



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 June 4, 2025

Attendance: total number of attendees = 20

Attendees

Executive Board

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

Music Directors

Name	School
Jon Jow	RMS
Michael Boitz	SHS
Jason Shiuan	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
Joshua Zhang	IT/Google Administrator
Vrinda Gopal	SHS Band
Suzie Kim	RMS Orchestra
Dongni Chen	SHS Band / Pancake Breakfast Silent Auction
Eunjoo/Emily Yi	Member
Srividhya Balakrishnan	Member/ 2025-26 co-recording secretary

Alicia calls the meeting to order at **7:11pm**

May Minutes Approval

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

This is the last meeting of a very active and jam-packed academic year for SMB. There were lots of emotions, celebrations and we are so glad to come back to our normal operations. May I request our co-recording secretary Nisha to please share the update on the May e-vote?

Nisha: The SHS music directors requested an approval of the 2025-26 SHS Marching Band budget by e-vote to be able to create the donation request forms and share them with families during the kick-off event. The e-

vote to approve the 2025-26 SHS Marching Band budget was called on May 15. The 2025-26 SHS Marching Band budget was approved by the SMB board by a vote of 14-0 with 6 executive board members casting a YES vote, which is in accordance with the SMB [by-laws](#).

Josh: I did not receive the e-vote email.

Nisha: I apologize, that was an oversight on my part, since we maintain a spreadsheet of email id's and manually add them to the email thread. Going forward SMB plans to use domain emails and Google groups for all communication, so that should avoid this issue.

Alicia: The May minutes were circulated over the weekend. Any comments, questions? May we have a motion to approve the May 2025 SMB meeting minutes?

Vrinda makes a motion to approve the May 2025 SMB meeting minutes, **Joyce** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

May Financials

(Presented by Sneha Melkote)

Cash Flow

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

The Pancake Breakfast fundraising account is in the process of being settled. Couple more expenses to be resolved. Meanwhile, we have created an entry for the 2026 summer Japan trip. These are the two big updates this month. The program wish list reserves is an item that we can carry over another month and then we go to next year. We have about \$75K in reserve for wish list items. This is an FYI to the music directors.

Josh: Question on Pancake Breakfast income. How did the income of \$57K compare to last year?

Sneha: This year the Pancake Breakfast income was \$57169 this year, with expenses of \$9959 so the profit to SMB is \$47210. Last year our income was approximately \$48000, so we have an increase in revenue of about \$9000 over last year.

Josh: SMB scholarship for \$50K., is that annual?

Alicia: That is a typo, it is \$5000.

Michael: This is a donation made by a family annually.

Sneha: Let me make the correction to the SMB scholarship amount in the cash-flow and repost the document.

Alicia: Any questions? Comments?

Balance Sheet

[BalanceSheet \(32\).pdf](#)

Sending out checks regularly and maintaining a Bank of America account is minimal because we need to make a wire transfer for a Japan trip that is not this fiscal year. Some check recipients have not cashed their checks; I will be calling that out at this meeting. No other activity besides the trip.

Budget vs. Actuals for fiscal year

[BudgetvsActualsBudget_FY25_PL-FY25PL \(13\).pdf](#)

Almost the end of the year paying out for some programs. No big changes from last month.

Josh: What is the fiscal year for us?

Sneha: July to June end.

Josh: I noticed that almost every expense category has instructor fees, some of which are large, what is that for?

Jason: These are for coaches and clinicians we bring from outside to work with our students, not any of us who are staff members.

Sneha: A couple of checks, I need to resend to Mrs. Hasegawa, to send them out, since they have not been cashed. Mr. Jow, you have yet to cash the check for a new portable speaker, for \$249.96.

Jon: Will do.

Alicia: Once we finalize the financials for June, end of year reporting on the website we must be sure we are ready for the next year's CRF's, budgets and key placeholders, in this case Japan and we may REMOVE gala. We should, however, have the Hall of Fame Gala in our books as this will be a recurrent event if successful and it would be wise to have SMB a part of it. This is a conversation to be held post event with the experience in hand.

Transactions

[TransactionListbyDate \(5\).pdf](#)

Alicia: We need to review transactions 1517-1561 any questions about these?

Josh: 1526: Check for \$1000 for program expenses, what was that?

Jason: Sound designer for SHS Marching Band, Winter Percussion, creating sounds, electronic package for our performances.

Josh: 1529: \$3400 to Tori Farias?

Jason: That is our visual caption person, who helps with choreography.

Josh: 1535: McAfee fee. Do we need to pay this?

Jon: That is for the RMS concert. We need to pay for personnel, though we can use the facility for free.

Josh: 1561 \$11k to SUSD.

Josh: I am assuming that when we pay our clinicians through the district, they do background checks. I am assuming that this is for a semester. This is for a walk-on coach. SUSD pays for it, and we reimburse them.

Josh: How do we track it? Are we approving the request in anticipation and pre-pay or do we pay retroactively?

Alicia: Jon takes charge of the whole thing, so he is gatekeeper who ensures that the numbers add up.

Josh: Even at SHS are we approving expenses before they come?

Alicia: As long as we don't we go over the music program budgeted amount it is approved, and we utilize the amount. Now we need a motion to approve the financials and the transactions for this month with the caveat that the typo in SMB scholarship will be corrected in the cash flow document.

Vrinda makes a motion to approve the May 2025 financials and transactions (1517-1561), **Josh** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Approval of 2025-26 SHS budget (minus Marching Band)

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Jason: We have yet to finalize the SHS choir budget for next year with the new Choral Director, Ms. Shelly Durbin, who just joined us. We have a created placeholder for the choir budget, which is based on this current year's budget. We will amend it with the final numbers when we return to school in August and submit it to the SMB board for approval.

Alicia: When we finalize the SMB financials for June, we need to upload the end of year reporting to the SMB website. Sneha and I are ready with CRF's and budgets including the placeholders. We need data for the Japan trip and the SHS Hall of Fame (SHS HOF) gala.

Sneha: A small comment that we do not have the final budget numbers for the 2026 Japan trip. We need to finalize it.

Alicia: Yes, we will. Also confirming that you are already using the domain for treasurer.

Sneha: Yes.

Alicia: Other than the fact that some program budget numbers are a placeholder, are there any questions or comments? If not, could we move to approve the 2025-26 SHS music program budget minus the SHS marching band budget?

Nisha makes a motion to approve the 2025-26 SHS music program budget (minus SHS Marching Band), **Vrinda** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

RMS Budget

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

We have to vote on the RMS budget without the choir budget. M. Ramirez sent his preliminary budget. Ideally, I prefer to have everything approved together. Let's discuss the budget for the choir.

Jon: Preliminary budget comes from Mr. Ramirez. These are things like clinicians for 1-2 months, no request for an accompanist. Small potential expenses like props and sight singing program. Also requesting formal uniforms for students. We have past uniforms packed away. He is looking for what resembles ours. We have about 80 of them, so we can reuse them. We were interested in building a performance dress shoe library. Ms. McPherson and I have been talking, building a school collection. If parents can't buy them, we have shoes

Joyce: Can we ask parents to donate shoes their kids no longer need?

Jon: Yes, that is on our list too. We are requesting \$500 for creating the initial shoe bank. For formal choir uniforms, I estimated 25 students, \$25 per student in the budget going into reserve, so when we need to replace, we have money in the pot.

Alicia: Next meeting starting next year we will discuss and any changes we will go to these numbers. Any comments on the RMS budget proposal last month?

Jon: We still have concerns about splitting ensembles into multiple classes and we brought them to the RMS administration. After working on the resolution, we have 2 proposed schedules that allow for the current ensemble to rehearse together sometimes, depending on how many new students enroll in music at RMS over summer. We are putting that on hold until we see our numbers in August. That would affect how many periods the clinicians can come in. We will have a better idea in August based on how many class periods each ensemble has.

Discussion about the May SUSD board meeting

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Dongni, you went to the last SUSD meeting. Apparently when I advocated for common sense class ensembles at RMS, someone thought that SMB was not behaving right.

Dongni: I have the recording from the meeting, and they also have posted it on their official site. Aside from what was said by Mrs. Marimuthu and Ms. Jen Vandenberg, I don't have the details. Here is the crux of

what was discussed: an SUSD board member is using their strong ties to SMB to unfairly influence the board and SMB is attempting an undue influence on an SUSD school course organization. Math has more kids than other subjects at RMS and is part of the core curriculum, but SMB is trying to influence priority for music over core curriculum subjects.

Alicia: My comment is: SMB does not have the position to put any other teaching situation in jeopardy. Perhaps the issue is with how the school administration is handling schedules. SMB does not wish any teacher to feel attacked, minimized or disrespected. We must correct this perception.

Josh: SMB also represents the largest numbers of student electives at RMS. We should speak about what kids want to do. Can't force them into an elective they don't want, and students are choosing music.

Alicia: Our position is that the RMS administration should handle this. They cannot push us under the bus. We never discussed any of our concerns with other teachers during our conversations with the school admin (Superintendent and Asst. Superintendent). We only state our goals and desires as they best represent the desires of students. It's not our fault that the administration is having difficulty planning the schedule in a way that works best for the students.

Tista: Alicia you were talking to the RMS Principal about this topic.

Alicia: I could not speak to Principal Hamm, but I spoke to Moira. She advocated for our position once she understood the concern. She genuinely wishes to work with us. She proposes redoing the RMS Master Schedule so we can do ensembles without hindering other teachers. They can do a whole ensemble for all students, with some wiggle room. If the influx of new students into RMS music programs over this summer is > 15 that could throw off the proposed one ensemble music period schedule. The teacher's union class size contract states that 30 students per classroom is acceptable. We don't want to break contracts. We have a short turnaround but that does not mean the issue was not presented with ample time to find a solution. If the district finds the need to divide the ensembles, the SMB asks that the RMS music teachers collaborate with principal Hamm to ensure a balanced class. Moira says Mr. Hamm thinks that is a futile endeavor. I said to the school administration that music directors should be part of conversation when drawing up a roster, in the event there will be new enrollments over summer exceeding 15 students. SMB is not here to hurt other teachers.

Michael: At SHS we have a strong leader in Principal Louie, the Master Schedule has singleton classes, we are also flexible in handling conflict in students' schedules. That is on the administration and leadership to communicate clearly. Don't be flippant about it. Only music teachers have this problem where class needs to be balanced so work with them.

Jason: I was telling Jon Jow he is not asking for anything out of the ordinary, every other school does it this way. Administration wants to make it sound like it is a crazy idea, but it is not.

Alicia: Saying that SMB is against teachers is a flawed argument.

Michael: Pitting one against the other is what they are attempting to do, and it is bad for our students.

Josh: What was Principal Hamm's reason for not seeing you?

Alicia: His position is that ensembles were never together and can be separate. I said to Hamm, your reality does not coincide with my lived experience, and he said no to further discussions.

Dongni played the SUSD board meeting audio: [Saratoga Union School District.m4a](#)

Comment about SMB involvement at time 1:50 in the audio file.

Alicia: The speaker is misinformed. She did not like or was unaware of the solution, that I was assured by Moira, that the master schedule would keep the integrity of the ensembles without affecting other school

classrooms or breaking contract sizes with the teacher union. If there is an influx > 15, I said we can split the ensemble but keep it balanced. Music directors should be a part of conversation to maintain music balance. We know who was misinformed. I know what I advocated for. SMB does not crush teachers. We wish to solve the problem at hand, that is my intent. We need to ensure the quality of education is not crushed by poor master scheduling skills or by a poor understanding of real educational concerns.

Josh: Can we get the recording to listen to later?

Alicia: The co-recording secretaries will have it to share with the minutes.

Dongni: SUSD also has uploaded the video on their YouTube channel. Right before the recording I will be playing today, the RMS math teacher, Mrs. Marimuthu spoke. She spoke about her own issue in math class with the board member. Ms. Jen Vandenberg, who speaks in the recording, speaks about SMB and her views.

Josh: Will we have knowledge before school starts of how this plays out next year?

Alicia: I asked the same question. Moira said that the updated schedule that does not split ensembles is a go. She does not know the summer influx numbers yet. If we have more than 15 new students enrolling, we must see how it impacts the class. I said if that happens, please involve music directors in your discussions.

Josh: What percentage of the RMS student body is enrolled in music?

Jon: 210-220 each in band and in orchestra. 440 total or fewer. This does not include students enrolled in RMS Choir and Color Guard. Total RMS enrollment is 700 or less.

Josh: 6th grade participation?

Jon: About the same. Fluctuates between the programs.

Josh: Percentage is about the same.

Jon: Yes, but next year or the year after is a big drop off in enrollment at RMS.

Josh: We represent 60% of the student population at RMS so we advocate for them. It is important for families to put music as a priority.

Dongni: Jen Vandenberg states incorrectly that music is competing with math, which is a core subject and not with another elective.

Josh: It is not as if RMS parents are saying math is less prioritized.

Alicia: My point is they need to hire teachers to cover shortfall in math, that is the underlying problem.

Approval of RMS National Orchestra Festival registration grant

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Ms. McPherson informed us that RMS Orchestra students have been accepted to perform at the [National Orchestra Festival](#) being held in San Francisco next year.

Jon: This is the same festival that the SHS Orchestra went to Atlanta this academic year to participate in. I am very excited for the RMS Orchestra program. This also means that we need to put in a deposit for student registration at the festival very soon, which is \$1500 per participating group. We are asking \$3000

for registration to hold a spot at the festival, this is not the full program grant. We will also fundraise and replenish the deposit amount.

Alicia: May I request a motion to approve the 2026 RMS National Orchestra festival registration grant?

Josh makes a motion to approve the 2026 RMS National Orchestra festival registration grant, **Suzie** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Update on hosting CMEA at LGHS

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

LGSUHSD Superintendent Heath Rocha came to SMB and asked us to partner with LGSUHSD in hosting the CMEA moving forward. I informed him that we did not have enough information to move on this. He said: fair enough and he will do more research. He is going to hold a facilities workshop meeting. I am signing up to attend. I hope everyone fills in the facilities survey and is able to attend said meeting. I will attend and it is this Thursday from 6-8pm. The goal is to improve facilities. I invited Mrudula to join me.

Approval of update to SMB [by-laws](#)

(Presented by Josh Rupert)

[Bylaws Redline.docx](#)

We approved all of the executive board positions for next year. We added code of conduct. We inserted a second article. I did some cleaning up. There are some grammar and formatting changes. Nothing material. Sent out to everyone. We need approval from the board that we can accept the new bylaws. Any questions?

Nisha makes a motion to approve the update to SMB by-laws, **Vrinda** seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

SMB Domain update

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Everyone on this team, including the executive board members please put all your data on SMB's domain. Joshua will get your data up and who is allowed access to all who require so. Use new emails with the SMB domain. We are going to phase out other accounts. This way we can use protection offered by the domain. Anything to add to this Joshua?

Joshua: Let me know if you have requests. Email or text me. Send me the forms filled out. We get plenty of storage. We make good use of what we have.

Alicia: We need other admins on the account besides you.

Joshua: You are one of them, Google allows us at least 2 admins.

Joyce: Can the "Year in Review" which is a document be part of the SMB website?

Alicia: Great idea! Can the publicity team take that info and make it shine?

Oliver: I can do that. I will work with Beryl.

SHS Hall of Fame update

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Nominees have been identified. I cannot disclose who they are. I am especially happy with a couple of them.

Year-end checklist

(Presented by Alicia de Fuentes)

Recording secretaries both of you leave us this year. I would like to thank you and wish you the best.

Executive bodies thank you for your support through a difficult start of the year. It is great that we have come from zero chance of having a school funded international trip to a confirmed Japan Performance and Cultural Exchange Tour for the summer of 2026 (June).

Tista: Japan trip question: can we please have a dedicated email address for parents to ask questions regarding the trip and for one of us to answer them? They have been sending questions to the donations team, but it might be a good idea to separate this one out.

Alicia: Great idea, Joshua can we please create one?

Joshua: I can create one in SMB domain

Alicia: We can put the link to it on our WhatsApp groups and our website.

Dongni: For the trip donations, are we letting parents donate a minimum when they can get a company match?

Jason: I have not advocated for anything. We recommend families to at least donate half the amount and get it matched equally by their employer. If they can donate more, their donation and match can help another family with the tour expenses. It is not my place to ask parents to do anything in the matter of donations.

Alicia: Our message is that if you can donate more to help someone else and get a match from your employer, that helps the community.

Jason: We can frame it as: it is not as scary if you can do 60% or 70% and get a match on that.

Alicia: They will learn it and they will see how supportive we are. Fundraising in RMS is hard, so communicating this to the parents will help.

Josh: Have we thought about going to large corporations and have them sponsor us?

Nisha: I tried approaching my company, and they said you are not a low-income community, sorry.

Alicia: Richard is there any issue with soliciting sponsors. Is there a negative to it?

Richard: Not legal but perception. If there is a political lean with the organization we approach, then there is an issue. Our mission states that we are non-political.

Jason: Maybe we can be more specific, like sponsor t-shirts or instrument rentals.

Josh: That could be explored.

Jason: We can have them sponsor concert programs at the very least.

Alicia: I want to add that I am grateful to our alum member Joshua for help with the domain transfer.

Richard, thank you for doing taxes and addressing the obstacle regarding the tax filing this year.

Richard: The PayPal interest payment this year accidentally went to a former SMB board member, we caught it and got it resolved.

Alicia: Thank you for dealing with all the audits

Webmasters thank you for all you do.

The parent liaisons we cannot thank you enough for helping in running the music program events and getting our message out to the parent community.

Publicity what a fabulous year, promoting all our events and programs and showcasing our students to the wider community.

Everyone thanks you for all you do.

Introducing SHS Choir Director Ms. Shelley Durbin

(Presented by Jason Shiuan)

Ms. Shelley Durbin has accepted the position of SHS Choir director starting academic year 2025-26. She is a 35-year veteran of music. She comes from Texas A&M. Worked with top programs. She moved to California to follow her husband while he pursued a PhD. She previously held a job at Kennedy Middle School, and she turned the program, which previously had 22 members into a powerhouse of 300 choir members and music theater. They have performed at California state and national conferences and performed works of famous composers. She moved over to Amador Valley High School as the orchestra and choir director and led them to the state conference as well as the state festival.

When our previous choir director Ms. Nitzan announced that she was leaving, we knew the position required a person who could lead band, orchestra and choir, and we knew one person who could do this really well. We started recruiting her and we are grateful she is here.

Shelley: There are good reasons why I am here, the current music directors and I have a long and deep friendship, we have known each other a good while.

Alicia: We are lucky that you accepted the offer made by Mr. Boitz and Mr. Shiuan. Thank you.

Shelley: I am currently in the process of moving, I cannot wait to be done and get started.

Shelley: I am an extrovert by nature, and I am happy to be here. I love the collaboration between the various music programs and ensembles. I love answering questions. I came to the choir concert and what impressed me was the personality of the choir. I really enjoyed it.

Alicia: I can say that from behind the scenes, I know how excited our directors were to have you.

Directors' Reports

Michael Boitz

Our year-end concerts were wonderful. Very proud of the work the kids did. Band summer mailer was sent out to all families. We are sending out orchestra mailers tomorrow or Friday. Mr. Shiuan worked on updating the forms for a long time and now they are ready. We are working on next year's music in classes, also music for Japan and August placement audition pieces. Kids get music earlier this year than previous years, giving them extra time to practice and perfect their auditions. We are setting a record next year for orchestra enrollment. 70 kids in freshman orchestra, total headcount in strings 180. Great problem to have. Mr. Shiuan also sent an update on the 2026 Japan tour to all the families.

Josh: How many freshmen in all music at SHS?

Jason: 140 in all music ensembles in total. More than 50% in freshman class are enrolled in music.

Michael: Social emotional learning is what we try to achieve. Mr. Shiuan did an update of tour numbers. For the Japan tour, we have 142 band members, 114 string players, 22 choir members, 149 family members for the shadow tour, and 19 parents offered to chaperone. We got word today that Lynbrook would like to join us as part of the choir tour ensemble, if we have space like we did back in 2022 on the Europe trip. We want kids to have the most successful performance experience, so we want the ensemble to be rich and full.

Alicia: Who will make that determination regarding whether Lynbrook choir can join us?

Jason: We will get info to them now, but they will get back when we return back to school in August.

Joyce: Only Lynbrook choir invited to the tour?

Michael: Only choir. We need to fill the roster such that the sopranos, altos and tenors are balanced. They thrive when they are with other choirs.

Josh: Does the tour include freshmen musicians?

Michael: Yes.

Alicia: I took on Mr. Baitz's offer to sit in on his class. I got a preview of the music pieces. The kids are amazing, and when I saw how well they were sight reading the tour performance pieces and playing them, I was amazed.

Michael: We have great student leadership and kids who love to play and love to work with other kids. Today school is done and there is no one practicing in 101, which almost never happens. It sort of feels eerie.

Jon Jow

I would like to share an email I wrote at the end of the year to the RMS music students and parents, which reflects my feeling regarding how the SMB board and the music community members support each other:

Dear students and families,

Various times that we have taken our bands out for performances outside of our city boundaries, I have heard folks ask where we are from, usually assuming Redwood City to be our school's hometown as opposed to Saratoga. I have a confession: Besides the fact that there are a number of such trees around our campus, I have wondered on various occasions as to why our school was named "Redwood Middle School" as opposed to something more straightforward ("Saratoga Middle School," for example). I like to understand the world around me and the reason that things are the way that they are, so not having an understanding of this name or at least a meaningful connection has always baffled me.

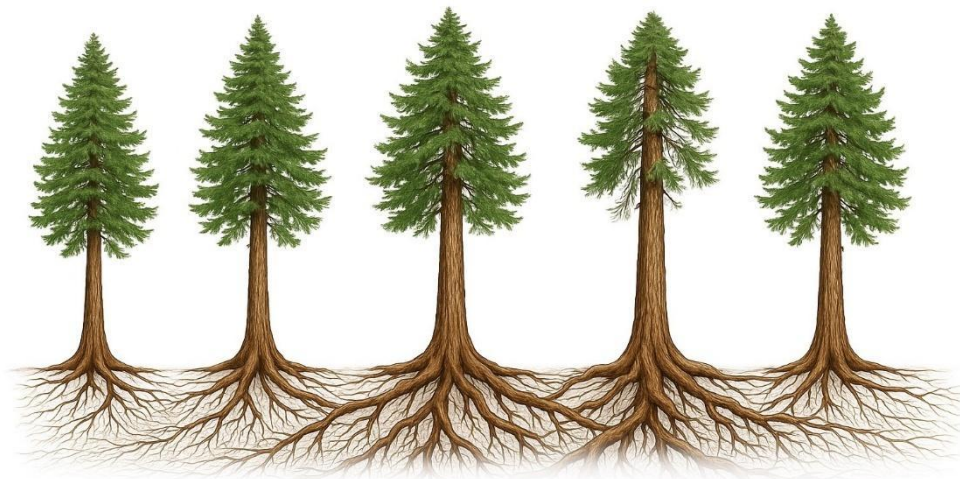
Even today, the origin of our school's name is still a mystery to me. However, the more I have thought about it over the past 20 years of teaching music in Saratoga, the more I make my own sense of the name, and the more meaning it holds to me. If you are not familiar with some of the most fascinating facts about coast redwood trees, I invite you to spark your own curiosity!

While most redwoods have an average lifespan of 500-700 years, the oldest known living coast redwood tree is at least 2,200 years old. This means that this redwood tree (and many others) have seen and outlasted an incredible span of history including (events long before) the Fall of the Roman Empire, The Crusades, The Renaissance, The Reformation, The Age of Exploration, The Scientific Revolution, The Enlightenment, The Industrial Revolution, World War I, World War II, The Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the current rise of Globalization. Redwoods withstand the test of time in part due to their fire-resistant bark, ability to sprout new trees from the base of mature ones, and the way in which they grow. Moreover, they are only natively found along the Pacific coast in California and southern Oregon.

I was listening to the soundtrack to "Redwood," a new and recently closed musical starring Idina Menzel (original actress of Elphaba in Wicked, voice of Elsa in Frozen, etc.). I found the following words/lyrics from one of its songs "[Roots](#)" to be a fantastic reminder of why redwoods are so special:

*The roots of this redwood tree are extremely shallow
But imagine, they're spreading out, they're going in every direction
And they keep on going for a hundred feet or so
And when they come to the roots of another tree, they intertwine with that, they lock together
And now, not one tree, but hundreds of trees, or thousands, are linked together
And under our feet lies a vast system of interconnected roots*

*And that is how the redwood's able to stand tall
It's being held up, and supported, by others
...the tree's most important lesson
Is that like the roots, we need connection*



(In case you hadn't noticed, we have a group of redwood trees right along the back of our music room as well)

And thus, we have our metaphor. I find this to be such a profound description of what teaching music in Saratoga means to me. We have the privilege of starting many students on their musical journey, alternatively extending our hands out and welcoming others already on their pathway and building a community that lasts throughout high school and beyond. Every single day, year after year, we build, sustain, and grow connections that span middle school tenure, traverse over to high school, and remain connected through a common experience throughout college and beyond. While we may never see some of our students after they walk out our doors for the last time, we know that they will continue to grow and reach new heights and have the potential to flourish as they find their way up and out into the world. Regardless of how far they go(/grow), our roots remain connected. For me, teaching and education is about establishing roots of relationships and connection, and music is the water and nourishment that allows our students to thrive.

To add to this (and in case you were not at our concert to hear it), one of the trees in the front of campus next to our library is a City of Saratoga heritage tree planted in memory of Mr. Rowland Schwab, a beloved music teacher here in the 1970's and early part of the 80's. It is not lost on me that this tree is also a (dawn) redwood, whose roots also grow in the same way as coast redwoods do.

And so, regardless of the real reason that we were named Redwood Middle School, these similarities between the community that we build, and redwood trees makes it all the more fitting that we are so privileged to share music with our students here.

As it is with our children and musicians just like it goes for the redwoods, when presented with the right conditions, we have the capacity and potential to grow, flourish, and withstand the elements of weather and time when we have a community to support us with. Thank you for being a part of ours this past year. We look forward to remaining connected into the future!

With gratitude and on behalf of our incredible music program and music staff (and congratulations to our 8th grade class of 2025!),

Mr. Jow

- Our spring concerts were fantastic this year! We're grateful to all of our students and parents for such great performances and all of the support. If our numbers in band and orchestra remain high

next year like they were this year, we will likely be returning to a split concert evening in order to accommodate all audience members and ensure that everyone has seats for the show (also to adhere to fire code).

- We're continuing to plan and make reservations for field trips next year. We'll have more information upon our return in August/September.

Jason Shiuan

SHS Winter Percussion had their yearend concert, which always amazes me. Students led the practices on their own time. They put in a lot of effort. We got to feature RMS Winter Percussion.

We had the Marching Band kick-off with current 8th graders in attendance. We put ensembles together, they spent time playing together, getting to know each other, and learning the show.

Right after that we had the annual MESH band concert. This involves middle & high schoolers interacting and playing music, practicing at their own time, all of it is extra. So much joy to see it.

We had a band concert featuring Dylan who was outstanding. Orchestra concert also had 4 amazing soloists.

AP music theory concert as part of the finals, students compose their own pieces and recruit SHS student musicians to perform them. This is the largest class we have had in a long time. There were 30 premieres of musical compositions.

At the SHS Choir concert, we said goodbye to MS Nitzan. She joined us during the pandemic and rebuilt the SHS Choir program. I always appreciate how she highlights other musicians in choir concerts as a collaborative effort. This time she went all out. Every piece had a musical collaboration.

Jazz band concert, we got to share with Homestead. Mr. Burn is retiring this year; we were his last concert. He also played his trumpet at the concert. Mr. Burns is our good friend.

At tomorrow's SHS graduation ceremony, the SHS band and choir will be performing, the event is at 6-7:30pm.

The music directors are off to Japan next week. We are finalizing the tour details. Next year is geared for the tour.

Finally, I have to say that it is mind blowing where we were in September with the uncertainty surrounding SHS tours and the LGSUHSD board position. It feels like a different school year now. What a stark difference since then! We shared our heartfelt thank you to the community for all the love and support and care.

Alicia: Looking forward to another great year next academic year. Music educators, what a privilege it is for us to work with you. Knowing your heart is right here brings out the best in our students, and the importance of giving back to the community. You are great educators. What an honor to work alongside you!

Joyce: Thank you, Alicia, for your thoughtful leadership during what started as a difficult year and for steering us to where we are now.

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm.

Summary of Motions

Approval of May SMB Meeting Minutes	Vrinda moves, Joyce seconds, motion carries
Approval of May financials and transactions 1517-1561	Vrinda moves, Josh seconds, motion carries
Approval of 2025-26 SHS budget (minus Marching Band)	Nisha moves, Vrinda seconds, motion carries

Approval of RMS NOF registration grant	Josh moves, Suzie seconds, motion carries
Approval of SMB by-laws update	Nisha moves, Vrinda seconds, motion carries

Bharti Ramaswamy/ Nisha Hebbalae
Co-Recording Secretaries