



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

Regular Meeting in-person, Aug 22nd, 2023: 44 Minutes

Attendance: total number of attendees = 25

Executive Board

Name	Role
Alicia de Fuentes	President / Pancake Breakfast co-chair
Mrudula Prashant	Co-VP Donations / Pancake Breakfast co-chair
Tista Kapoor	Co-VP Donations
Nisha Hebbalae	Co-Recording Secretary
Bharti Ramaswamy	Co-Recording Secretary
Ramy Vasu	Parliamentarian / SUSD & RMS Program Donations Chair

Music Directors

Name	School
Isabel McPherson	RMS
Jon Jow	RMS
Jason Shiuan	SHS
Beth Nitzan	SHS
Michael Boitz	SHS
Sean Clark	SHS

Booster Members

Name	Role
Richard Aochi	Controller (Financial)
Thea Widmer	Parent Webmaster (Communications)
Oliver Su	Student Webmaster (Communications)
Dongni Chen	SHS Percussion liaison
Rashi Sanghi	Publicity (Communications)
Sameer Vaidya	SHS Band/Percussion liaison
Suzie Kim	RMS Music Programs/RMS Orchestra Liaison
Anu Kankanwadi	SHS Color Guard/Winter Guard liaison
Josh Rupert	RMS Choir liaison
Vrinda Gopal	SHS Percussion liaison
Chitra Nandula	SHS Band liaison
Lily Chow	Cookie Dough co-chair
Arnita Proffitt	Color Guard/ Winter Guard liaison

Alicia calls the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. The meeting starts with introductions.

Introductions

Alicia: I am the current SMB president. I have a 9th grader and 12th grader in the music program. I am happy to be a part of the team and honored for the trust.

Nisha: I have a junior in the orchestra program. My first year at SMB. Very excited to be a part of the team.

Bharti: I have an 8th grader in RMS band, and a kindergartner at Argonaut.

Thea: I have a 10th grader and a 7th grader in music. I am the SMB webmaster, working with Oliver on website.

Vrinda: I have a 10th grader in band and winter percussion, I am the percussion liaison.

Mrudula: I am the Co-VP donations; I have a 9th grader in band.

Josh: I am the RMS choir liaison.

Anu: I have a daughter in color guard and choir, I am also a color guard co-liaison.

Suzie: I am the mom of triplets in 7th grade.

Beth: I am the Choir director at SHS. I also teach philharmonic strings and AP music theory at SHS.

Isabel: I am the string orchestra director at RMS. I also teach 5th grade instrumental music and perform assorted tasks at the elementary and middle schools.

Jon: I teach band and orchestra at RMS.

Tista: I am the Co-VP for donations.

Lily: I am the Cookie dough chair; my partner Meghana could not be here today. I have a 16-year-old in band.

Chitra: I have a 9th grader in band, I am also the band co-liaison with Sameer.

Arnita: I am the co liaison for color/winter guard with Anu, I have a senior in color guard.

Richard: I am the Financial Controller, I deal with holdings and 1099 filings, I work with our accounting firm and banks.

Sean Clark: I am the SHS percussion director, but now I also work with our Marching Band and Percussion ensembles.

Michael Boitz: This is my 26th year at SHS. I was planning to go on a leave of absence this year. That did not happen.

I am preparing our highest string orchestra ensemble, the Saratoga Strings to perform at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago in December. I'm teaching the freshman orchestra this year. And then on July 28th, somehow, I became one of the orchestra directors at Los Gatos High School. But the drive so far back and forth has been interesting but so my leave of absence became the opposite. Yeah, but it's OK.

Sameer: My son Rishi is a senior now, so I am very saddened at the thought that this might be my last year at school with music. He plays percussion and we have enjoyed the last three years at SHS. We enjoyed every moment of being part of percussion and part of music.

Jason: Hello everybody, my name is Jason Shiuan and one of the band directors here. This is my eighth year.

Review of June 2023 meeting minutes

Alicia: I sent an email with the minutes from the last meeting, agenda, list of open positions, by-laws, and documentation over the weekend. Here is the SMB meeting schedule for the years 2023-24.

2023

- August 22
- September 12
- October 3
- November 14

2024

- January 9
- February 6
- March 12
- April 2
- May 14
- June 4

The schedule is at [Meeting/Events Calendar - Saratoga Music Boosters](#). If we don't say otherwise, the location is M103.

The June meeting minutes were already circulated among the members. Ok to move the minutes? Does anyone have anything to say? Ok to approve?

Mrudula makes the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Josh. May the record show the motion passed unanimously.

Financial Operations (presented by Alicia on behalf of Tim)

Alicia: I'd like to show you the June transaction list. I am not going to talk about end of year financials from last year, because that is Tim's turf. He closed the books. However, we do need to approve the transaction list because that's all the business that went on during the summer, with checks being submitted to purchase the products for the year.

We need to approve checks 1266-1299. We paid for uniforms, dues, instruments, and other purchases over summer.

Vrinda makes the motion to approve the checks, seconded by Ramya. May the record show the motion passed unanimously.

Balance Sheet

[2022 year-end Balance Sheet](#)

Alicia: We will be looking at the balance sheet. Our fiscal year started on July 1st. These are our big numbers for the start of the year. Any questions about the balance? If not, we will move on.

Budget vs Actuals

[2022 year-end Budget vs Actuals](#)

Josh: Our deposit balance is over FDIC insurance limit, should we bring it below.

Alicia: Our treasurer always ensures we are below 250k, over summer we may go over. Thanks for catching that. Again, this is the start of the year. We have not received donations yet. So red is OK. Those numbers will improve when we see the reports next month. So, if anybody wants to comment or ask a question, please do. If not, we will move on to the cash flow.

Cash Flow

[2022 year-end Cash Flow](#)

Alicia: Fresh new year. This is what it looks like at the beginning. Budget has been allocated for all the music programs. Nothing has come in yet. Some small amounts are trickling in, but nothing substantial. Any questions, comments? Nope. OK.

Transactions Lists

Alicia: I will ask again that we need approval of the July transactions. We are trying to approve today's meeting transactions 1300 to 1310.

Ramya makes motion to approve, seconded by Lily. Motion is passed unanimously.

Audit

Alicia: Dave had recommended an audit before he left. Orgs do not do audits for a budget for under 2 million. We do not have to do it since an audit can cost approx. \$10K. But it keeps our house in order and helps with IRS. We should agree as a body to proceed.

Rashi: When was the last audit done?

Alicia: Last year. The audit found a few issues that we fixed.

Ramya: Will we use the same org as last year?

Alicia: Richard, what do you think?

Richard: The experience was good with the company we used. Let us identify a treasurer so they can take this up.

Alicia: We can defer this decision to the next meeting, let the treasurer pursue this.

Alicia: Richard needs a list of donors who donated more than \$5k to report to the IRS.

Tista: We have the spreadsheet with the data ready and will send it to you.

Cookie Dough Presented by Lily

Lily: I do have a question to start with. Has it been finalized that the vacation for Thanksgiving will be the entire week. Or is it being discussed?

Michael: It is the entire week for elementary and middle schools, but not for SHS.

Lily: We are proposing to move the distribution up by a week because of this. We traditionally distribute the Friday before Thanksgiving week. But this year, if some kids are going to take off earlier, we want to distribute earlier, give them the following week to go deliver all their products.

We have been working with Harmony for many, many years. The experience we had last year was not that great because they were extremely short-staffed. And this year we are going to try a new vendor. And it's because they offer a lot of new products. Based on feedback from parents, we see that they are tired of the same cookie dough. I have multiple requests for savory and vegan items. The new vendor is called EB Fundraiser. They have soup mixes and vegan items. They are called protein puffs and we have had some high school kids try it. They really like it - it is healthy with simple ingredients. So, we are going to put some of those now on the list and we are going to try it, see how it goes.

Alicia: Prices?

Lily: It is about the same. With Harmony we got 79 free items last year that we sold for profit. We got more free boxes by combining all orders, will do the same this year. We got Choco chip cookies as the free item, everyone loved it. I just want to get the date approved by everybody.

Michael: Did you talk to Henry?

Lily: yes

Alicia: Do you need anything from us?

Lily: No, just need date approved. Will move to Thursday 11/9. 5 weeks of sales. Will close sales on October 21 (Saturday)

Rashi: We always extend the deadline to order.

Lily: We will do it again since it boosts sales. Ending on Saturdays helps people place extra orders.

Alicia: Saying that this is the last day forces people to get the orders in.

Lily: We need a final count before submitting the order. We submit the order on Oct 23, after we close on Oct 21, let us see how the sales go.

Cookie dough fundraiser kicks off on Monday September 18. Order sheets are on the website, will be updated by Oliver.

Jason: Can you please let us know when Nov 9 is official, so we add it to our calendar. We need to work out the rehearsal rooms for distribution.

Open Positions Presented by Alicia

Alicia: Still looking for an SMB treasurer. If there is an extended family member who is experienced in accounting such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle etc., please bring them in. We need someone with accounting knowledge, who can ramp up quickly.

Mrudula: Still talking to Revati, she is almost convinced. Will let you know.

Alicia: Mr. Jow sent someone who wants to help with band in RMS. Can she shadow Tista? Is she interested in color guard, there is an opening. How do you want to answer the lady? Let us take this offline.

By-Laws Amendment

Alicia: Why do I want to amend the by-laws? Because something came up over the summer. When we were in the transition phase, our treasurer Tim and our president Dave Holt were out, and we did not have someone to sign the checks. And we needed them to make sure the marching band was up and running when the school year began. I allowed the checks to go out with just one signature. Now the by-laws make it clear that two signatures are required.

I recommend that the by-laws reflect the summertime. What happens when we have only one signee for the period, and we need to make payments by check? I recommend that we do an e-vote no matter where we are in the world, and we sign yay or nay on the check approval. And depending on the results, the check can go out with one signature only in those conditions. When we are in transition, or our signers are not all available for an urgent matter.

Ramya: What would be the size of the quorum?

Alicia: At a minimum, all the members of the exec board must be on the e-vote.

Josh: And what if one of the members of the executive board is on a cruise in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean and can't be reached?

Alicia: In that case it is 50% of the of the board members.

Alicia: From banking perspective we are fine, but we overstepped our own laws. Do we agree to make this amendment? Ramya, will you bring it to motion at the next meeting?

Ramya: Yes

Michael: you had to do it to get us the instruments we need, so we are with you on this.

Informance

Michael: Last year had an Informance night for all the music programs in the first semester for the first time. We have done this for our band program for years. Now we added orchestra and choir. We are a small town; this helps all the programs to get to know each other better. We rely on contributions to run the program. Also allows us to recruit liaisons, volunteers, and chaperones. We kick off Informance for orchestra and choir family members at McAfee. Saratoga Strings will play our Saratoga Alma Mater, Saratoga High - All Hail, with our Choir and an All-Strings piece we will be using later this year. We invite the SMB president to speak on behalf of SMB. There is a reception at the sports complex (cookies, etc.), where parents can sign up for volunteering. The Band Informance is next on the Benny Pierce field. Choir and orchestra parents are optional to stay for this.

Alicia: We should invite 8th grader parents to the Informance.

Directors' Reports

Jason Shiuan

Marching band has been off and running for a few weeks now, and it has been exciting few weeks. It is our largest freshman class that we have had in a long time. We are over 200 students in Marching Band and Color Guard which is the largest it's been. So that is exciting. We spent last week in band camp really trying to build the fundamentals, and then rehearsing. Today we had an afternoon rehearsal. Mr. Clark was out there helping. And then we are gearing up for the SHS football game on Friday. We are not going to perform there. We are just going to play in the stands. Of course, all parents get to see what their child has been doing. And then we are off and running. Next Friday we will perform at the home football game during the half time.

Also, our wind ensemble was accepted into California All State Music Educators Conference ([CASMEC](#)). So, we are going to get started on that and we are excited for that.

Department Informance night for all music ensembles is this coming Saturday, August 26th. We will communicate useful information to students and parents.

Beth Nitzan

We did not have choir camp yet. We have had 2 ½ days so far. We are “voicing” students, to determine if folks need to switch parts. Had some great surprises today. The choir ensemble is the same size as last year. But half the students are freshmen, which is an exciting growth opportunity. We are looking forward to Informance night to perform with the orchestra.

We will have the annual beginning of the school year Choir Retreat at Saratoga Springs. Our choir will be singing the National Anthem at the Homecoming football game. We also have a new accompanist on board this year (Emily Hsu, SHS class of 2001!) and will have our vocal coaches coming in to start working with students soon.

Rashi: We don't have a choir parent liaison yet.

Beth: We are emailing parents to find out. Please advertise among parents so we find one soon.

Sean Clark

This is the largest fall percussion group we have ever had. I think we're close to 40 for the ensemble. I do not think we can get bigger from this without being absurd. Battery is bigger than we've been in 10 years, I would say. The concert percussion program is strong too. I think we're going to try to take a stab at recording for [PASIC 2023 | November 8-11](#), which is an International Convention for the concert percussion side. And so, we have a couple of pieces we want to do there. Then we're going for a whole production program for the winter percussion to go to World Championships in its highest class for Scholastic at Dayton, Ohio. It is a big deal, and our kids are super passionate and ready for the year.

Michael Boitz

SHS music dept is growing to the point it is alarming (in a great way!). We now have 44 cellists in the Orchestra Program and nearly 170 string players altogether. Luckily, we are in a good financial position. Our community has been great with contributions. We must rent or buy 5 cellos to cover everyone in the program, SMB will be requested to grant these. Out of almost 50 Freshman Orchestra members, we have 6 Bass players which is a record.

Isabel: 18 Bass players at RMS. Tried to stop 6th graders 😊

Alicia: This is all the good work put in by the RMS directors. Ms. McPherson gives her lunchtime to the kids.

Michael: we have nearly 50 students in Freshman Orchestra and just under 170 students in the SHS orchestra program.

String orchestra news: Saratoga Strings has been invited to perform at the [Midwest Clinic](#) in December. We plan to also invite the class of 2024 seniors, as well as many of the Class of 2023 alums are planning to attend. The Midwest Clinic is an international conference that has been going on for nearly 80 years with 18-20k international attendees annually. All 50 US states and over 40 countries are represented at the conference. With 150 colleges and universities represented, past students have been recruited by colleges from the performance at the event. We are waiting for the final itinerary. One of the musical pieces that we will perform is a composition called "Songs from my Ohma", which is based on Korean folk music, composed by [Dr Soo Han](#), Director of Orchestral Studies at the Reva and Sid Dewberry Family School of Music at George Mason University. He has started the [Project Imagine](#) with Scott Lang (Project Imagine | Music & Arts (musicarts.com)) to bring music education to underserved communities, with composers of historically marginalized populations. Another piece was written by famed commercial and film composer [Jay Kennedy](#), who composed the piece "Be Ever The Hope" for his now wife, [Dr. Mallory Thompson](#), and will transcribe it for string orchestra and percussion. We also have a composition for String Orchestra and Jazz Combo by an alum and internationally renowned Trumpeter and Band Leader, [Tony Glausi](#). As the only original American Art Form, the piece is being written specifically for SHS in the hopes it will be published and become a great repertoire resource for string players to learn more about the art of jazz improvisation. Charles Yun (Violin, SHS 2019) will join the Tony Glausi Quartet flying into Chicago from New York as a Jazz Soloist. Another famous alum, [Thomas Lim](#) will solo with us on a famous "showstopper" originally written for Violin that he has transcribed for Cello and String Orchestra. Multiple current students will also be featured throughout the program.

Josh: Will anyone work with Redwood orchestra ensembles?

Michael: Dr Soo Han will work with RMS orchestra. Also, Ms. Isabel McPherson will conduct a piece on the program for Saratoga Strings at the Midwest clinic.

Isabel McPherson

Start of another year, things are at least staying the same if not growing. Having some schedule conflicts for students that we are still working on resolving. Hopefully, that will get fixed very soon because I wanted more students than last year and now I have about ten fewer. The 8th grade class is very small, under 40 students. Things are looking good for the future; the 6th and 7th graders are 60 or 70 kids.

I am talking to the 5th graders about the music exploratory option. There are 85 kids already signed up to learn instruments in 5th grade, and they only just got the information in class. They have another week to let us know their preference, and I hope that we can accommodate everyone.

At Redwood, we just started playing in all the classes. This year we have Mr. Jow helping with beginning and intermediate orchestra, since each class has about 50 students. And if you've been in my classroom, you know that it's not built to hold that many students. And advanced and chamber ensembles started to get into more complex stuff. Soon I need to get all state audition music to them. Hopefully, they can go to Allstate and then maybe they can watch the high school perform and see that connection.

Jon

- We've hit the year running! We now have band, orchestra, AND choir in school at Redwood spread across 13 different classes/sections. We currently have over 400 students enrolled in in-school music classes at Redwood. (Some doubled, but the majority in just one class.)
- We're hoping to bring back the Marching Band at the holiday parade in December, and - fingers crossed - color guard as well. We have a potential lead for an instructor and hope to have more concrete information for you next month.
- We're also starting our push for program contributions so giving students some incentive to get those donations early.

Jon: I have sent out a challenge that is making rounds in the WhatsApp groups: If we can get to 80% of the expected band donation goal, I will color my hair blue 😊.

<Everyone cheered for Jon>

Alicia: What I hear is that more kids are signing up, which is great.

Josh: Any feedback from Mr. Ramirez for choir?

Jon: Not yet. We will have more info next time.

Josh: Was Mr. Ramirez invited?

Alicia: Will invite him next meeting.

Ramya: Are you getting reimbursed for the little stuffed animals you hand out Mr. Jow? We love them and the kids love them, but we want to make sure you get reimbursed for them.

Jon: Last year I got carried away and did it all myself. I am being reimbursed by RMS PTA.

Ramya: It falls under the MTSS tier, and I can help you with submitting for reimbursement. I want to make sure you are getting reimbursed.

Apparel Update Presented by Sameer

Alicia: Honored to have Sameer talk about the apparel initiative.

Sameer: I am involved in this parent-led initiative outside of SMB. Couple years back we wanted to get apparel for all band parents. Our president at that time, Dave insisted that SMB should not be involved. It was not worth making it a fundraiser. All marching band parents were wearing marching band shirts and I wanted one as a percussion parent. So, I took the lead. I found a vendor who could help us. The best part is that parents can order directly from the vendor and SMB is not involved. The first year, I took the low friction path, and carried over last year's design. Had a few hiccups, such as no one bought a "guard parent" shirt, people did not like what it implied- 😊. I started doing variations such as grandparents, etc. But this meant we did not get a bulk order discount. This year, we made it common across all music programs, and for other family members and supported besides

parents: Saratoga music, everyone can agree to this one. We want 4 kinds of apparel. The front still says marching band and color guard. We need to create one for orchestra, choir parents as well. We can have 1 color 1 uniform for all parents.

Thea: What about RMS parents? We should do something for RMS too.

Sameer: Let's get the SHS one first.

Alicia: Can we make the front more generic for all programs.

Sameer: Agree that it should be for all programs.

Jason: The jackets say SHS music dept.

Rashi: In the front can you say Falcons?

Thea: Can we list all the programs in the back?

Michael: Not feasible to list everything, what If a program becomes obsolete. Red is a good color. Thanks Sameer.

Meeting adjourned at 8.45 pm.

Summary of Motions

Approval of June Minutes

Mrudula Prashant moves, Josh Rupert seconds: motion carries.

Approval of Financials

Vrinda Gopal moves, Ramya Vasu seconds: motion carries.

Approval of Transactions

Ramya Vasu moves, Lily Chow seconds: motion carries.

Bharti Ramaswamy/ Nisha Hebbalae

Co-Recording Secretaries