

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 Feb 11, 2025

Attendance: total number of attendees = 20

Attendees

Executive Board

Name	Role
Alicia de Fuentes	President
Mrudula Prashant	Co-VP Donations
Bharti Ramaswamy	Co-Recording Secretary
Nisha Hebbalae	Co-Recording Secretary and Pancake Breakfast Chair
Sneha Melkote	Treasurer/ Pancake Breakfast Treasurer
Josh Rupert	Parliamentarian

Music Directors

Name	School
Beth Nitzan	SHS
Jason Shiuan	SHS
Jon Jow	RMS
Isabel McPherson	RMS
Jemal Ramirez	RMS

Booster Members

Name	Role
Richard Aochi	Controller
Joyce Koh-Fernandez	Publicity
Beryl Liu	Publicity / Pancake Breakfast Purchasing
Thea Widmer	Parent Webmaster
Dongni Chen	SHS Band / Pancake Breakfast Silent Auction
Vrinda Gopal	SHS Percussion Liaison
Vidya Vineet	Member
Tina Pao	Pancake Breakfast Purchasing
Ramya Vasu	Member

Alicia calls the meeting to order at 7:03pm

January Minutes Approval

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Alicia: Minutes were circulated over the weekend. Any questions or comments, corrections required? May I request a motion to approve the January meeting minutes?

Nisha makes the motion to approve the January minutes, seconded by **Josh**. May the record show that the motion passed unanimously.

Financials

Cash Flow

[Cashflow 2024-2025 - January 2025.pdf](#)

Sneha: Business as usual, a couple of updates from the last meeting to RMS and SHS percussion budget are included here. Want to have conversations about the wish lists. Looking at the program wish list.

Alicia: Great news, SUSD agreed to pay for the speakers, which means SMB does not have to fund them. The RMS wish list needs to be updated to reflect this.

Sneha: I will take it off the wish list then.

Alicia: To the orchestra instrument purchase wish list we need to add \$250 for shipping costs to send in the violas. Where are we on that?

Isabel: I am almost done packing the instruments. I need to coordinate with the RMS office to schedule a pickup.

Alicia: Once it is done, please let us know so we update the wish list to include the shipping cost.

Sneha: We can add it once we get confirmation. Our total expense for all wish lists is \$75k at present, not including these updates.

Alicia: Any questions?

Josh: First question is related to the Disney trip. We have a \$10k surplus between revenue and expenses. Do we have plans for that?

Alicia: Automatically goes into the general fund.

Josh: \$117k of unallocated funds, what is that for?

Sneha: We started the year with that amount. As we approve wish lists, the amount from them gets deducted from this balance. At the moment the total for wish lists is about \$75k. So the balance in surplus is what is left from the \$117k.

Josh: Got it, thank you.

Jon: We still have some unclaimed expenses from the Disney trip, such as the nurses. We typically pay them after the trip. That will be paid from the Disney trip surplus funds.

Budget vs. Actuals

[BudgetvsActualsBudget_FY25_PL-FY25PL \(6\).pdf](#)

Sneha: We added RMS and Percussion budgets here. The entry coded as 4221 is for RMS Marching Band. We don't have an RMS Marching Band this year. Some of the PayPal donation entries were incorrectly encoded as this. We corrected them to indicate that the donation is for sectionals instead.

Alicia: So, we have corrected all that was incorrect?

Sneha: Yes

Alicia: Any questions?

Balance Sheet

[Balance Sheet.pdf](#)

Sneha: Other than the one bounced check sent out to music.com inc. which was returned, and we re-issued the check, our statements are a little off. Hoping it will settle by the end of February.

Richard: Did you get credit from the bank for the bounced check? I saw the double charge in the statement, but not the credit.

Sneha: I am going to follow up on that. We did not get charged twice, but the statement is showing that. I'll follow up.

Josh: Did we get penalized for the bounced check?

Sneha: We didn't. We can make 4 wire transfers per month for free and then we start getting charged a fee. There was a \$30 fee that was not reversed.

Alicia: It is the same system every time we do a wire transfer. Why the difference?

Sneha: Usually when there is a fee, I request the bank to reverse it and it goes through. This time it did not. They informed me that because it is the 5th transaction of the month the system would not allow them to reverse the fees.

Alicia: That doesn't make sense, we should follow up.

Sneha: I will follow up with the bank on this.

Parent: Can we have two-factor authorization?

Alicia: Not with transfers.

Sneha: The solution for music.inc was that they gave us a check and we deposited it.

Mrudula: Can we use Zelle?

Alicia: We don't use Zelle nor we will ever use Zelle..

Alicia: Alright. Any questions wrt the balance sheet?

Transactions

[TransactionListbyDate.pdf](#)

Alicia: Any questions?

Josh: Check # 1365 - \$1000 uber ride and dinner. What's the split for Uber vs. dinner? Do we pay for all dinners on these trips?

Jason: Depends on the trip. This trip we were catering some meals, some meals we went out.

Josh: Is the money going to be reimbursed through the parents' payments?

Jason: That was for the SHS Percussion Midwest Clinic trip in December, and yes the payment will be from the contributions. For catered meals, the chaperones put their cards down, which we got reimbursed later. Uber picked up the food, so we submitted both together. It was part of the planned meals that were catered.

Josh: 1383 - 2k dollars to Custom Ink. What is that?

Parent: That is for Disney t-shirts

Josh: Do we do this every year?

Jon: Yes, it is part of the trip budget

Josh: Got it, thank you.

Richard; I want to make sure no voided checks since there were deletions.

The board verified that there were no voided checks or skipped transactions.

Alicia: Any other questions? May I request a motion to approve the January financials and transactions **1362 - 1411**?

Mrudula makes the motion to approve the January financials and transactions **1362 - 1411**, **Thea** seconds the motion. May the record show the motion passed unanimously.

Hall of Fame

Alicia: Date for the gala is confirmed, 4th October 2025. Celebration of people who are the pride and joy of the Saratoga community who have excelled in their fields- academics, sports, performing arts, arts, activism - so many categories. We used to have this before. Mr. Louie would like to revive it. 5 boosters and clubs have come forward in support. We are working together to make it happen. We have all agreed that the website will be done by SMB. Deliberating if they want to take charge of sales of tickets. I owe you an update on that. Any questions?

Pancake Breakfast

Nisha: We are going as planned. Meeting this Thursday. Mr Shiuan, were you able to check if you are allowed to book the facilities for the event?

Jason: Sorry, I have no update yet on that. It is on my to-do list and I will take care of that.

Nisha: Would the directors be able to send an email out requesting contributions for the silent auction?

Jason: Yes we can. Can you please share the draft from, say the previous years?

Nisha: I will send it out to you.

Alicia: Can we take some of the time during spring concerts to promote the event within our community?

Jason: Absolutely, yes.

Alicia: FYI, SMB renewed the insurance we must have for this as it is a school requirement. In the process of getting the new contract soon.

Nominating Committee

Josh: Vrinda and I have sent emails to everyone who currently holds a position in the group. Still waiting for some responses, gentle reminder to please respond. My hope is that by May we know who the new members are going to be.

The wonderful news is that our current president has agreed to nominate herself for another term.

Alicia: I am more than happy and honored for your trust. But I also want to say - if you feel that you want to take the role, do so. I think that SMB is better with new eyes, vision. Don't feel like you must not take the role, that is not true at all. I am not holding on to this position, the organization is good with new blood. And I mean it.

Josh: Maybe they are willing to step into the role, but I am 100% confident that we have the right person already.

Thea has agreed to nominate herself for parent webmaster. We have 2 publicity folks, Joyce for RMS Beryl for SHS. If someone changes their mind and chooses not to, that's fine too. Accounts payable - Nina. Joshua - an SHS alum - continues his role as IT administrator which is very helpful. Thank you to these folks for their willingness.

Lastly, there may be some confusion as to the executive committee vs. other members. Exec board - 5 positions identified: President, VP of donations, Recording Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian. Any nonprofit is required to have an executive board to ensure things are run honestly and legally. Other positions are voting members such as publicity, Webmaster, etc. Other positions such as parent liaisons are critical for facilitating information. Liaisons are more critical to find to run the program smoothly. If you know someone who would fit the position, please email me or Vrinda.

Alicia: One vote per school for the music directors, but all other board members have one vote each.

Josh: Treasurer also has agreed to nominate herself for next year.

Alicia: If you are not returning, and if you know of someone, please help by trying to get them to take up the role.

Parent: For RMS with the liaisons, if we could add a Disney trip liaison specifically, that will help. This year none of the other liaisons are traveling so we are having some trouble.

Alicia: Joyce, would you be okay with sending messages even though you may not be traveling?

Joyce: Yes, I can.

Alicia: Would you also be the liaison for the RMS color guard?

Joyce: Yeah

Parent: If they are not traveling, they are not getting the information. Who is feeding them the information?

Alicia: You are right. We need a publicity person to channel the communication.

Parent: For this year I think we are okay.

Joyce: Let's look at the list of people and pick someone we trust

Isabel: We have a lot to communicate to the 5th grade families, parents have come in the past to take pictures for the yearbook. I am only in each school one day, so it is tough to coordinate.

Joyce: Nice to have a channel for elementary, we don't have to use it but good to have it.

Isabel: I've had some opportunity to communicate with parents in the past, but having a liaison will help.

Alicia: I would not say we need one for each school, but maybe a good idea to have one for 5th grade music in general.

Josh: Since our leadership positions will eventually be open, it will be good to identify someone that can shadow upfront.

Parent: Isn't that predetermination?

Josh: We do not identify them for the role, just as a nominee.

Directors' Reports

Jason Shiuan

[California All-State](#) conference happened in January in Sacramento, it was a great experience for our band, choir and orchestra students who auditioned and were selected for the event. Some students had solos in the ensembles, representing Saratoga well in Sacramento. Great show.

Josh: How many selected?

Jason: I can look it up.

Alicia: Can I get a list of names of students and instruments they played? We will highlight them with the students' initials and the instrument they play on our website.

Jason: 18 were selected in high school. This is a lower number. Many seniors chose not to audition this year. Timelines have shifted. Auditions were due when college early action applications were due. This gave more opportunities for our younger students to audition.

SHS Winter Guard and Winter Percussion had their first official competition past weekend. Both got first place, both did a fantastic job.

We also had electives night at SHS. Exciting to present to 8th graders what music programs are available to them. Student volunteers represented us well.

Tomorrow night is the jazz concert with the Los Gatos Jazz Band. After the mid winter break, on the 27 there is an exchange concert with Homestead High and Lynbrook HS bands. On March 7th is the SHS Orchestra spring concert. This is also a preview and send-off concert for the [ASTA](#) Atlanta trip coming up in March. SHS Band has another exchange with Las Vegas Academy, which is a magnet school on tour of California. Their director is a classmate of mine and Ms McPherson, when he put together the California tour he reached out to me. They are one of the top bands in the country. They have been to the Midwest Clinic just like our SHS Saratoga Strings Orchestra and SHS Percussion ensembles.

Finally, CMEA which is still moving forward right now. March 13 and 14. Added so late, harder for families to get to. During class, it is easier for students.

Beth Nitzan

Brief update from choir land. It was great to see them perform at the All-state this year. Hosted a choir fun night for Saratoga students, we invited our Redwood friends. We are also doing Valentine grams this week - we will go around and drop into classrooms. We are not allowed to give candy in class, but kids can pick it up later after school. We are making it work. Bunch of kids never picked up their candy in December, so more for us. 😊

A few things are coming up in March. 6 students wanted to do CMEA solo but missed the deadline. But they got in and will be doing solos and duets.

Jemal Ramirez

Jemal: Last time I mentioned the RMS choir was going to go to Music in the Park at the end of April. I put down a deposit, and the district and RMS admin put a note in parent square about donations. Money is trickling in.

Alicia: So, you are doing it outside of SMB?

Jemal: Yes, that is what the school suggested. but it is a little tricky, money is going to the office, so it is hard for me to track. About half of our students have turned in donations so far. Some are still planning; a fair number of hands went up when I asked. Deadline is mid-March. We still have about a month before the actual amount is due. We have parents volunteering to drive - 6 parents with minivans needed. 3 parents have already volunteered, so may not need a bus. We will go early, and give free time in the park.

Alicia: Are they excited?

Jemal: Haven't talked about it a lot, just talking about the music. TBH did not make a big deal out of it, just put it out there. Kids don't mind working. We have had a pretty good year, Ms. Nitzan came over one day to work with us. They were very excited about it, tried to replicate some of it. But we forgot the specific order.

Beth: I have a video, I'll send it.

Jemal: That would be amazing. Working on a piece called Peace Cannon. Today we were working on the very end - the last part is a 4-part harmony. They are doing it. Had to break into small groups and isolate them a little bit. Working on that.

For percussion we got a new student as of Monday. They are new to the school and percussion. Now there are up to 19 in the class. We are working on practice pads. Reading music as a mallet player is difficult. Unlike piano where you can touch and feel, it is difficult for mallet players to read and play. A lot of players have been starting from scratch. So, it has been challenging. I've been asking them to practice more on practice pads.

The Beginning Band is moving along. We have some kids who are pretty good, some who are struggling. Quite typical, but all in all moving along. Mr. Jow has been talking to them about what to expect as they go into intermediate band and advanced band.

Alicia: That's beautiful, there's a lot going on there. I learned that SEF is bussing children. If you do not have enough people to drive kids, you can talk to SEF. They contract out buses. Yellow buses for elementary, not sure about middle school.

Jemal: That's good to know. Bus for a day costs about 2200 to 2500. Smaller bus costs 1700 or so. Pretty good price for all day.

Alicia: I would recommend connecting with SEF. The President's contact information is on the website.

Jemal: Thank you.

Alicia: Good to see the school taking charge. Where are you going?

Jemal: To Great America. [Music in the Parks](#) is the name of the company organizing this.

Isabel McPherson

Hi, good to see everyone again.

Let's start with 5th grade music. 5th graders started their second instrument. I already see the difference between the first and second semesters, there is a huge improvement. I must be getting better at teaching 😊 or maybe these are mature kids.

After we come back from break, I will talk about registering for music in middle school.

For RMS music, auditions are due on Sunday. We are talking to beginning classes about reasons to stick with music. I asked 8th graders to write a note card to their 6th grade self. A lot of 6th graders who are struggling will see that someone they idolize also had their struggles when they started out. This will

motivate them to stay on. Many of our 8th graders wrote the notes, which was quite selfless of them. Retention based on auditions is looking good for intermediate music level and higher. Advanced and chamber ensembles are going to Disney this weekend. First time we will have the band and orchestra performing together. There are not many symphonic orchestra music pieces written for middle school students. We had an idea and ran with it.

Advanced and chamber orchestra: We had 13 total students from RMS represented at the California All-State event in Sacramento. We already sent the names to our parent webmaster. We are in a 3 year streak of 1 student represented on each instrument in the RMS orchestra. We have a well-balanced program.

Alicia: It is a sense of pride that so many middle schoolers made it to all-state.

Isabel: Yes, it is a sense of accomplishment that they made it.

Jon Jow

- Color Guard has attended their first two CCGC winter guard events ever! We're very proud of our students and their hard work in getting this new tradition up and running. We have plenty more choreography and routine to learn, and plenty more to improve on!
- Winter Percussion has finally gotten started! Due to the delay in the program starting up, our percussion staff has decided to forgo formal competitions for this season. However, we look forward to having small, in-town performances from our Winter Percussion students near the end of the school year. This will also reduce our donation ask as well.
- We depart for Disneyland on Friday! We're excited to perform as a full orchestra for the first time, and grateful to our chaperones for spending Valentine's Day with us and allowing this trip to be possible.
- Students have submitted auditions for advanced groups. Upon our return from Disney, we'll be reviewing recordings and begin the process of forming our ensembles for next school year.

Jon: When there is a donation or a company match for a donation, if there is nothing specified in the notes, then it goes into a common pool and does not come to the music program. So, if you are donating for the Disney Trip, make sure that you specify this in your notes.

Joyce: My husband donated, but didn't specify anything. So, we are guilty of that.

Jon: We are going to live-stream the Disney performance this time.

Josh: How common is it for a middle school to have a full symphony orchestra?

Isabel: Very uncommon. I would like to continue doing this, but it will have to be after school.

Miscellaneous

Parent: Will the Jazz band be performing at the pancake breakfast?

Jon: I think so, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 8.34pm

Summary of Motions

Approval of January SMB Meeting Minutes	Nisha moves, Josh seconds, motion carries
Approval of January financials and transactions 1362 - 1411	Mrudula moves, Thea seconds, motion carries

Bharti Ramaswamy/ Nisha Hebbalae
Co-Recording Secretaries