

Hello Parents, and Supporters of the MBUSD Music Program,

Thank you to all of you who were able to be a part of the various teleconference calls with Dr. Benham. It was wonderful to have over 200 people join the Town Hall on Saturday. By now, you should have received Dr. Benham's report (sent under separate cover; also available by clicking [HERE](#)). Even if you weren't able to participate on the calls, please continue reading this message and consider being part of our advocacy effort to help reinstate the recent cuts which have been made to our district's music program.

The report has been sent to every School Board member as well as the senior members of the administration and all school principals. It is supposed to be an agenda item at the April 15th board meeting. However, until the Agenda is published (it normally should be available by Friday or over the weekend at the latest), we won't know for certain.

Public Comment Letters Needed for 4/15 Board Meeting:

The next step in our advocacy effort is for as many people as possible to submit public comments at the April 15th board meeting. As soon as the agenda for this meeting is published, we will forward it to you, as well as the link for submitting your public comments.

As it relates to your public comment, the following are a few general guidelines:

- While there is no minimum length, your submission should be no longer than 400 words. Succinct letters might have a greater impact;
- The form will ask you to input the agenda item to which your letter refers (assuming this issue is on the agenda). Please make sure that you include the agenda number;
- The deadline to submit your letter is normally 1 hour before the meeting. However, please submit as soon as practical and, ideally, by noon on the day of the meeting (4/15);
- Please do not include any negative comments levied toward any board members, administrators, teachers or other programs. The focus of your letter should be constructive and reflect the positives of the music program (see below). As Dr. Benham reminded all of us, and which is included in his report, a strong music program also strengthens other programs. Its strength does not need to come at the expense of any other program.

Public Comment Letter Template:

Some of you have asked some guidance in writing your public comment letter. The following are some guidelines to assist you:

Paragraph 1

State who you are and your connection to the music program (Student, Parent, Former Student or Parent, or Community Supporter). **Please use the umbrella term "music" rather than band, choir or orchestra in this opening section because it is consistent with our unified approach.**

Paragraph 2

Share your personal experiences with the music program. These include:

- How have you or your child benefitted from the music program (personal growth, development, academically, social wellness, college applications)?
- Have you or your child learned better time management skills that have helped you in other areas of your life?
- Have the benefits derived from the music program helped you / your child in other areas of his/her/their life?

Please be as authentic as possible. It is important to bring your own unique voice, experience and perspective to the board! **We also encourage each individual to speak up by submitting their own public comment.** A parent's reasons for valuing the program are often different from a student's. It is our hope that all interested voices will be shared and heard. **In this paragraph, it is certainly appropriate to name the specific music program(s) you have experience in (band, choir or orchestra).**

Paragraph 3

Describe your "call to action" for the board. In this paragraph, please let the board know how you would like them to proceed. As was mentioned in the report, as well as during the Town Hall, we will be asking for the Board to **form a Task Force to study all issues raised in Dr. Benham's Report in greater depth including**, but not limited to:

- Analyze the costs / benefits of the music program from an academic, financial and social wellness standpoint.
- Analyze all of the issues raised in Dr. Benham's report.
- Make recommendations to reinforce the music program's status as a core curriculum program beginning at the elementary school level and continuing through the high school level rather than, as it appears to be treated now, simply an extra curricular class on par with the wheel.
- That the school board and administration rescind, or at least put on hold, its actions approving any reductions in the music curriculum until this Task Force can make its recommendations to the Board.
- And that all stakeholders, including parents and teachers, be included on the Task Force, representing all music programs at all grade levels.

If you need additional information, please feel free to go to MiraCostaBands.com. We will also be posting this template and Dr. Benham's full report on these sites:

www.MCHSOchestra.com
www.MiraCostaBands.com
www.MiraCostaChoirs.org
www.ManhattanBeachMusic.org

If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us by replying to this email or contacting Carolyn Mukai at carolyn.mukai@gmail.com or Michele Gentile at mgband@yahoo.com.

Thank you for your continued support of the Manhattan Beach Music Program!
The MBUSD Music Parent Coalition