



Parents, Staff and Community Members,

With the implementation of common core, many schools are focused on the new tests and rigorous standards, and instruction in the visual and performing arts can easily take a back seat. I do not want that to be the case in Mt. Diablo Unified School District. The Arts should be an integral part of our district's academic program. We want our students to be highly skilled and literate. We want them to be strong in mathematics, science and the social sciences. We want them to be physically fit and healthy. We also appreciate the ability of the arts to enhance their lives.

All of our students must have the opportunity to experience the beauty of color, sound, movement, and creativity. At the elementary level, students participate in vocal music each week with a credentialed music teacher. The children learn how to sing, dance, and perform with music. Fifth graders have the opportunity to participate in the instrumental music program. This voluntary program provides instrumental lessons twice a week where the children acquire the skills to read and play notes and rhythms. Through this program, many of our fifth graders are learning how to play musical instruments and perform in a band or orchestra setting.



Many of our elementary schools have visual arts programs. The children learn about artists, visual art forms and create using a range of different media and techniques. This year Meadow Homes Elementary is one of just ten Turnaround Arts Schools in the state. Turnaround Arts is a public/private partnership that works to improve student achievement, increase student engagement and enhance the culture of a school. This grant has allowed Meadow Homes students to receive visual arts, music, dance and drama instruction at school and to experience the arts integrated into their regular classroom curriculum.

At the secondary level, students have the opportunity to expand and enhance their artistic skills acquired earlier in their school careers or find new forms of expression. At the middle level, students may choose courses in visual art, vocal or instrumental music, or drama.

Our high schools offer an array of courses that vary from school to school but that may include everything from AP Studio Art to Film Study, Photography, Jazz Band or Stagecraft. Our students have the opportunity to find a new artistic outlet and learn the intricacies of that craft.

We are very proud of our students and their talents. However, it is through the diligent support of parent and community groups that our art programs thrive. The Mt. Diablo Music Education Foundation has provided grants to purchase new and refurbish old musical instruments. The Booster Clubs provide grants for new music and materials, and assist in securing transportation to festivals, concerts and performances. Additionally, parents work tirelessly to make such performances enjoyable for the participants and audiences. Many of our middle and elementary Parent Faculty Clubs provide funding to purchase equipment and supplies for class projects and also contribute to fund after school arts enrichment programs.

Another great partnership we have is with the Bedford Gallery. They are providing a new docent-led visual arts pilot program at five of our elementary schools. Next year, the Assistance League of the Diablo Valley will also support a new visual arts program at two additional elementary schools. Everyone should be grateful to the parent and community groups that share our district's commitment to educating the whole child by supporting the arts programs in our schools.



The visual and performing arts programs for our kids would not exist without dedicated teachers and staff. These educators model their passion for the arts and guide them as they discover the excitement and beauty inherent in timeless works of art. MDUSD is fortunate as we have accomplished artists who share their talents and enthusiasm with our students while teaching them to follow their artistic inspiration.

I urge you to attend some of the many performances by our students and view an exhibition of their work. I think you will be impressed with what you will see and hear. If you follow our district or specific schools on social media or school websites, you will see postings about upcoming performances. Creative, imaginative, and wonderful things happen at our schools every day.

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Superintendent  
Mt. Diablo Unified School District