

Hi everyone!

As you have probably heard recently, the MBUSD board approved district-wide budget cuts affecting the elementary through high school music programs. In the coming months, teachers will be fired, fewer periods of music will be offered (K-12), and ensemble sizes will increase. These approved budget cuts will affect you and especially the future of our very successful band program, as well as the MBUSD music program as a whole.

I am writing to you today to call us all to action and to hopefully inspire you to write your own letter to help us overturn the budget cuts. MBUSD states on their website that they represent not only the district staff, but also the teachers, parents, and us students. In this process to cut our music funds, they did not hear our voice. We are a group of 179 students with an that has not been heard, and our job today is to make ourselves louder!

Just last week the MBUSD board cut the MBMS zero period in one meeting without proposing the plan to the public. Parents, middle school teachers, and students had no input on this decision, leaving the public powerless. Cutting zero period will directly impact how many middle schoolers can take band, which is a guaranteed decrease to new Costa band members in the coming years. If we want this to change, we need to let the board know.

If you care about the success of our music program, want to guarantee the opportunity to participate in a thriving program for current elementary and middle schoolers, and want to be a part of this change, then please consider writing a public comment to the MBUSD board.

Writing this letter can be quick yet extremely powerful. With everyone social distancing right now, it could only take you just 10 minutes to make a difference. I suggest including who you are (name, grade, involvement in band), why the band program is important to you, and why the budget cuts will hurt the future of music education in Manhattan Beach. Letters should be 400 words or less. Your letter should be much shorter than this block of text!

The MBUSD music budget is being reviewed at the district meeting on Wednesday April 15th, so be sure to submit a letter before Tuesday if you want to possibly change the outcome! If you are seeing this message later than that, letters are always welcome; the budget issue will likely span many months and will be open for review.

Once you have written your letter, here's what you need to do to make your voice as loud as possible:

1. This is the most important. If you are writing your letter before April 15th, use [this official form to submit a MBUSD board meeting public comment](#). Press next, select agenda item # F.1 (Board Subcommittee re: Music Programs), and paste your letter as a comment. Be aware, there is a 400 word maximum. With this form your letter will appear before the board members during their public meeting on Wednesday which I encourage you all to attend!

2. Email your letter to the following 5 board members: Dr. Matthews, and his assistant (include all on the same email or email them separately. Copy and paste letter text and send as an email): mmatthews@mbusd.org, hhoffman@mbusd.org, kkomatinsky@mbusd.org, bfournell@mbusd.org, jfenton@mbusd.org, speel@mbusd.org, jcochran@mbusd.org

You can find the 5 board members information [here](#):

3. Submit a community feedback form about the budget on the [MBUSD website here](#) (copy and paste your letter, takes 10 seconds)

4. Share these instructions with your parents, siblings, friends, community members, or anybody that you think could say something personal about what the band program means to them. Tell your mom to post on Facebook! If you know the mayor, tell them to write a letter about why they love the band!

Here are some excellent sample letters graciously provided by [Ryan Koch](#), [Evanne Rochelson](#), and [Elsa Kim](#). These are perfect examples, and your letters do not need to be as long or as personal as these. Anything helps!

If you need any more help writing a letter, please refer to this website created by the booster parent programs for MBUSD band, orchestra, and choir: <https://manhattanbeachmusic.org/budget-cuts-faq>.

There is nothing you can do that would hurt our efforts. Of course writing a letter is optional, but I am asking that you please take the time to at least write a few sentences to the board or even copy and paste this text to your parents. Anything you do will help the program.

This is a fully student-led and parent-led process. Your parents, booster parents, me, and the rest of leadership are the only ones asking you to take action. Please understand that Mr. Carlson is

not involved; I have written this on my own accord. There is no assignment or extra credit for writing a letter, but everyone a part of our amazing program will thank you for your support.

In unsure times such as these, people have many questions. Will we have a final concert or banquet? When will marching band season start? I cannot answer any of these questions because we know too little about when COVID-19 will slow down, but be assured that we will end our school year with something great and everyone will be together.

All of you have something special to share. Everyone in our program has a story from our band that impacted their experience in high school, or beyond. Sharing this story with the people in power through a letter is what will allow us to make our voices heard. If you want to share your band story with me or Mr. Carlson, please do so!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this. If I inspired you to reach out and write a letter, then I thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping us. Feel free to ask me or anyone else in leadership if you have any questions. Also let me know if you end up writing a letter; I would love to hear about it! Your efforts will not go unrecognized. Thanks again :)

Onward and Upward,
Dexter

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