

SMB:
**SARATOGA MUSIC
BOOSTERS**

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

Table of Contents

Attendees 2

Executive Board..... 2

Music Directors..... 2

Booster Members..... 2

February Minutes Approval 2

SHS Hall of Fame Committee Update..... 3

Pancake Breakfast 3

Financials 4

Cash Flow 4

Balance Sheet 5

Budgets vs. Actuals 5

Transactions 5

Update Regarding Charter of Accounts..... 5

Nominating Committee 6

Directors’ Reports..... 6

Isabel McPherson 6

Jon Jow..... 7

Jemal Ramirez 7

Michael Boitz..... 8

Beth Nitzan..... 8

Sean Clark..... 9

Miscellaneous 9

Summary of Motions 10

Regular Meeting in-person on March 11, 2025

Attendance: total number of attendees = 21

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
Jon Jow	RMS
Isabel McPherson	RMS
Michael Boitz	SHS
Sean Clark	SHS

Booster Members

Name	Role
Richard Aochi	Controller
Joyce Koh-Fernandez	Publicity
Beryl Liu	Publicity / Pancake Breakfast Publicity
Thea Widmer	Parent Webmaster
Oliver Su	Student Webmaster
Dongni Chen	SHS Band / Pancake Breakfast Silent Auction
Tina Pao	Pancake Breakfast Purchasing
Ramya Vasu	Member
Emily Yi	Member
Jolene Huie	Member

Alicia calls the meeting to order at 7:07pm

February Minutes Approval

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Alicia: Welcome everybody. I hope you had a restful staff development day on Monday. I believe we have the quorum to vote on the February meeting minutes that were circulated Sunday evening. Any comments? If not, may I request a motion to approve the February meeting minutes?

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

SHS Hall of Fame Committee Update

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

[Copy of SHS HOF Nominations DRAFT Flyer.pdf](#)

[Saratoga High School Hall of Fame Bylaws \(updated 3.14.25\).pdf](#)

The by-laws were circulated with the board on Sunday – I want everyone to know that we are following the regulations that were put together by Mr. Louie and the committee. Please share your comments or observations with me after reviewing the by-laws, I will bring them to the hall of fame committee in the next meeting.

3 main groups to nominate on - the Alum category, the distinguished employee category, the distinguished service member category.

Distinguished service person - an alum or employee or community member. Someone who has been helping our school or community on an on-going basis. I am sure we can all think of an individual who has been outside of our school realm but still helping our school.

Any employee being nominated to the hall of fame must be outside of the school realm as well. That's basically what it is. It is not a popularity contest. Each entry will be evaluated, each candidate will be ranked until the committee is able to agree upon the finalists.

Parent: The bylaws did not come in the email; we only received the flyer.

Alicia: Oh, I did not send the bylaws? My bad, I will check and send it out. You folks can email me any comments or observations.

(Alicia shared the bylaws in a separate email on March 24)

Josh: Do we make our nominations as individuals or as SMB? What if board members are nominated?

Alicia: You make nominations as individuals; board members are not eligible.

Josh: Does this person have to be a SHS graduate?

Alicia: No, they do not. If you feel that someone is deserving of the award, do suggest. The nominating form has been circulated in Mr. Louie's Friday email.

Parent: Links in the Hall of Fame email.

Alicia: Beryl, when we promote the Hall of Fame, we should promote this as well.

Beryl: I am doing that next Monday.

Alicia: Any questions?

Pancake Breakfast

(Presented by Nisha Hebbalae)

We reserved the SHS facilities for both Saturday and Sunday in Facilitron. Mr. Shiuan helped us with it. Mrudula took care of party rentals, thank you. Our purchasing lead has done a great job. She got a local business to donate sausages, all 240 lbs. of them - saved us almost \$1000.

Josh: Which business?

Tina: New York Style Sausage Company <https://newyorkstylesausage.com/>.

Josh: That's awesome, congratulations

Nisha: Also looking to save some money on orange juice.

Tina: If you know someone who is willing to donate orange juice, that would be great.

Alicia: Tina did a wonderful job by presenting slides explaining what SMB is and what Pancake Breakfast does! They said no non-profit organization has ever taken the time to draw up such a thoughtful presentation and it encouraged all the decision takers to agree to donate to the cause. Thank you!

Josh: Maybe we should ask Costco if they will donate orange juice.

Nisha: Finalized items for silent auction, in the process of getting them. Thanks to the directors for sending out emails to the community.

Michael: We plan to send out a second reminder.

Mrudula: There were some responses to the email from RMS parents, we are getting wine and some kitchen equipment.

Nisha: We will be meeting with the SHS facilities manager this Friday. Ticketing site is almost ready, and we will be able to send it out this week.

Alicia: All we need is a link for “sponsor a teacher” and we are good.

Thea: Yes, we will add that to the site.

Alicia: I saw the update on the website, it looked good.

Thea: We need a poster update - we had a second one with the schedule, need that.

Alicia: That will come later.

Nisha: Spoke to Toga Vision, which is an SHS ASB club. They will do the video recording; they are trained by the local public station in Saratoga: KSAR15, they also get their equipment from the station. They bring their own volunteers. It won't cost us anything. The only thing they need is the location and schedule of events and performances, so they can plan their equipment setup and volunteers for the event. Whenever the schedule is ready, I will get it to them. I will also be doing a walkthrough of the performance locations with them ahead of the event.

Don't think we will be live streaming - we had some concerns about live streaming with the kids.

We also need volunteers with a strong voice for raffle announcements, perhaps a tenor in SHS choir?

Beth: I know just the person for it.

Nisha: Just curious - given that this will happen on May the 4th, do we have any Star Wars themed music?

Jon: All of RMS are playing Star Wars themed music 😊

Financials

(Presented by Sneha Melkote)

Cash Flow

[Cashflow 2024-2025 - February 2025 \(1\).pdf](#)

Parent: Redwood band line item is not there, where did that go?

Alicia: It goes under Sectionals - we don't have a marching band this year.

Sneha: Program wish list is at 75k. It is on row 117, unallocated minus \$41k.

Alicia: The amount shown is the difference between the unallocated funds and the expenditure from the wish list covered by SMB grants, all good.

Any comments with the cash flow?

Balance Sheet

[BalanceSheet \(27\).pdf](#)

Alicia: Any questions with the balance sheet?

Sneha: Do we get any stock donations through Schwab?

Alicia: Sometimes we do.

Sneha: Don't they inform you before they send stock? I haven't seen this before.

Alicia: Best to check. Any comments?

Budgets vs. Actuals

[BudgetvsActualsBudget FY25 PL-FY25PL \(9\).pdf](#)

Sneha: Had to make a couple of changes. Some of the budget (Midwest) was decided and approved over the summer, and I was not aware of it since my tenure started July 1st, 2024 - so, once I understood this fact I added a line item for the Midwest trip. You will see a budgeted item for 141k, I added that. Color guard for high school is now under the HS Band. I separated and fixed that.

Michael: Was the number incorrect?

Sneha: It was not incorrect, it just had to be put under HS Band.

Alicia: Any comments?

Sneha: One bounced check for music.com - that got fixed. Money is there in the bank; QuickBooks had a minor issue. 41k - brought it out

Josh: July to June fiscal year - are we expecting to spend the remaining 35k as projected?

Michael: Biggest part of that is the clinician and instructor fees. District usually bills us; all those people are paid through the district. SMB does not have to be the entity to deal with insurance, so that's why it is done that way. We keep a close eye on that, that's how we plan for improvements ahead.

Transactions

[TransactionListbyDate \(2\).pdf](#)

Alicia: Let's go through the transactions one by one and make sure there are no gaps.

For this month we need to review and approve Check # 1412 - 1425 - does anybody have any questions?

May I request a motion to approve the February financials and transactions 1412-1425?

Thea makes a motion to approve the February financials and transactions 1412-1425, Mrudula seconds. May the record show that the motion passed unanimously.

Update Regarding Charter of Accounts

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Since we are not a little PTA budgeting group, I decided to attend the workshop offered by our accountant, regarding the Overhaul of our Charter of Accounts. What became clear to me from the Workshop was that

this organization is sufficiently big and over 50 years old that overhauling our charter of accounts would require an upkeep of 22 QuickBooks subscriptions as we would need to provide reporting for past and present financials upon the request of any audit. From a strictly financial side, we must be able to track financials from years past and understand how past accounts correlate to the current year's financial information. Discussed with Richard and Sneha before coming to this decision and they agreed that the scope of the work is not negligent, and expert care must be involved.

Instead of doing something that may be complicated, given that the finance world is not my expertise, let's err on the side of caution and fix anything that needs to be fixed within our current charter of accounts. Meaning, we will continue to operate the way we have been operating and, not venture into unfamiliar territory.

Nominating Committee

(Presented by Josh Rupert)

We are really looking for nominees to fill the Co-Recording secretary positions for 2025-26, all other positions are filled. This is also an executive board position.

We are still looking for some liaisons, but we are moving forward well. Hopefully we have better luck this year.

Tina: The recording secretary position - is that a position that a student can fill? Can we send an update with the description of the position?

Josh: No, because it is an executive position.

Parent: Perhaps we can post it on our social media channels?

Josh: Vrinda is working on a blast that can be sent out.

Alicia: I would like to have the names in place before it comes to the floor. I agree the best way is to use public channels to reach out to the community for nominations. Josh, thank you so much.

Directors' Reports

Isabel McPherson

Mr. Jow can share more details about the Disney trip. The Symphony orchestra made it a little challenging, but it was fun. Nothing catastrophic happened, left with the same number of kids that we went with.

We also processed all auditions for next year over the February break.

This year we were able to email the results to the kids - everybody knows where they stand. There is no waiting in anxiety like last time.

Alicia: Were kids excited, did we get enough kids to audition?

Isabel: Yes, we had many students audition for orchestra.

We are also on our final round of voting for our hoodie.

Regarding the smaller size cellos they are getting sent back, they are too small for our use and SUSD has agreed to cover the mailing cost of \$250. These cellos will be replaced by bigger ones that we can use. It has been 6 months since we rented a 1/8 bass and we are at the point where we must decide whether we will either continue renting or go ahead and purchase it. If we decide to purchase it then we are looking at about \$1060 dollars or something, after applying for the rental credit.

Alicia: Can we wait until next month, what is the timeline?

Isabel: I will check with them and get back.

Alicia: We can vote on it and circulate the final amount next month.

Jon Jow

- Our 2025 Southern California music trip was a success! We had a fantastic full orchestra performance with all our band and orchestra students, and some fun workshops. We're very appreciative and grateful to our volunteers and chaperones for all their help and support during our preparation period and travel time, and proud of our students for such a smooth journey this year.
- March is Music in Our Schools month! I'm working on having some presentations to some of our classes for this month with an overall theme of music and long-term music/entertainment professionals. Last week, my classmate Maya Tuttle had a video call presentation with our Intermediate and Advanced Bands. School board president Melissa Stanis was a music composition major and worked in the industry before moving to Saratoga. She will be speaking to some of our classes later this month. I'm also working with (rescheduling) MANA Saxophone Quartet for a visit later this month.
- Winter guard will be attending CCGC finals at Independence High School on Saturday, March 29. You'll also be able to see them perform at Pancake Breakfast and possibly SHS winter guard/percussion senior night.
- Next up is preparing for our May performances. Stay tuned!

Alicia: Did they take away the "you cannot do both band and orchestra" rule, or is that still in place?

Isabel: They changed the rules, you have a first choice and second choice.

Parent: Did you have any 5th graders audition?

Isabel: Yes, we had a couple of them.

Parent: Any update on choir?

Jon: Yes, Mr. Ramirez sent me a written update.

Jemal Ramirez

(Read by Jon Jow)

In beginning percussion, we are working on "stickings" that help with sight-reading music for the mallet percussionist. We are reading simple melodies in 4/4, 3/4 and 2/4. We are playing scales and simple melodies in the keys of Bb and Eb mostly, but we have also worked in the key of F and Ab. We are actively talking about key signatures and time signatures and unpacking the skills and information they have been studying all year. This class does "playing" tests in class in front of their peers almost every other week for a grade.

In choir, we are working on warm-ups out of the Building Beautiful Voices book. We have been starting class with a 3-minute starter. The starters generally have our students working on inner hearing a melody or warm-up exercise. We have also been having students volunteer to lead our class in a warm-up exercise that they have learned. We have roughly 20 vocal exercises that students have been able to sing individually after the starter - 3-minute inner hearing segment of class. This is basically the equivalent of a performance test. Though we aren't grading these contributions.

We have also been actively working on annotating rhythms - writing in counts. Especially since we are learning a piece in 6/8 with some advanced rhythms. Today we had a few students lead us with this segment of our class. We have 2 other pieces that are closer to performance ready - though still need some polishing. The field-trip - choir competition looks like it will happen. We are short \$900 of the \$4800 as of Monday morning. Almost all students have turned in a field-trip form, but I have no idea who has donated money.

If SMB would like to donate to help secure our chances of attending this choir competition, we would gladly accept any contributions.

In (3rd period) beginning band, we have 4 pieces that we are working on for future performances. Our beginning band students are juggling lots of information at this point in the school year and it can be overwhelming for them. The pieces we are playing reinforce that our students are on the right track. The students are making steady progress. Looking forward to our upcoming concerts to help motivate our students to continue to practice as we approach the last couple of months of the school year.

Alicia: This is a district event, so unfortunately SMB cannot sponsor it.

Michael Boitz

All of the SHS Orchestra will be off to the ASTA [National Orchestra Festival](#) next week, it is the largest competition of its kind in the country – we are attending for the very first time. Just never applied to go before. But since the Japan trip this year was canceled, we wanted to avail an opportunity for our students to showcase their talent. We applied and were accepted. It is a motivational tool. They allow us to bring 2 ensembles. We decided to take all our students.

Luckily, we have the strongest team of Music Educator / Directors than ever, and along with Mrs. Hasegawa keeping us all together (both professionally and personally, I might add) so I believe the impact of my absence has been minimized as much as possible. On the Orchestra side, Ms. Joni Swenson, retired director of Orchestra's at Santa Monica HS and someone I've idolized for years as a model Music Educator, has been and remains fully invested through the Spring and my clearance to get back on the podium. Ms. Swenson is traveling with us to the National Orchestra Festival in Atlanta and will be joining Mr. Shiuan and Ms. Nitzan leading our Orchestra's from the podium.

Top two ensembles Saratoga Strings and String Orchestra will be performing as one group. The Freshman and Philharmonic Orchestras will be performing as the second ensemble. Making sure everyone gets an opportunity; we are very excited.

Also excited about the food – our flights land quite late, so everything will be closed. We spoke to a local pizzeria, and we will be getting pizza delivered to the hotel.

This time around, I might have bought the tickets too soon. Next time I'll wait until the prices are just right.

Since this is an industry conference, our students will be exposed to the larger groups and representatives from the industry. We are using cellos from various companies, using only our own bows there. Same with the basses. Really stoked about it. Got an entire restaurant booked for all 156 of us to fit. We will go there after the performance for a celebratory dinner - all southern food. There is also going to be a live band at the restaurant, kids can try out if they want.

Beth Nitzan

Last Friday the Chamber Choir attended a clinic at SJSU. Best festival performance. Publicity team did a great job sharing the videos recorded by our parents and attendees. It was super fun, got to watch other schools performing and interact with them. Just be in our community and connect with other ensembles.

6 students are performing a solo at the CMEA festival next weekend. Some of them are performing duets as well.

We have auditions coming up, if you know any student who is considering joining SHS Choir, send them my way.

The choir is also going to Japan, so spread the news! Shallow learning curve, easy to come up to speed.

Beryl: Can incoming students also go to Japan?

Michael: Students who are currently in the 8th grade can, they would have finished 9th grade by 2026 summer. We want every student to do one big trip before they graduate.

Beth: Last piece of Choir news - festival in Southern California 2 weeks after the orchestra trip. We will also visit some campuses in SoCal, meet the faculty etc.

Sean Clark

This is the first year the RMS is having Winter Percussion, we have 10-15 students signed up, which is exciting. Our SHS Winter Percussion ensemble already has a custom show - performing at Logan HS on March 29. The writer who composed the SHS Marching Band drill also wrote this show. If you haven't seen it, I will send you a nice video. Pretty unique show.

We will be competing at the WGI NorCal- used to happen way back and now it is once again coming back and getting stronger where they will bring back regionals. First time in 5 or 10 years. It was really fun. Prelims are on Saturday, finals on Sunday. Same judges seeing your show twice, you get to hear their feedback.

The SHS Jazz Band had its first spring concert in February. Working towards the next concert on March 27 at the Foothill Club. The Jazz Band is performing their own program at Foothill Club, not attached to the school.

Early to talk about the Marching Band for fall 2025, but we have been piecing together the items. We have a 5-minute sketch show coming tomorrow, which is great. Trailer for the first year, for 8th graders to get excited and get started right off the bat. We will create a trailer for the show. We will bring clinicians from outside. The kickoff will be in May.

Already started designing the Winter Percussion show for next year.

Miscellaneous

Michael: If you pay close attention to the productions of Sean and Chavi, every single kid gets a moment to shine. That is just wow, it is so difficult to come up with something like that. 2-day event this weekend for Winter Percussion. Finals are on Sunday - parking at James Logan is going to be interesting. Construction going on, we encourage everyone to come there early.

I also urge you to attend the SHS Choir concert on Tuesday. Beth Nitzan also has a varied group of kids with different abilities. But she does not let it stop her. She works with a small group of students in the sonic landscape. She gets them to balance well without having to overstrain their voices to be heard.

Friday night we had the SHS Orchestra NOF showcase and send-off concert. Has been the hardest year for me personally - I have not been on the podium conducting, not cleared by the surgeon to do so. But the coolest thing in the world is watching the kids perform. Working with the directors to bring the kids there and watching the kids in real time absorbing everything like sponges is amazing.

The other part is - Joni Swenson - orchestra director, she got recruited to teach at the Santa Monica high school. During COVID, she retired and moved here. She has been working with the kids, and it has been magical how the kids are getting better at handling their instruments.

The concert on Friday night was great. Got an email from a parent with a beautiful note about their experience of the concert.

SWE had their first performance of spring with Lynbrook High and Homestead High last week. Exchange concert this week with Las Vegas Academy, which is a magnet school for music from the Las Vegas area. It is very cool that our kids get to watch their performance and interact with them. I get joy watching our other directors conduct and teach them.

CMEA festival will happen this year at SHS albeit at a smaller scale on Thursday and Friday. Do come watch the performances and don't miss the sight reading. SHS ensembles will be performing on Thursday AM.

Friday is almost the same - symphonic wind ensemble on stage, followed by sight reading in M101.

Japan trip is on for next year - at a stage where we are talking to different municipalities in Japan. We will kick it off in May. We are in the process of nailing down the schedule.

Josh: Is RMS at the CMEA this year?

Isabel: No because of conflict with Disney and the district did not want us to miss school. We are hoping we can participate next year. Also excited that the 2026 National Orchestra Festival is right here in San Francisco so it will be great for us to participate in it. We will record the music before spring break.

Michael: Excited that Isabel is doing this. Orchestra has not been a part of school day for all that long at RMS. But we have already grown into a huge program, 40 cellists and 25 bass players. We exist in SHS only because of RMS and elementary music teachers and because of SMB. Very grateful for SMB. We can do great things because of SMB. Amazing president who made sure things were saved such as CMEA and international trips, among a lot of precious experiences.

Parent: Do any of the Cupertino middle schools have an orchestra program?

Michael: Lawson has a huge one, Kennedy has one.

Parent: Miller and Hyde do not have it, so I wonder how they are preparing their high schoolers since they have strong ensembles.

Michael: Instrument petting zoo, that is what we called it.

Parent: We had it 2 yrs back at SHS, but last year it was not allowed.

Isabel: We were told last year that kids will complain that they won't get an instrument they tried. We can ask the district. It will help drum up excitement, we cannot assign instruments at the event though.

Dongni: Regarding the Japan trip, what about students who have summer conflicts?

Michael: When we plan a trip, we advertise the date as far ahead as we can. We have communicated with the Blue Devils. Some summer programs we checked. Benefit of the Japan trip is that we are leaving almost immediately after graduation. We are not going to have time to prep but it will allow our students to come back and start their summer programs and internships, without missing anything. Also, since July is hot in Japan, June is a better option.

Dongni: Can graduating seniors also go?

Michael: Seniors are always welcome on tour; we always plan to include them.

Meeting adjourned at 9.09pm

Summary of Motions

Approval of February SMB Meeting Minutes	Josh moves, Thea seconds, motion carries
Approval of February financials and transactions 1412-1425	Thea moves, Mrudula seconds, motion carries

Bharti Ramaswamy/ Nisha Hebbalae
Co-Recording Secretaries