (or by-passing of them) to keep our students safe. I have finally written a response to SUSD admin requesting an immediate ceasing of this low level retaliation through proxy quest. It is my expectation they will now cease.

Volunteer Clearance and Safety Concerns

Alicia: The issue began when parents reported concerns about an individual who allegedly had a violent criminal history and was volunteering at SMB events without proper clearance. I conducted research, filed a report, and alerted the district. Administration initially refused to conceal my identity, which placed me and my family at risk and dropped my filed complaint. I want to stress: the goal of my filing has always been student safety, not politics. SUSD volunteer clearance process clearly needs review if an uncleared individual is allowed to work with students. Now referring to the letter I shared with this SMB Board, the letter suggests I need to be cleared in order to fulfil my position as SMB President. Currently, board members in governance roles for any organization or clubs in SUSD or LGSUHSD are not required to be cleared if they do not work directly with students. But anyone interacting with students MUST be properly vetted. Parents deserve to trust that volunteers around their children are safe. That is non-negotiable. Since filing my report, I've experienced what I reasonably believe to be retaliatory actions. This retaliation has been carried out through proxies while the administration denies responsibility. These actions undermine trust and discourage future reporting of legitimate concerns. I contacted the Santa Clara Board of Education (SCBE) to see whether the dropping of my filed complaint by SUSD was valid under their refusal to conceal my identity and they (SCBE) clearly stated that that is incorrect, that identities must be concealed if requested and that I am to request my complaint to be reinstated. I want to make it clear: raising concerns about student safety is not misconduct and should not make anyone feel that way when bringing forward legitimate safety concerns. Any efforts to discredit or intimidate individuals who act in good faith are unacceptable."

If you require more information of how this all began please know I have been forthright with this organization from the very beginning and welcome all to look at meeting minutes starting from June 2025 onward. The only reason I have brought this recent retaliation forward to the SMB board is because SMB is mentioned and I do not want to keep this body who I fully respect in the dark. I have had countless attacks made to discredit me only because I will stand for our most vulnerable always but they have never brushed SMB into until now. This is why I am sharing the last attack with you now.

Given these unfounded damning attacks I propose updating the bylaws regarding voting when nominations are made on the floor on the day of the election. Currently, names presented at the time of the vote could greatly change the board make-up and this organization is way too important for outside petty politics to infiltrate it. I suggest mailing ballots for these cases. The parliamentarian will draft updates to the bylaws for the next meeting and share them with the group for review before implementation."

Josh:I will draft something and share it for discussion next month.

Alicia: I want to highlight the dedication of our music department and parent volunteers. Your efforts provide students with meaningful experiences and opportunities to succeed. I apologize if this has been a heavy discussion. But the parents and students deserve the full story. Accountability only works if we sit at the table and communicate openly. Children's safety is my top priority. I will not stop advocating for them, even in the face of personal risk.

SMB Webmaster Update:

(Presented by Oliver Su)

Oliver: So, as you all know, we've been searching for a webmaster since the fall. We found a great candidate—Vivian, she has a lot of leadership experience and qualifications, so she was clearly the most qualified person for the role.

Right now, she's in the onboarding phase. We're gradually getting her up to speed, having her take on more responsibilities, and mastering key systems for us. By mid-summer or August, she should be fully integrated and operating independently in the role.

Music Directors' Reports

Jason Shiuan

I want to discuss the next two meetings.

The **March meeting**—we're tentatively planning to meet in the choir room instead of our usual space. There's a lot going on in the building right now, and Winter Percussion needs more space and they have requested to use this room. I'm working on securing some gym space for them so we may not need to move, but I'll keep you updated.

The **April meeting** is currently scheduled for **Tuesday, April 14**, which is the week after spring break. However, that's also when the Winter Percussion group will be traveling. Several people involved, including Mr. Boitz, myself, and Ms. Hasegawa, will be affected.

The proposal is to move the April meeting **one week later**, to **April 21**.

Action Item: Recording secretary

- **March SMB meeting** tentatively in the choir room.
- **April SMB meeting** moved from April 14 to April 21.

I'll start with the **band side of things**, including percussion and jazz band, as well as updates from Mr. Clark.

- Since our last meeting, which was right before CASMEC (All State Conference), we had great representation there, and the students had a fantastic performance over the weekend. The guest conductors worked closely with the students, and it was a very positive experience.
- The week after, we hosted **Electives Night**, welcoming incoming ninth graders. I learned today from Mr. Louie that the projected school size for next year is three students larger than expected, which is a good sign. The event went well and we had a great turnout.
- **Winter Percussion and Winter Guard** are now in full season. Winter Percussion had a preview show at **James Logan High School**, where 13 programs performed. They also competed at **Fremont**, with the **world-class group taking first place** and the **A class**

placing fourth. This is significant because our A class consists mostly of ninth graders, competing against older, more experienced students. Their success reflects their hard work, staff support, and parental involvement.

- Winter Guard had two recent shows: an evaluation at James Logan and a competition at Independence High School, placing **fourth in their round and fifth overall**. Many of the performers are first-year members, so this is an impressive achievement.

- **County Honor Band auditions** for San Jose-area high schools resulted in **11 students making the band**. They will perform this Sunday at **Palo Alto High School at 3 PM** after three days of rehearsals.

- **Upcoming jazz band concert** tomorrow night in the music building, featuring Jazz Band 1, our advanced jazz band, and a small exchange with Los Gatos students.

- **Winter Guard competitions** are coming up:

    - Fremont High School on **February 28**

    - One of the largest West Coast Winter Guard competitions on **March 6**

- **Winter Percussion** will compete at **American High School** on **March 7**, in a world-class division.

- **Band with concert** scheduled for **Friday, March 6**.

Lots happening as we enter March, and it's exciting to see the students' growth and accomplishments.

Michael Boitz

Michael: It's kind of been an alumni theme the last couple of weeks. Two weeks ago, we had **Jay Wu Lee**, class of 2017, a professional trombone player with the **Toledo Symphony**. He visited two of our fourth-period orchestra classes. It was really fun because he sat right where the students sit and shared his experiences as a professional musician. He talked about audition processes and working with people much older than him. Interestingly, he was the youngest member when he first joined that orchestra. Jay started in **seventh grade at Redwood**, a little later than many students, and he worked with our trombone players just before their County Honor Band auditions.

I also want to thank Sandyha, a parent who helped connect us with another alum, **class of 1995**, a music director, **Ankush Bahl**, of the **Omaha Symphony**. This is someone who has conducted the **New York Philharmonic** and orchestras worldwide. Miss Durbin asked if I had been his teacher—I was flattered, but no! Anyway, he came to speak to two of our classes. His insights were authentic and invaluable, emphasizing relationships and the professional world, no matter the field.

This is part of a series of alumni guests we've been hosting. Previously, we had **Dr. Lauren Casey**, another alum, and in a few weeks, we'll have another guest. Additionally, a new clinician, a friend of mine recently accepted to **San Francisco Ballet**, joined us as a horn coach and spoke to students about pursuing excellence in music.

It's refreshing for students to hear from outside professionals because, while they hear from their main teachers all the time, it's impactful when someone else gives advice—they pay attention differently.

We had our first full **tour orchestra rehearsal**, combining freshmen orchestra, Philharmonic, and symphony orchestra. It was a huge group. Mr. Shiuan often tells me, 'It's really big—we might be too big,' and I'm the optimist, he's the realist. On stage at McAfee, it was massive—the trumpets were against the back wall, no risers set up. Despite that, the kids are learning how to perform in a large ensemble. First rehearsal reactions were mixed: students wondered how they'd manage, but by the end, they began to understand their part and the importance of group practice versus learning independently.

Upcoming performances:

- **Symphony Orchestra Concert**: March 11

- **CMEA Performances**: Freshman orchestra will have a reduced set; Philharmonic and Symphony orchestras will perform their main sets younger ensembles perform before advanced groups to avoid excessively long concerts. This structure helps students see progress and prepares them for large ensemble performances.

I've said before, I always want questions. I feel like I never send an email without soliciting them, because questions guide us and keep us on track. It helps when people ask, because someone else might have the same question. I don't understand leadership that relies on deflection.

This past Saturday was a perfect example of what this organization is about. The campus is always busy—my own two five-year-olds are at Chinese school on campus, and there are other activities: Winter Percussion, Winter Guard, etc. The parking lot is full; percussion rehearses outside to not disturb the classes. I joked that it's a perfect recruiting mechanism—little kids come running to watch. You see how hard parents work to support their kids. It's really wonderful and a positive escape from the rest of the world.

We are lucky to have this community and parents willing to jump in, lead, and serve on the board. The notion of bringing a group to WGI in Dayton, Ohio—or even to Japan for authentic learning experiences—doesn't happen everywhere. It happens here because of the super-supportive parent community. It's humbling and energizing as teachers to plan for the next batch of kids.I feel terrible about what's happening elsewhere—it's unnecessary. People need to sit down and have a dialogue. I hope there will be support and people present with her at that meeting.

Alicia: Leadership matters; who sits at the table matters. The love I have for this organization comes from seeing parents give their time and best while watching their kids feel that belief excel with dedicated energy. Walking through this building, I feel that energy and the high level of

education offered here —it's the right place to be. That's why I care deeply about this coming election and who continues in these roles. It really does matter."

Shelley Durbin

For choir, six students participated in **All-State**, held downtown Sacramento, although the choirs were located far from the main conference. I watched their rehearsals and was very impressed.

Strong leadership in choir allows us to continue operations even when unforeseen challenges arise. For example, my mom had a health crisis during an ice storm in Dallas. Despite my absence, the students ran events smoothly and showed ownership and competency, which is fantastic.

This Thursday, February 12, we will deliver **Singing Valentines**, with a new structure: four groups performing different music, giving students more self-direction and choice in repertoire.

Additionally, we have **two upcoming events** requiring strategic planning:

1. **San Jose State Invitational**: Traditional choir music, students will observe and perform
2. **Pop Show**: Requires a completely different repertoire and preparation

We are juggling rehearsals, traditional music, pop music, and preparing **Japan tour music**, all while maintaining student engagement and skill development.

Isabel McPherson

Starting with the youngest, fifth graders are now making sounds on their second instruments, which wasn't the case last time. Most of them are beginning orchestra. We hit an important milestone: they have *Peace Dragon Hunter*, a classic we play every year, and they're moving their little lines over it. Jon can speak to that too—really exciting. They also started the scale quest a bit early this year, where they learn certain scales and move up on the wall finding little dragons—they're really into it. Overall, beginnings are moving pretty smoothly, despite being split with no common prep time. Somehow it's working out, which is great.

In intermediate, we're starting music. We'll probably play it for the pancake breakfast, including some shifting skills—a big skill we work on in middle school, as Mr. Boitz mentioned. For advanced and chamber, the ASTA performance is the week we return from break—Thursday for chamber, Saturday for advanced. They're in the final stages of refining their music, which is a big accomplishment because it's twice as many pieces as usual, worked on for almost twice as long. I'm looking forward to a really good performance, similar to our high school ASTA experience last March.

Alicia: Do you have enough volunteers?

Isabel: Yes, we're all set. There's a lot of moving parts—the seventh-grade field trip got scheduled the same day as ASTA, so all seventh graders now have a private field trip, driven by parents, from the Exploratorium to the Hilton in San Francisco and back to Redwood. Thankfully, generous

parents stepped up; otherwise, a large part of the group wouldn't have gone, which was a little scary.

I wasn't able to attend CASMEC—I've only gone once, for one day—but I want to change that. Everyone who participated in All-State said they had a good experience, which is amazing, because it's a tough year to get in.

Miscellaneously, Mr. Boitz talked to the eighth graders about the high school orchestra and will listen to some of our ASTA music on Thursday, which I'm looking forward to. I love when he says something I've already mentioned and the students think it's a great idea—it's that "parent analogy," hearing it from a different adult.

Auditions were due Sunday, so we're past that hurdle. Retention is looking very good, which is exciting. Despite all the challenges happening, I realized we have a lot of good things going on in music. I was interviewed by middle school media arts students about cello and bass for a mini documentary. Sixth-period student news also filmed a class spotlight on orchestra. I've received another interview request from students doing a story on ASTA. It's very fortunate to have such positive press at Redwood—the program is thriving.

I'm really excited. Last week in Select, since we had hour-long periods, we played through the full set for the first time. It was a little scary, but there was so much excitement—"oh my gosh, we actually did that!" Now we get to make it better and do it again. I gave a big challenge with the ASTA set. Once that's over, we'll move to music for Disney, which is more upbeat, pop-style stuff, not Mozart or more thoughtful pieces.

Jon Jow

For us as teachers, the focus is always on the kids. Thank you for advocating for them. A couple of personal anecdotes: during meetings for beginning orchestra, Isabel and I often check in on the way home. Even brief car calls help us coordinate and stay connected.

Jay Woo visited the high school recently. I share his story with students often—he almost dropped band in seventh grade but stuck with it, starting with just the first note of each measure. Now he's a professional trombone player. It's a great example to show students it's never too late to start or learn.

At lunchtime today, a beginning band student played 'Remember Me' from *Coco* and other kids around said, 'Play it for your Valentine.' It was really cute and shows how engaged the kids are.

Winter Guard season has started. They've performed at evaluation shows and are picking up momentum after a mid-season choreographer change. New silks and flags are arriving, so excitement is building. Winter Percussion is learning movement along with playing for the first time at this level, and they're doing really well. Beginning band students are enthusiastic, and intermediate band is moving into sheet music for upcoming performances. The advanced band is working on about 30 minutes of music for CMEA and Disney.

Jazz Band is restarting with Ray Wyant, grandson of Mrs. Wyant. He's just starting his music career and is helping us get Jazz Band up and running, while also contributing Winter Guard and Winter Percussion music. It's exciting to bring Wyant back into Saratoga music.

Fifth-grade auditions had some communication challenges. Parents sometimes didn't receive the information, so we're working to improve outreach. Students submit videos or email us for placement, and we'll refine the system moving forward.

Winter Camp practices are in the gym in the mornings and on the basketball court after school when the gym is reserved. Only school students participate. We're also coordinating with Ray to start the Jazz Band after break or later this year.

Closing

Alicia: Thank you to all our music directors, you are all awesome. Any final comments, questions from any one?

Meeting adjourned 8:42pm

Summary of Motions

Approval of January SMB Meeting Minutes	**Josh Rupert** moves, **Joyce Koh-Fernandez** seconds, motion carries
Approval of January 2026 Financials & Transactions **1729 through 1764**	**Mrudula Prashant** moves, **Josh Rupert** seconds, motion carries

Thank You,

Sri Balakrishnan / Tina Pao
Co-Recording Secretaries