

**SWEETWATER UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT
MEETING NOTES FOR ALL ARTS DISCIPLINES FALL 2010**

- 1.0 Welcome and Introductions—After introductions, participants used the “sticky wall” to share their ideas for what district standards should exist for public performances by our school ensembles. A common understanding of professionalism and attention to detail so audiences would enjoy attending our school and district performances was agreed to, our “Standards of Public Performance.”
- 2.0 Creativity in Schools—Participants read “The Creativity Crisis” by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman from the July 10, 2010 issue of Newsweek magazine. The article describes research that shows American creativity is declining and what can be done to correct that trend. A discussion ensued about how to make sure that VAPA courses give students opportunities to be creative.
- 3.0 The Four Year Argument—Participants read the executive summary of “Champions of Change,” a report from the Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington D.C. The report details how ELA and Math scores are impacted more positively the longer students are in arts courses, as in, we don’t see much impact on VAPA student test scores if they have been enrolled in VAPA one year, but there is significant impact on test scores after four years. The report also states that the arts help level the playing field for disadvantaged students. Participants talked about ways in which students could be involved with VAPA programs for the four years of high school.
- 4.0 VAPA Landscape
 - 4.1 National—Participants were given an update regarding Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education and his support of arts education. The U.S. Department of Ed will be funding new studies to ascertain the level and quality of arts education throughout the U.S. Arts education remains core instruction as a part of NCLB.

Participants read House Resolution 275 which proclaimed support for Arts in Education week.
 - 4.2 State—AB 2446, a bill allowing a year of Career Technical Education to be used in lieu of VAPA or World Language for graduation was not signed by the governor. Areas of crossover and collaboration between VAPA and CTE continue to be explored and developed in Sweetwater.

Participants were given an overview of resources on the California Counties Superintendents and Educational Services Association (CCSESA) website, www.ccsesaarts.org
 - 4.3 County—Our district received the Gold (and highest) level of achievement for participation in the San Diego Arts Network, and has

current projects and video on their website
(<http://www.sdartsnetwork.com/content/home.asp> look under
"Districts")

- 4.4 District
 - 4.4.1 South Bay VAPA Collaborative—Participants were informed that regular meetings have occurred among our VAPA Director, County Office VAPA Coordinator and district administration representatives from each South Bay elementary feeder district. The meetings have focused on building a sequential K-12 arts curriculum in the South Bay.
 - 4.4.2 South Bay Alliance for Arts Education—This alliance began in the spring of 2010 with support from the California Alliance for Arts Education and consists of local educators, business and community members. Ron Bolles, former Sweetwater District Music Teacher and Chula Vista School for Creative and Performing Arts Facilitator is the leader. The group has participated in distributing and posting school board surveys on arts education and members have attended school board meetings to support the arts.
 - 4.4.3 VAPA Student Leadership Summits—A report on student leaders in VAPA who have met twice to share with each other and be trained in leadership.
 - 4.4.4 Sweetwater Arts Education Plan—Some work was done in committees to further the updating of this 2007 document.
 - 4.4.5 VAPA Emphases 2010-2011—Participants were updated on the VAPA Departments three emphases for this school year: 1) Annotation, 2) Recruitment and Retention, 3) Standards of Public Performance
 - 4.4.6 Enrollment—the latest figures on enrollment in VAPA courses was shared. A modest 3.5% overall gain in VAPA enrollees was achieved from 09-10 to 10-11.
 - 4.4.7 October 11 and January 10—All VAPA teachers gathered together on these professional development days to discuss Annotation, getting on to Outlook Communities, impact of an A-G graduation requirement, and updates on all of the issues in these notes.
 - 4.4.8 K-6 Outreach (El Sistema)—Teachers were given an update on outreach programs for elementary students in the South Bay, particularly in music, loosely based on the El Sistema model of Venezuela. Five elementary instrumental music are now functioning in Chula Vista elementary schools.
- 5.0 Recruitment and Retention—Participants were presented with their own copy of "A Practical Guide for Recruitment and Retention" published by the Music Achievement Council. The contents of the document were explored and ideas were shared among teachers to improve recruitment and retention strategies.
- 6.0 Student Work in Annotation—Participants were asked to bring examples of student work demonstrating annotation. Teachers shared this student work with each other and discussed the quality of the work, and the teaching strategies used to create it.

7.0 PLC Work—The following is a description of the focus of district-wide PLC work in each arts discipline as reported by each committee chair:

Music - Vocal

The Vocal committee has completed the Sight Singing exam, and have made it DataDirector friendly. Once implemented, each vocal music director will have the resources to administer the Sight Singing exam to their students.

SMART Goal #1: By the end of Semester 1, 80% of district vocal music students will be proficient or above in sight singing an eight-measure, stepwise selection incorporating eighth, quarter, half and whole notes and rests, in common time, in the key of C-major, without previous rehearsal.

SMART Goal #2 (under construction): 80% of district vocal students will be proficient in both defining and demonstrating basic music vocabulary by end of a grading period. It will be the responsibility of all choral teachers to teach the appropriate music vocabulary and assess student learning.

Visual Art

On last year's PLC's accomplishments report, the main focus was working on common final exams.

It is difficult to have PLC activities of creating these when we do not have district pull-out time to concentrate on creating the exams. We have a variety of courses taught by the teachers. Ideally the teachers would need pull-out time to create these exams.

Most of us have PLC time at our school. For example Monica Derrick and Stephanie Yaussy at SYH have PLC's time at their school and they work together on creating the PLC for their school.

The District Visual Art PLC did accomplish the following this year:

- 1) Created a final assessment for the Fall semester for beginning art that focused on elements and principles of design.
- 2) Shared projects and curriculum with one another. This was successful. It would be great if we could use any meeting times to actually share project ideas that cover the standards and curriculum basics.

These items were follow-up items from last year:

- 1) Keep working to try to have common final assessment. Have completed one for beginning art. However not sure how many chose to use it. Need to continue working on creating more.
- 2) No more discussion needed regarding AP course assessments.
- 3) Talked again about need to write course curriculum for the district and textbooks. However, this cannot be accomplished until we are given the opportunity to update the curriculum.

A main thing that needs to be worked on are common assessments for each course. That will need to be done with pull-out meetings for each area to work on their assessment criteria.

Digital Media

Our goal was to use our PLC time to advance our lesson planning by sharing best practices, and plan the Digital Media Showcase. Kelly Hamilton from OTR feels this year has been successful to that end. Kelly has learned a lot from visiting the

various classrooms of my colleagues and seeing how they are teaching and running their programs, and I have definitely gleaned ideas from them that she is incorporating into her own classroom and lessons. Attendance was small, but fairly consistent this year, which helped especially in the planning of the Digital Media Showcase which is still under way. We have made good advancements in this event by expanding the venue to accommodate the growing crowd we anticipate after last year's successful event, and we have enabled online submissions of entries. This will make for easier collaboration also as it will get us familiar with network and Sharepoint communities for next year as well, and we can use that to further our collaboration. Kelly believes we have made good use of our time in PLC this year to further our intended outcomes, and she is sure next year we'll do the same.

Dance - Folklorico

This year the Ballet Folklorico PLC examined and assessed various topics within Ballet Folklorico course study content. Assessment results were clearly identifiable and it was in agreement we embark on the following course of action:

- All Instructors this year made observation visits to other Ballet Folklorico class sites, with the objective of seeing diverse approaches to teaching folklorico movement and the introduction of research material. Observations also included the adaptability to the dance room environment, and methods used to store traditional attire for maximum preservation.
- All Instructors this year have focused on elevating the level of performance by all students. Attention to traditional attire and overall concert visual have been addressed. This effort has been met with positive oral feedback as well as written congratulatory letters of acknowledgment.
- Instructors have worked closely to share research books, illustrations, etc., that have been acquired at folklorico workshops to expand the depth of curriculum study.
- All Instructors have maintained clear standards for formal research, as well as written report submittals. Various folklorico workshop application information packets have been provided to students. These workshop opportunities have expanded from District, to community and state-wide workshops.

Music - Strings

Goals this year: 1) to complete a list of Smart Goals for Second year (Middle School Beginning String Orchestra) string classes, and 2) revise and finish year one goals for last year. These goals are divided into 9-week quarters and should provide general guidelines which string teachers throughout the district can follow. For each year, we began by compiling a list of string techniques and musical concepts. Next, we decided which of these techniques and concepts should be taught during which year.

Dance

This year we have eight schools offering dance in the Sweetwater Union High School District. At our CIA meeting we were able to write a quarterly exam based on dance vocabulary and have started the process for writing an End of Course exam for first semester. We still welcome input on how to use the results from these exams to increase the success of our students as well as how to write and implement exams for each of the courses of dance currently offered (PE Dance, Dance I, Dance II and Advanced Choreography, Dance 7 and Dance 8). Most members of the Dance Council are also a part of PLC groups on their individual school sites and vary from Physical Education to Performing Arts PLCs.

Music - Band

The Middle School Directors continue to develop and adapt common assessments using the district approved textbooks and DataDirector. Assessments added this year include formative assessments in annotation skills in beginning band, and an EOC for Advanced Band 1st semester at the Middle School level. They have created Smart Goals for the Middle School Intermediate/Advanced classes. They have begun the process for creating a pacing guide based on common exercises found in the text books.

The High School Directors have continued their focus on skills that are tested, but not found in DataDirector. Testing focuses on performance skills necessary for subject mastery. Directors use common exercises found in the adopted textbooks that focus on key signature mastery, with a rubric that steps through increased skill with increased years of experience (for example, sophomores may be required to know all their major scales, but seniors will also be required to know all the minor scale variants related to these major scales). Rhythmical skill levels have been discussed as we start to develop common assessments for an appropriate level of rhythmical reading. Discussions have included using SmartMusic as a means for testing many of these skills.

At our all-district Band Director Meetings we have directors from within our district teach "mini-seminars" on techniques for teaching our students to master the state/national standards in music. Topics have included warm-up techniques, percussion instruction, proper music selection, tuning techniques, sight-reading skill development, instrument care and maintenance, balancing instrumentation, use of technology to communicate with the parents and the community (band information website, email, surveys, etc.), use of SmartMusic and Finale to help with instruction, testing, and student practice, as well as time to share details of district sponsored events.

Drama

First PLC covered SMART goals concerning the standards for Creative Expression and Artistic Perception while training new teachers:

Covered teaching of pantomime including activities, assessments, etc.

Second PLC :

Covered teaching of improvisation with activities, assessments, etc.

Third PLC:

Covered teaching of oral interpretation with activities, assessments, etc.

Fourth PLC:

Covered scene work...choices, activities, assessments

Music - Mariachi

Music

Lack of fundamentals continues to be a problem, but in our last PLC meeting we came to a consensus as to what material we need to teach beginning students on each instrument per semester.

We still need to get this material on Finale and SmartMusic. The idea is to work towards a generalized curriculum that all teachers can follow, with set goals each semester.

Claudia Garcia mentioned that she had experience working on Finale and SmartMusic.

Fredd Sanchez will contact Mark Fogelquist and Guadalupe Gonzalez, as they are the most experienced teachers, to double check the goals.

Music library

We currently have a very limited music library, but Fredd Sanchez will bring workbooks from conferences he has attended and give them to Jenni Jouan in the VAPA music library. We have talked about each teacher bringing music to VAPA.

Workshops and conferences

Several of us have been attending conferences outside of our district and continue to encourage our students to attend, not only our own, but other conferences as well. Mark, Lupe, Wendy and Fredd took our students to the San Diego conference. Fredd took his students to the Tucson conference this year.