



MNPS Visual and Performing Arts Strategic Plan



**METRO
NASHVILLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

Prepared for

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Prepared by



<http://www.sparkimpact.com/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategic action plan seeks to establish a clear and documented path for increasing access to, participation in, and the quality of visual and performing arts education for all MNPS students. This document should serve as a roadmap for implementing key organizational goals by setting priorities, focusing energy and resources, strengthening operations, and ensuring that staff and other stakeholders are working toward common goals.

This document is the result of an eight-month process between MNPS' Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) department and Spark Impact, which included stakeholder mapping, interviews, and roundtable discussions with key stakeholders; sector analysis and interviews with peer school districts; and strategy sessions with department staff and district leadership.

The priorities identified through the process described above resulted in three overarching goals, each with its own strategic actions. It is important to note that these goals are highly interrelated and some of the strategies outlined target multiple goals.

Goal 1: VAPA are a priority for the district and are integrated into district planning.

Currently, VAPA are not highly integrated into district priorities, resulting in limited focus and support from the district towards VAPA. The long-term viability and sustainability of the work outlined in the following pages will depend on it being a priority for the district and for that priority to be pursued at the individual school level. The following six strategic actions are designed to more deeply integrate VAPA into existing district priorities.

1. Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader: Leverage the existing relationship between VAPA and SEL to increase VAPA education's relative importance to the district.
2. Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities: Lead and coordinate partner efforts around a clear and cohesive strategy to achieve VAPA objectives.
3. Reorient the Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council: Refocus the council's efforts around the goals of advocacy and connection.
4. Foster stakeholder and community engagement: Rally community around the importance of visual and performing arts education.
5. Implement a district-level VAPA-focused data collection protocol: Design and implement an in-house district-wide school rating system for VAPA education.
6. Improve coordination with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville: Work toward increased coordination and collaboration with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville.

Goal 2: VAPA resources are allocated and priorities are set with equity in mind.

Opportunities for MNPS students to participate in quality, diverse program offerings are not distributed equally or equitably. The following three strategic actions are designed to center equity as a critical pillar of district priorities with regard to VAPA and ensure that the equitable allocation of resources and opportunities is used as a guiding principle for decision-making.

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1. Implement a customer-service approach: Work to implement a “teacher-centered bureaucracy” with increased efficiency and reduced burden on teachers and school administrators.
2. Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources: Develop partner relationships and distribute partner resources in ways that will serve to diminish inequities.
3. Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative: Develop and pilot a culturally responsive programming initiative that reflects the needs and cultural backgrounds of the diverse populations of MNPS students.

Goal 3: Ensure that access to high-quality sequential VAPA learning is available to all MNPS students.

Many schools are ending long-standing programs due to low student enrollment. The root causes for this low enrollment include double blocking in high schools, lack of sufficient culturally responsive curricular offerings, and a lack of formal feeder programs to ensure sequential enrollment. The following three strategic actions are designed to address these root causes and increase student enrollment in VAPA offerings.

1. Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning: Vociferously advocate for new scheduling practices to reverse the impacts of double blocking and freshman seminars on access to VAPA classes.
2. Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs: Create a coordinated strategy at the cluster level to guarantee sequential arts learning.
3. Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers: Better align supply and demand for professional development, and ensure VAPA teachers are able to easily access the PD available to them.





BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The goal of our partnership with Metro Nashville Public Schools is to provide a comprehensive strategic action plan to increase access to, participation in, and the quality of arts education for all MNPS students. Through collaboration and consultation with the MNPS visual and performing arts (VAPA) office and district leadership, we identified the set of priorities for the district outlined below. The following pages contain an overview of our strategic planning process, summaries of key inputs along the way, and detailed steps for short- and long-term implementation of agreed-upon priorities.

Goal of a strategic plan

Strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish

agreement around intended outcomes and results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. It is a disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide who an organization serves, what it does, and why and how it undertakes activities—all with a focus on the future. Effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organization is going and the actions needed to make progress but also how it will measure its own success.

What this document is

This document is a roadmap for short- and long-term implementation of strategic actions. It highlights important actions to be taken, as well as questions to be resolved. Wherever possible, we have tried to offer concrete next steps that the VAPA department staff, leadership, and the Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council can take for implementation, and have noted open questions that will need to be addressed.

How did we create this plan?

1. Stakeholder mapping

We started this process by conducting a thorough review of MNPS's VAPA-education documents including history, activities, programming, and grant applications as well as the Music Education Needs Assessment conducted in March 2019. With the information collected, we then conducted an in-depth analysis of the stakeholders involved in MNPS' VAPA programs. This map is fundamentally a subjective view of a set of interconnected relationships that offers a way to understand stakeholders' relationships with MNPS arts-education programming.

Figure 1, the Stakeholder Onion Diagram, is a way of visualizing the relationship of stakeholders to a project or organizational goal. The Stakeholder Onion Diagram maps stakeholders' relationship to the goal of a project. It can help show the importance of stakeholders with less influence but who will be important to the success of a program, initiative, project, etc.

This map takes into account a variety of factors including individual and institutional stakeholders' influence, interest, and relationships. At the center is MNPS VAPA education itself. The first, inner layer includes stakeholders that interact and benefit directly from MNPS VAPA's programs and who may be most critical to its success. This layer includes students, teachers, principals, other school staff, and MNPS' VAPA department.

The second layer consists of the stakeholders who may not interact directly with the program, but who can impact the program or benefit from it. Stakeholders in this layer include the district superintendent, assistant and associate superintendents, school board, MMU Advisory Council, parents and guardians, cultural partners and funders, and the Nashville Public Education Foundation.

The final, outermost layer represents the wider environment in which MNPS VAPA department operates. This layer includes stakeholders like the national arts-education organizations, elected state and city officials, vendors and providers, and comparable and peer school districts.

2. Stakeholder interviews

Based on the stakeholder mapping process, we conducted 15 interviews between November 7th and December 11th, 2019. During these interviews, we discussed participants' experience with visual and performing arts (VAPA) in MNPS schools, what they believe to be most important and of greatest impact about the programs, potential areas of improvement, and potential barriers to access and improvement.

Figure 1: Stakeholder Onion Diagram–MNPS VAPA Programming

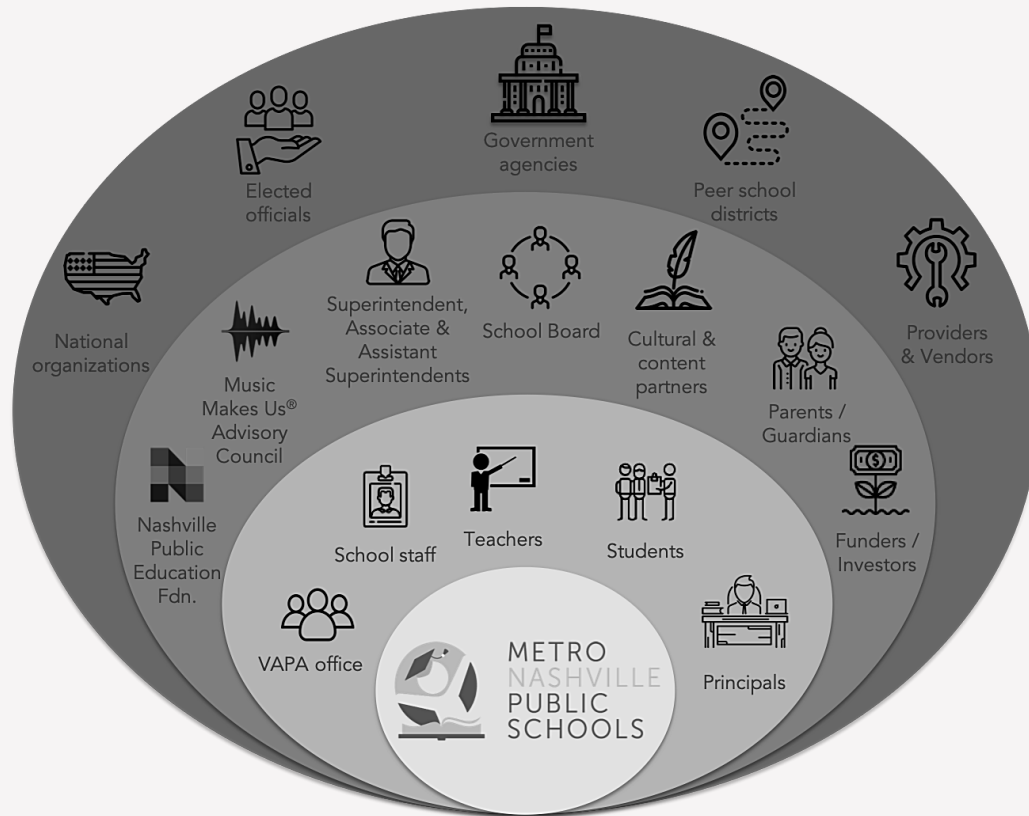


Figure 2: Interviews Conducted

Interviewee	Organization, Title
Paul Oakley	Music Makes Us® Advisory Council member
Debbie Linn	Music Makes Us® Advisory Council member
Laurie Schell	Former Director of Music Makes Us®
Dr. Adrienne Battle and Hank Clay	MNPS, Director of Schools, and Chief of Staff
Anna Shepherd	MNPS Board Chair
Dr. David Williams,	MNPS, Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Damon Cathey	MNPS, Associate Superintendent Elementary (North)
Dr. Pippa Meriwether	MNPS, Associate Superintendent Elementary (South)
Dr. Schunn Turner	MNPS, Associate Superintendent High Schools
Jeff Syracuse	Metro Council member
Tricia Williams	The Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, Program Director
Katie Cour and Jennifer Hill	Nashville Public Education Foundation President and CEO, and Vice President, Policy and Programming
Jaclyn Rudderow	VH1 Save the Music, Program Director
Jacki Artis	Mayor's Office, Manager Of Music City Music Council*
Lee Whitmore	Grammy Music Education Coalition, Executive Director
Tiffany Kerns and Falon Keith	CMA Foundation, Executive Director, and Grants Associate

*At time of interview, now Project Manager at PENCIL

3. Stakeholder roundtables and in-person interviews

Following the initial round of individual interviews, the Spark team went to Nashville during the week of November 19th, 2019 to conduct in-person interviews with members of the MNPS Visual and Performing Arts team, and roundtable conversations with key groups of stakeholders. Interviews and roundtables conducted are presented in figure 3.

Figure 3: In-Person Interviews and Roundtables Conducted

Interviewee	Title, Organization	Roundtables
Jason Walsh	MNPS, Performing Arts Coordinator	MNPS Parents
Glenn Fugett	MNPS, Secondary Music Coach	MNPS Visual and Performing Arts Faculty
Valerie Harbin	MNPS, Administrative Assistant	MNPS Principals
Allison Ross	MNPS, Visual Arts Coordinator	Maplewood High School Students High School Students from multiple schools

4. Sector analysis

We researched multiple school districts and their partners and conducted interviews with those doing the most relevant and interesting arts-education programming. During these interviews we discussed the districts' experiences, key strategies, and lessons learned, and how their knowledge and experience could be adapted to MNPS. Interviews conducted include:

Figure 4: Sector Analysis Interviews Conducted

City	Interviewee(s)
Austin	Alan Lambert, Fine Arts Director at Austin ISD
Boston	Emmanuel Toledo, Program Director for the Performing Arts (BPS) and Ruth Mercado-Zizzo, BPS Arts Expansion Director at EdVestors
Chicago	Julia deBettencourt, Director of Arts Education at CPS and Nicole Upton, Director of Partnerships and Professional Learning at Ingenuity
Dallas	Tim Linley, Executive Director, Visual and Performing Arts at Dallas ISD; Jessica Malek, Chief Strategy Officer and LeAnn Binford, Director of Services at Big Thought
Houston	Wenden Sanders, Director of Fine Arts at Houston ISD
Seattle	Audrey Querns, SPS Creative Advantage Project Manager and Gail Sehlhorst, SPS Visual and Performing Arts Manager

Additional research was conducted on Albuquerque, Philadelphia, and Orange County, Florida, Schools.

5. Strategy sessions

The information collected during the interviews and sector analysis was analyzed and presented to the VAPA team and other key district stakeholders during a day-long in-person session and one follow-up webinar. During these sessions we discussed key insights and challenges gathered from the research; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and our proposed approach to address said challenges. Most importantly, the goal of these sessions was to gather consensus around the findings and potential recommendations.

Overview of strategic goals for MNPS VAPA

As a result of the months-long process described above and the discussions and framing exercises of the first half of the Strategy Session, we've grouped the priorities identified into three overarching goals, each with its own strategic actions. It is important to note that these three goals are highly interrelated and some strategies outlined below target multiple goals.

Goal 1: VAPA are a priority for the district and are integrated into district planning

Goal 1 Strategic Actions:

1. Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader
2. Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities
3. Reorient the Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council
4. Foster stakeholder and community engagement
5. Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol
6. Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville

Goal 2: VAPA resources are allocated and priorities are set with equity in mind

Goal 2 Strategic Actions:

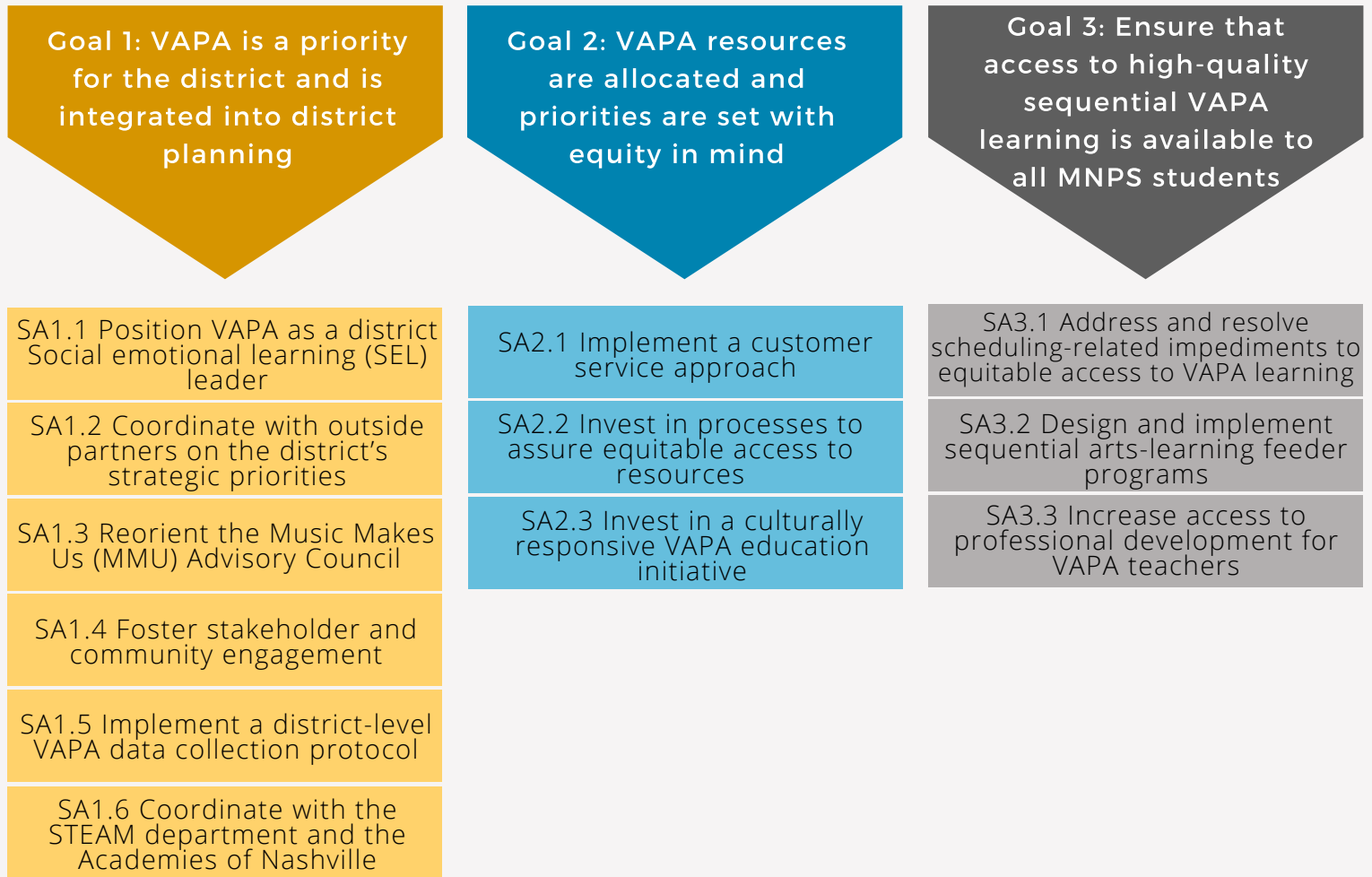
1. Implement a customer-service approach
2. Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources
3. Invest in culturally responsive curriculum and programming

Goal 3: Ensure that access to high-quality sequential VAPA learning is available to all MNPS students

Goal 3 Strategic Actions:

1. Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning
2. Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs
3. Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers

Figure 5: VAPA Strategic Plan Structure*



*Full page version of figure 5 is available in the annex. External stakeholders are encouraged to review annex 5 where they will find an overview of the strategic actions and the stakeholder involved. Annexes 2-4 outline specific actions or activities to be completed by the VAPA department by goal and year.



GOAL 1: VAPA ARE A PRIORITY FOR THE DISTRICT AND ARE INTEGRATED INTO DISTRICT PLANNING

Currently, VAPA are not integrated into district priorities, resulting in limited focus and support from the district toward furthering VAPA. This lack of a strong focus on VAPA from the district leadership often translates into even less focus on VAPA at the school level and increased disparities between schools in terms of VAPA prioritization. Long-term viability and sustainability of this work will depend on it being a priority for the district and for that priority to be pursued at the individual school level.

At the school level, increased focus on ELA and math achievement has led to the implementation of a double-blocking strategy in high schools, significantly reducing student choice in electives. Additionally, VAPA classes are sometimes used as the “catch all” class, with reports of students frequently being pulled away from class—or of class time being cut short—for other commitments. This leads to lower enrollment, which reduces funding for VAPA courses, and creates a barrier for sequential arts education.

In order to address this set of issues, we propose the following six strategic actions designed to more deeply integrate VAPA in existing district priorities.

Strategic Actions:

1. Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader: Leverage the existing relationship between VAPA and SEL to increase VAPA education's relative importance to the district.
2. Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities: Lead and coordinate partner efforts around a clear and cohesive strategy to achieve VAPA objectives.
3. Reorient Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council: Refocus the council's efforts around the goals of advocacy and connection.
4. Foster stakeholder and community engagement: Rally community around the importance of visual and performing arts education.
5. Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol: Design and implement an in-house district-wide school rating system for VAPA education.
6. Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville: Work towards increased coordination and collaboration with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville.

Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader

Leverage the existing relationship between VAPA and SEL to increase VAPA education's relative importance to the district.

SEL has been designated as one of the school board's key priorities for the 2019–2020 school year and is expected to remain a key priority for the upcoming year. Additionally, the 2018 Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce Education Report Card recommended that the district focus on social emotional learning.

Arts education has been shown to be an excellent vehicle for learning social-emotional skills since these skills are integral to art making. Visual and performing arts help students develop social-emotional skills necessary for self-actualization, self-management, and interpersonal relationships through developmental experiences that they enjoy. This connection between VAPA and SEL, and the unique value that VAPA could provide in achieving district SEL objectives, is not well-recognized by the district, or incorporated into district SEL plans.

While district VAPA teachers receive training to integrate SEL approaches in their classes through workshops and professional development, and many do, they do so in a vacuum. These efforts are not meaningfully connected to the larger district SEL goals. By leveraging the existing relationship between VAPA and SEL as well as the work VAPA teachers are already doing in this area, VAPA can be further integrated into district planning and VAPA education's relative importance can be elevated, thereby improving district SEL outcomes and student access to high-quality VAPA education.

Step 1: Research and create documents outlining VAPA SEL benefits, needs, and approaches for each stakeholder group

SEL is a topic of increased focus in the education field. There are, however, misconceptions and misinformation about what SEL is as well as about its relative importance to a child's education and development. There is even less awareness in the academic community of the potential to use the arts as a vehicle for SEL. It is the responsibility of the VAPA department to educate stakeholders about the value of VAPA classes and strategies (e.g., arts integration in non-VAPA classes) for improved SEL outcomes, and to make sure they have the necessary resources and information to properly advocate for increased arts involvement in SEL.

The first step in accomplishing this goal is to create documents and communication plans to explain the priority for VAPA for each stakeholder group. Documents to be designed can include:

- District and school board and MMU Advisory Council: How arts can be used to foster SEL
- Principals and cultural partners: Resource list to help them integrate VAPA into their SEL-focused activities and SEL into VAPA activities. How VAPA SEL supports other school priorities

Annex 6 includes a list of VAPA SEL resources that can be used as a starting point for research.

In this phase, we recommend you enlist the appropriate SEL-focused cultural partners. The MNPS VAPA department has existing relationships with multiple cultural partners with expertise in the intersection of VAPA and SEL that can help build out this resource list and communication materials. As we will expand upon the following strategic initiatives, it is important to engage cultural partners in working with the VAPA department towards a clear objective rather than simply providing a service. This presents a unique opportunity to collaborate with existing partners in work that is important and well aligned for their institution, is valuable for the students, and also helps position VAPA as a district priority.

Step 2: Identify opportunities and roadblocks towards VAPA and SEL integration

Convene a collaborative session between district leadership and school principals to identify opportunities and roadblocks to thriving VAPA integration throughout the district and at the school level. During this session, it is important that you:

- Communicate the priorities from the district.
- Ensure critical district leadership is present and leading.
- Engage principals in brainstorming or other activities to identify opportunities and roadblocks.
- Prioritize the most critical and greatest opportunities for change.

Step 3: Support the inclusion of VAPA within the district-wide SEL framework

Work with district leadership and previously identified partner organizations to ensure that the district-wide framework for SEL highlights VAPA as integral and essential to achieving SEL objectives. This will also help to ensure that VAPA are a measurable priority for the district.

Regarding VAPA, the district-wide framework should include:

- Specific and measurable goals for VAPA SEL and tools by grade level.
- Grade-appropriate SEL training and activities, with professional development that focuses on the value of VAPA as a vehicle for SEL. Currently, SEL-focused professional development is included in the district's Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports (PBIS) practice and as part of SEL support practices. However, no VAPA SEL professional development is currently included.

Step 4: Review, revise and support VAPA outcomes for district-wide SEL framework

As this is a multi year plan, it is essential that the VAPA team review the VAPA outcomes annually and revise the planning and implementation of VAPA-related interventions based on lessons learned. Reporting out in some form to the stakeholder groups discussed in Goal 1, and enlisting their help and support in advocating for annual improvement for VAPA, will help strengthen the VAPA stakeholder ecosystem, and thus improve overall community support for VAPA programs and policies. We recommend an annual review followed by a short document highlighting successes and opportunities for improvement to be shared both publicly and with MNPS administrators and faculty. The ultimate goal is that there is a district-wide understanding of how VAPA can inform and improve SEL outcomes, and district-wide plans to improve those outcomes for students via VAPA.

Step 5: Workshops with teachers about their use of VAPA SEL

The need to improve the professional development relationship for MNPS teachers is described below (Goal 3, Strategic Action 3), along with specific steps to ensure that MNPS is better able to meet teachers' needs (Goal 2, Strategic Action 1), and teachers are more able to take advantage of the PD available to them. Here we highlight the importance of including SEL-related professional development among the opportunities available to teachers. Many VAPA teachers successfully use SEL-related techniques but would benefit from further training and more intentional SEL integration in their instructional practice, and many "core subject" teachers may not know the value of arts-related content to improve SEL skills for their students. While focusing on arts-related content in core subject areas is not a priority focus at this time, it may be valuable to provide some PD that offers teachers insight into how they can use the arts to improve the SEL outcomes in their classes.

Step 6: Ongoing support and advocacy for SEL through VAPA

Coordinate with business and other outside VAPA partners to elevate the emphasis on the value of SEL in the community, advocate for SEL through VAPA as a priority, and support new and ongoing SEL work.

Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities

Lead and coordinate partner efforts around a clear and cohesive strategy to achieve VAPA objectives.

The VAPA department is currently working with over 90 partner organizations who provide diverse resources and programming to schools and the district. However, there is no clear strategy originating from the VAPA department to coordinate partner efforts towards a clear cohesive objective or long-term strategic objectives, meaning that partnerships function in an ad-hoc manner.

Improved coordination with outside cultural partners can help with:

- Better targeting and increased equity in program distribution: Currently, schools and teachers are applying to grants and programs individually when they can find them. For the most part they do not know what is out there. This means that programs usually go to schools whose teachers have the time and willingness to look for these resources and not schools who need them the most, nor are they being assigned in a way that contributes to an overall VAPA organizational goal.
- Relevance of programming: Partner organizations are looking for ways to better target their programs towards the needs of the community, but without understanding how they fit into the long-term strategy or vision, partners can sometimes feel frustrated about how best to do this. A clear understanding of the district's goals and needs could ensure that programming being provided by cultural partners is designed with those goals in mind.
- Partner-district synergy: Many partner organizations want to and can go beyond being service providers. The VAPA department does not work in a vacuum, and partner organizations are experts in the field and have key connections that could be fostered and used for advocating for VAPA education.

Step 1: Partner meeting

Accomplishing this goal starts with clear and direct communication with partners regarding the district's goals. We recommend you start this work with a partner meeting to communicate the move towards a more intentional approach to partnerships. Here you can share the new strategic plan with partners, explain the reasons for those priorities, describe in-depth some of the specific needs and issues to be addressed, and share and brainstorm tangible goals for them to pursue. This is also an opportunity to connect partners with each other, so that they can form a more tight-knit ecosystem of support for

the district, and to encourage collaboration to support VAPA needs.

During this meeting you will also encourage partner organizations to assess their current programming and to consider how that programming could better align with the strategic goals shared during this session.

The goal of this partner meeting will be two-fold. Besides initial coordination, it will also be used to discuss teacher access and equitable distribution of programming. The partner resources are and will continue to be critical in addressing inequities in the system and in ensuring that teachers have as much (and as equitable) access to resources as possible. This will be further expanded on in Goal 2, Strategic Action 2.

Step 2: Identify and coordinate support in priority areas

Once partners are bought in, identify how they can best fit in within this plan. Ideally, this should come from the VAPA department and from the partner organization themselves. We recommend you work with each partner organization to categorize and adjust their offerings into clear and distinct support categories aligned to your strategic goals.

Reorient Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council

Refocus the council's efforts around the goals of advocacy and connection.

The purpose of the Music Makes Us® Advisory Council is to advance the goals of Music Makes Us® and support the sustainability of the public/private partnership through both strategic and tactical efforts, including the cultivation of community allies and funding sources. The creation of an Advisory Council for Music Makes Us® aligns with current MNPS practice in the Partnership Councils and Advisory Boards of The Academies of Nashville. The purpose of those entities is to engage the community, and specifically the business community, in efforts to advance the educational goals of the district.¹

Nonetheless, members of the council felt they lacked clarity about the role and objective of the council, which prevented them from making significant progress.

The council will be reoriented around the goals

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¹ Taken from Metro Nashville Public Schools ~ Music Makes Us® Advisory Council Governance Framework.



Clarification or distinction is required between what Jeff's and the team's role is, what they are accountable for, and what we, as Music Makes Us®, can help deliver. Maybe Jeff and team have 12 objectives, and maybe this whole advisory committee and all of this energy is spent only on one or two of those objectives. I'm OK with that. But we need clarity around what those one or two objectives are and how they fit within the broader MNPS umbrella.

-Music Makes Us® Advisory Council Member



of advocacy and connection for music education. This will help maximize the impact of the council by focusing its scope and harnessing its efforts towards strengthening relationships and advocating for music education and other key elements of this strategic plan.

Step 1: Meeting and reorientation around the new goals

To begin this process, we recommend a meeting with the MMU Advisory Council after sharing this strategic plan with them for review. Then, work with the Advisory Council to find potential areas within the strategic plan they can help advocate for and where they can help make new connections to move the strategic actions forward.

Establish clear goals for advocacy and tools for the MMU Council to use in advocating and supporting VAPA goals with MNPS leadership and Nashville's business and music communities.

Potential areas of support include:

- Advocating for and supporting VAPA SEL goals in MNPS (Goal 1, Strategic Action 1).
 - Be sure to provide the Council with focused materials that define SEL, explain its importance as a critical workforce skill, and demonstrate the value of VAPA as a SEL tool.
- Advocating for music education with city leadership and the Mayor's office and helping foster supportive relationships between the Mayor's office and the VAPA department (Goal 1, Strategic Action 4).
- Connecting the VAPA department with organizations who can help provide additional resources (in-kind and monetary) needed for new and expanding programming including the culturally responsive programming initiative (Goal 2, Strategic Action 3), the district-wide school rating initiative (Goal 1, Strategic Action 5), and the cluster-focused sequential arts feeder program (Goal 3, Strategic Action 2).

Step 2: Distribute MMU talking points, enlist MMU as advocates, and provide advocacy training

Work with MMU members after the above meeting and information session to create a clear, concise set of talking points for MMU members representing the organization to the public about the importance of music education and the items prioritized during the previous step, what resources or support they're soliciting or brokering, and what someone should do if they want to contribute or otherwise get involved.

Ensure that the MMU Advisory Council understands the importance of using correct terminology and justifications when engaging with MNPS or external stakeholders to avoid confusing or diluting the message.

- Identify an outside partner to provide advocacy training for MMU Advisory Council members, and schedule advocacy training for members.

Foster stakeholder and community engagement

Rallying community around the importance of visual and performing arts education.

Long-term feasibility and sustainability of this work depends greatly upon the degree to which the community sees VAPA education as a crucial piece of a well-rounded education and expresses this view. Steve Seidel, director of the Arts in Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, stresses the need for community engagement in VAPA education:

“If the community is organized and keeps saying ‘this is important’ to school and city leaders, they’ll pay attention and support it. Then, over time, when it becomes more embedded in the system, everyone will start seeing its benefits, and won’t want it to go away. And then it will be that much more difficult to eliminate, especially when there are changes in leadership.” (Gibson, 2016, p. 23)²

As highlighted by Seidel, this aspect is crucial, especially in districts without stable leadership, as it helps make this issue impervious to changes in leadership, both at the district and city level. Because of this and other structural aspects, advocating for arts education is crucial on multiple fronts: with district leadership and the board of education, principals, and teachers on one hand; with parents, partners, allies and local and state policymakers on the other. For some of these stakeholders we will also recommend working closely with formal advocacy organizations that track local school-district elections and/or urge increased state funding for arts education.



“I think a strategic communications effort is really important and I’m not saying it needs to be expansive, but it’s got to improve the culture such that the teachers and parents are talking about music and the arts as a differentiator for the Metro Public Schools

-MMU Advisory Council Member



The above will require a significant investment of time from the VAPA department, but the result will be a community that is organized around clear priorities and that rallies around the importance of the arts. A community that demands arts education from the district helps ensure that it becomes and remains a priority for the district.

Stakeholder groups that should be prioritized include:

1. Parents
2. Teachers
3. School Administrators
4. Mayor’s office
5. MMU Advisory Council

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² Gibson, C. (2016). BPS DANCING TO THE TOP How Collective Action Revitalized Arts Education in Boston. <https://www.edvestors.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BPS-Arts-Expansion-Case-Study.pdf>

All stakeholders

Step 1: Develop documents, tools, resources, and communication plans for each stakeholder group to use to speak on and advocate for the importance of VAPA education. Ideally, you will develop clear statements and talking points each stakeholder can use when discussing VAPA education with other stakeholders.

Step 2: Enlist all above stakeholders to make SEL and VAPA a priority for the district, and to advocate for a district-wide framework for SEL including VAPA. This will require outreach to leaders in each stakeholder group.

Parents

Step 1: Communicate to parents why VAPA are important and about other VAPA priorities and goals. This must be done as frequently and as widely as possible. Highlight SEL (Goal 1, Strategic Action 1) and culturally responsive programming (Goal 2, Strategic Action 3) during this process.

Step 2: Work with a group of highly engaged parents to create an advocacy committee. Time is best spent focusing on a small group of parents who are already highly engaged and can act as a multiplier amongst other parents and as an advocate with district stakeholders and school administrators. In order to help facilitate this work, share with them the resources developed above.

Teachers

The goal here is to mobilize VAPA educators to make their voices heard.

Step 1: Enlist an organization with advocacy expertise. There are many organizations at the local, state, and national, such as ArtsEd Tennessee and Americans for the Arts, with significant expertise and on teacher advocacy. It is important that whichever organization you decide to work with has expertise not only in teacher advocacy but also in the VAPA space.

Step 2: Enlist teacher leadership.

Step 3: Work with teachers and the expert organization to design a teacher advocacy plan. Successful plans in other districts have included:

- Advocacy training for teachers.
- Participation in mayoral and other city and district leadership debates.
- Dissemination of information through forums, social media, email blasts, and press releases.



- Consider public will building: One advocacy approach more organizations are gravitating towards is public will building, which is a way of building cross-sectoral support for VAPA education. “Public will building is a communication approach that builds public support for social change by integrating grassroots outreach methods with traditional mass media tools in a process that connects an issue to the existing, closely held values of individuals and groups. This approach leads to deeper public understanding and ownership of social change. It creates new and lasting community expectations that shape the way people act, think and behave” (Metropolitan Group, 2009. p.3).³

Step 4: Work with a wider network of teachers to:

- Encourage teachers to take advantage of their platforms to talk with parents and family members about the importance of VAPA education.
- Provide teachers with resources and talking points to be used to advocate for themselves, their courses, their students, and what they need to be successful with their principals.

School Administrators

Step 1: Support principals so they can advocate for increased resources (financial and otherwise) with the district, and with logistical support to expand VAPA as a priority.

Step 2: Provide messaging, resources, and materials (collected above) for principals to share with teachers, parents, and community members about the value of VAPA. Ideally, principals will become advocacy multipliers, helping enlist other stakeholders and helping you reach harder-to-reach audiences.



Mayor's office

VAPA in MNPS schools do not seem to be a priority for the city government. With the incoming mayor and cabinet, there is the potential to foster new relationships and cultivate allies within the city government.

MMU Advisory Council

As previously stated in Goal 1, Strategic Action 3, the MMU Advisory Council will be reoriented towards the role of advocate and connector.

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³ Metropolitan Group. (2009). Building Public Will: FIVE-PHASE COMMUNICATION APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE CHANGE. <https://www.metgroup.com/assets/Public-Will.pdf>

Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol

Design and implement an in-house district-wide school rating system for VAPA education.

“What gets measured gets done.” This saying is particularly true in the case of MNPS. With clear and standardized measures and test scores for core subjects such as math and ELA, it is easy for the school district to make data-based decisions to address issues in these areas. We’ve seen how emphasis in increasing these test scores has led to policies, such as double blocking in high schools (this will be further discussed in Goal 3), which have had significant negative impacts on VAPA education.

“By the government’s own estimation, NCLB’s narrow focus on achievement in reading and math led to decreased time spent on arts education, particularly in schools identified as ‘needing improvement’.”
-Daniel H. Bowen and Brian Kisida *“The art of partnerships: Community resources for arts education”*

Building VAPA education measures into the district evaluation plans or accountability systems will elevate the role of arts education and make the schools and districts accountable to providing quality VAPA education to all MNPS students.

This is not a phenomenon specific to MNPS. Several studies have analyzed the theory that the emphasis of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on core-subject testing was accompanied with a sharp decline of in-school VAPA education programming.^{4 5} Since the Every Student Succeeds Act, many school districts have incorporated VAPA indicators into their yearly reporting and accountability systems or developed district-wide VAPA evaluations and surveys. These districts include:

- New York City DOE⁶: Conducts the Annual Arts Education Survey.
- Chicago Public Schools⁷: Conducts the yearly Creative Schools Survey and implements The Creative Schools Certification which categorizes schools on a scale of 1–5 according to their level of arts instruction.
- Connecticut State Department of Education⁸: The Connecticut State Department of Education includes arts access as one of their 12 key indicators.
- New Jersey Department of Education⁹: Includes “% of school’s population enrolled in art classes” and “% of high school students enrolled in [dance/music/theater/visual arts]” in their school report cards.

We recommend you implement a model similar to the Creative School Certification developed in Chicago Public Schools. In this model, all schools will be assigned a VAPA-education grade based on a transparent set of criteria.

⁴ Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2009). Access to arts education: Inclusion of additional questions in education’s planned research would help explain why instruction time has decreased for some students. www.gao.gov/assets/290/286601.pdf

⁵ Bowen, M, & Kisida, B. (2017). The art of partnerships: Community resources for arts education. <https://kappanonline.org/art-partnerships-community-resources-arts-education/>

⁶ For more information refer to: <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/academics/annual-arts-in-schools-reports>

⁷ For more information refer to: <http://www.cpsarts.org/creative-schools-initiative/>

⁸ For more information refer to: http://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/nextgenFAQ_revisedJan2018.pdf

⁹ For more information refer to: <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/Documents/1819/ReferenceGuide.pdf>

Step 1: Design and workshop

Start by designing your VAPA-education rating system. This involves deciding what criteria will be included in the measurement and how these will be weighted. Consider including

- hours of instruction,
- percentage of students enrolled in VAPA courses,
- staffing ratio,
- percentage of students from different demographics,
- number of cultural partnerships, and
- program availability (e.g., culturally responsive programs, SEL-VAPA integration, arts integration).

When making these determinations, consider what information is easily accessible for the VAPA department and what information or indicators you will need to collect through additional means.

Finally, workshop this draft design with district and school administrators (including executive directors) to gather feedback and suggestions.

Step 2: Beta test

Once the design has been finalized, beta test the VAPA-education rating system on a smaller scale for the 2020–2021 school year.

Use this beta test to confirm availability and formatting of data as well as developing a semi-automated data input format that will allow you to collect information and conduct grading on a wider level. Semi-automating this process will be key for the district-wide implementation as the work will be done in-house.

Step 3: Share learning with other districts and learn from theirs

MNPS is not working in a vacuum: many other school districts across the country are actively working on increasing and measuring access to and the quality of arts education for their students. Some of these districts have similar populations or have been through similar problems.

Use this as an opportunity to collaborate with other districts implementing similar grading systems.

Step 4: Adjust and conduct district-wide rating

Include lessons learned during the beta testing period and adjust the design of the rating accordingly. Conduct the first district-wide rating for the 2021–2022 school year.

Step 5: Communicate rating results

Report out and communicate to stakeholders about outcomes for students as they relate to VAPA and the VAPA-education school-rating system. This rating will also be a valuable resource for parents, teachers, and school administrators to advocate for increased resources for their schools' VAPA programs. Additionally, this data should be used to complement the equity distribution list mentioned in Goal 2.

Step 6: Advocate for the inclusion of VAPA in a district-wide school report card

Advocate for the inclusion of VAPA measures in an integrated school-level report which includes elements from both the newly developed VAPA-education grade and summarized indicators from the district's multiple disaggregated data collection sources such as

- SEL walkthroughs,
- ELA and Math test scores,
- School Climate Survey,
- Family Engagement Survey,
- Neighborhood and Wellbeing Survey, and
- other key indicators such as demographics, graduation rates, and school attendance rates.

Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville

Work towards increased coordination and collaboration with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville.

Academies of Nashville

"The Academies of Nashville provide students with one of the best college and career prep experiences in the nation. Students have a choice of 36 different academies within the largest 12 neighborhood high schools offering a practical, hands-on approach to learning in fields that interest them ranging from engineering to healthcare." (MNPS the Academies of Nashville)¹⁰

Academies are divided into specific pathways which are available at different schools throughout the district. Out of the 36 available pathways, 4 include VAPA-related programs, including:

- Academy of Arts and Communication (or Academy of Art, Design, & Communication) , with available VAPA programs on Audio/Visual Production, Digital Arts & Design, and Visual Arts
- Academy of Design & Technology, with available VAPA programs on Audio Production, Audio/Visual Production, and the Recording Industry

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¹⁰ Taken from <https://www.academiesofnashville.com/academies-of-nashville>

- The CMT Academy of Digital Design & Communication with available VAPA programs on Audio Production, Audio/Visual Production, and Digital Arts & Design
- Academy of Design & Technology, with an available VAPA program on Digital Arts & Design

Currently, VAPA programming provided as part of the Academies-related curriculum is categorized as career and technical education rather than VAPA education. Since these courses and teachers are managed separately from traditional VAPA programming, the VAPA department has no supervisory or advisory role in those programs, teachers are not invited to VAPA professional development, and physical resources such as recording materials and instruments are not shared with VAPA teachers.

We recommend you:

- Engage with district leadership and clearly communicate this as an opportunity for increased coordination and synergies between programs.
- Meet with district, Academies, and Pencil Foundation leadership to discuss the issue and identify potential areas of increased coordination that will benefit students and teachers in both programs. This can include finding a way for academy teachers to take advantage of VAPA professional development and exploring solutions to the obstacles to sharing physical resources with VAPA teachers.

STEAM department

“Metro Nashville Public Schools is undertaking a teaching and learning transformation in each of our middle schools. Starting with the 2017–2018 school year, MNPS will implement a STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) approach into all middle schools. In a STEAM learning environment, students are challenged to think critically, be creative and communicate and collaborate with their peers. This empowers our students to better understand how their specific skills fit into our complex world.” (MNPS STEAM)¹¹

Currently, MNPS has 18 official STEAM schools and an additional 5 elementary magnet schools who participate in the STEAM Expeditions program. However, the degree to which each of these 18 schools implements the STEAM methodology varies, especially the “A”. There are significant concerns around the role of the arts in STEAM and how the arts can have a more prominent role in the STEAM program.

We recommend you:

- Continue collaborating with the STEAM department and advocating for increased arts participation in STEAM programming and for STEAM partnerships to be driven strategically to increase the exposure of arts and their connectivity to other district goals such as SEL.
- Work to involve additional VAPA partners in the STEAM Expeditions program. This will help expand the number of arts-related experiences students at STEAM schools can access.

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¹¹ Taken from: <https://www.mnps.org/steam>

- Advocating for increased arts integration: Arts are a valuable vehicle for learning-content standards. Through arts integration, students can use multiple art forms to strengthen their understanding of other, non-arts core STEAM courses. However, arts integration is not currently happening, and the VAPA department has neither the resources nor capacity to implement an arts integration strategy. For these reasons we recommend the VAPA department advocate for additional resources from the STEAM department to be allocated towards teacher training and professional development focused on arts integration. Although this strategy should be led by the STEAM department, the VAPA team can and should collaborate and provide advice, including acting as a connector with arts organizations with expertise in arts integration.

GOAL 1 BENCHMARKS

Goal 1: VAPA is a priority for the district and is integrated into district planning

Strategic Actions

- SA1.1 Position VAPA as a district Social emotional learning (SEL) leader
- SA1.2 Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities
- SA1.3 Reorient Music Makes Us (MMU) Advisory Council
- SA1.4 Foster stakeholder and community engagement
- SA1.5 Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol
- SA1.6 Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville

Benchmarks

Year	Benchmarks
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 20% of partners report having adjusted offerings to meet district strategic priorities 2. Importance of VAPA is highlighted at regular parent meetings and other parent communication opportunities 3. At least one VAPA PD is SEL related
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 50% of partners report providing offerings to meet district strategic priorities 2. Increased arts integration in STEAM schools relative to Year 1 3. Advisory board members report using talking points in their communication with others as they advocate for district priorities 4. Communication plans and tools regularly used by each respective stakeholder group. Evidence of stakeholder coordination on key messages 5. VAPA are integrated in district SEL framework 6. Partners mention MNPS VAPA objectives in their end of year report or other communication or marketing materials
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 90% of partners report providing offerings that meet district strategic priorities 2. Further increased arts integration in STEAM schools 3. Principals across the district recognize VAPA as a key tool for SEL implementation in their schools. ED's regularly discussing VAPA SEL with their teams and superiors in the district. 4. VAPA are explicitly included in district priorities



GOAL 2: VAPA RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED AND PRIORITIES ARE SET WITH EQUITY IN MIND

Goal 2 is designed to center equity as a critical pillar of district priorities with regard to VAPA. Many of the steps outlined here are connected to activities in Goal 1 and Goal 3; the focus here is on ensuring that specific strategy for equitable allocation of resources and opportunities remains a focal point and that there are clear steps to achieving that goal.

Currently, opportunities for students to participate in quality, diverse program offerings are not distributed equally or equitably in the district.

For example, some of the VAPA programs require external funding for items such as equipment and transportation to competitions and concerts. In order to participate in these programs, either families need to contribute or the students need to conduct multiple fundraisers. The strategic actions below are designed to address some of the inequities in the system and to ensure that an awareness of inequity is brought into VAPA, MNPS, and partner decision-making.

Strategic Actions:

1. Implement a customer-service approach: Work to implement a “teacher-centered bureaucracy” with increased efficiency and reduced burden on teachers and school administrators.
2. Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources: Develop partner relationships and distribute partner resources in ways that will serve to diminish inequities.

3. Invest in a culturally responsive VAPA education initiative: Develop and pilot a culturally responsive teaching and programming initiative that reflects the needs and cultural backgrounds of the diverse populations of MNPS students..

Implement a customer-service approach

Work to implement a “teacher-centered bureaucracy” with increased efficiency and reduced burden on teachers and school administrators.

Currently, excess bureaucracy limits opportunities for teachers and schools. During our work, we found that teachers complain vociferously of the burdens of constantly having to work within an overcomplicated bureaucracy, spending valuable time figuring out and then filling out complicated forms which change multiple times within one school year. The perception, then, is that not only are their needs not being considered in the planning process, but that the planning is not even being done thoughtfully in the first place. For teachers and principals, paperwork is a serious issue—formats are being changed with alarming frequency, the information being collected belies a lack of understanding of the basic day-to-day realities of life in the schools, and the sheer volume of paperwork makes it hard for teachers to do their work. Ultimately, this leads directly to teacher burnout and to missed opportunities for students—often teachers decide it is either not feasible or possible to complete the necessary paperwork, and so just don’t pursue opportunities for their students. They are angry about this. It is also important to note that this hasn’t always been the case. The amount of paperwork required by the district has only increased in recent years as has the rate of change.

The VAPA department devotes significant time and energy into procuring resources from cultural partners, only to have them not reach teachers (and students) because the barriers to



“We are now having to fill out facility use forms to use our own classrooms, we are getting more red tape and bureaucracy, it’s like we see way down at the end at all these resources and all these wonderful things but we are all just so weary and tired to go get them.”

“All of a sudden we have to do twice the paperwork, and it’s a hideous amount of paperwork, and we are overworked, our baseline is exhausted, that is where we start and you pile on more of that kind of work. I do feel like there are a lot of great resources, and [the VAPA Office] has done a great job bringing them our way, but its like you can’t access everything that is available because you don’t have the time to fill out the paperwork.”

“There are a lot of resources available, but they feel so far away because there are so many hurdles that we have to jump through to get to those resources.”

“You put so much time into preparing these young people that you don’t have the time to sit down to do paperwork for hours to give them an opportunity to perform. I think it is unfair to them because the amount of paperwork that goes into doing things that are for these kids you are actually taking away your ability to provide and work for these kids. This is quality time that I could spend studying and picking out new music or working one-on-one with students. Instead I am sitting here doing paperwork.”

-MNPS VAPA teachers



accessing them are too high. Furthermore, since the teachers that do apply to receive resources are often those who have the additional time and/or personnel to devote to this work, this problem further contributes to the unequal distribution of resources and programming across the district.

Customer service is the support you give to your customers, which in this case are your teachers. Effective customer service means listening to your clientele, anticipating their needs, and responding to their evolving environment. In other words, this strategic action is about supporting your teachers and making sure their job is as easy as possible.

Good customer service means higher customer retention (decreasing teacher turnover) and growth (higher quality of VAPA education). By putting a stronger focus on customer service, you will help reduce barriers faced by teachers so they can focus on doing what they do best: teach.

Step 1: Study the “customer- service” style approach from other sectors or districts

In order to accomplish this, start by researching how this “customer service” style approach is being implemented beyond traditional sales environments.

Over the past two decades, colleges and universities across the country have started to consider a customer-service-style approach where the student is identified as the customer. This has led to the growth of capacity and infrastructure constructed around students’ experiences such as course delivery and resource availability (e.g., textbooks and software), amongst others. Research by Cornell’s Higher Education Research Institute found that increased expenditure on student services had a positive effect on graduation rates and student retention rates.

Other school districts and VAPA divisions are also taking a customer-service approach to their work. Dallas ISD Office of Fine Arts has made customer service one of their three main strategic goals. Tim Linley, Executive Director, Visual and Performing Arts describes this as *“a service that’s fast, friendly, focused and flexible, it is a culture that permeates the district. Here they [teachers] have a team of 10 people who are working to facilitate their needs, which we put on the same level of importance as student achievement and student engagement”*.

Step 2: Identify challenges for increased customer service

Gather teacher and administrator feedback to identify what processes are creating the most friction, are most confusing and or time-consuming, and which can potentially be changed.

Teacher feedback will be collected through the Teacher Support and Program Survey, which will replace the existing Teacher Support Survey. This new survey will ask teachers about their needs, both from the district and the VAPA department (customer service challenges)

and from outside partners (Goal 2, Strategic Action 2). The survey will also include a third section about culturally responsive teaching practices and programming (Goal 2, Strategic Action 3). As with the current Teacher Support Survey, teachers will fill out the Teacher Support and Program Survey at the beginning of the school year. One cohesive survey will minimize the time required from teachers, a fundamental goal of creating the teacher-centered bureaucracy that serves teachers so they can better serve students.

Administrator feedback will be collected through the inclusion of two or three customer service questions in the Yearly Principal Survey.

Prioritize gathering feedback that targets the following questions:

- How fast are we able to serve our campuses?
- How fast do we respond to requests for art supplies or instruments, or for repairs?
- What formats/forms have changed the most in the last years? Which ones are taking up the most time for teachers? What forms/formats are the most critical?
- What (non-teaching activity) are teachers spending the most time on?

Step 3: Work with the district to address barriers identified in step 2

The source of some of the issues identified above and during step 2 will not solely depend on the VAPA department. This means that you will need to work closely with other district offices and workers in order to address these barriers.

1. Conduct workshops with district workers in charge of creating processes to see how these can be simplified.
2. Present new and simplified processes to teachers and schools administrators.
3. Get district commitment to making changes to forms and procedures once a year at the beginning of the school year (if needed, and at the most).

Step 4: Implement a cultural shift within the VAPA team

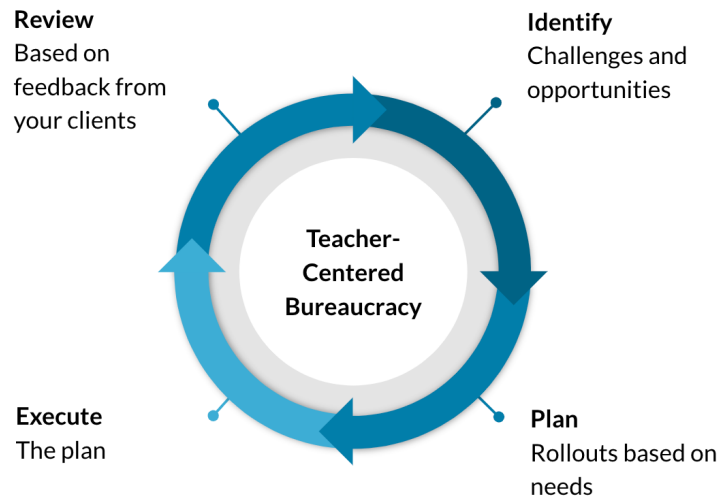
Developing a teacher-centered bureaucracy requires you to build a culture of customer service within the VAPA team. To do this right, this culture must be embraced from the top down and from the bottom up. During this step, work with the VAPA team to make this a priority and interiorize this in their day-to-day interactions with teachers and schools. Ground the team's decisions around customer service, through a teacher-centered lens, and have them ask themselves, "How can we best support teachers in providing high-quality VAPA education to all students?"

In order to do this, you must empower the VAPA team (with district leadership support) to be able to make said changes in their day to day and to advocate for larger institutional and systemic changes.

Step 5: Institute a long-term continuous improvement process

Since a significant part of the success of this work will depend on others beyond the VAPA department—and since teachers' needs and expectations do not remain static—this will be a long-term process of continuous improvement as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6: Teacher-Centered Bureaucracy: A Continuous Improvement Process



Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources

Develop partner relationships and distribute partner resources in ways that will serve to diminish inequities.

Cultural partner programming coordination

In Goal 1, coordination began with partners around specific district-wide objectives. In Goal 2, we outline the steps to ensure that those priorities address the classroom- and school-level needs that will increase equity across the district.

As mentioned in Goal 1, partnerships function with little coordination between the VAPA department and the cultural partners. Similarly, there is not much coordination between schools and cultural partners, where partnerships are based on the individual relationships rather than a strategic deployment of services with equity considerations.

Schools and teachers apply to grants and programming individually when they can find them, but for the most part they do not know what is out there and available to them. This means that services are not necessarily reaching the schools and students that most need them, since it is the less burdened teachers who are able to hunt for what services are out there.

This strategy is designed to keep equity as a guiding principle for service and resource distribution through strategic deployment and democratization of access to said assets.

Figure 7: Partnership Coordination Strategy



Partnership coordination strategy:

1. Partners will report current programming every set period of time (each semester perhaps)
 - a. If the timeline established for partner reporting is on a yearly or semester basis, partners commit to also reporting any new programming created during the semester.
2. Partner programming is then centralized by the VAPA department, who will keep an internal dataset of partner programs and services.
3. The partnership coordinator will share and highlight those programs and partnerships frequently and regularly—we recommend a weekly or biweekly communication with teachers, but whatever schedule is chosen, the regular nature of it is important for teacher engagement and to provide a sense of accountability.
4. In-person events will be held to facilitate school-based stakeholder and partner interactions.
5. This strategy is meant to increase access to programming for a wider range of teachers and students. To further increase focus on equity, partners will be provided with an arts equity distribution list to prioritize how they distribute their services.

Step 1: Formally designate a partnership coordinator

While much of this work is currently being done either formally or informally, and while currently, the department has a strategic partnership coordinator for Music Makes Us®, this role needs to be officially expanded to include non-music partnerships. This more hands-on approach towards partnership coordination will require a point person in the VAPA department. This partnership-coordinator role will help schools and cultural partners build stronger relationships, while also acting as a distribution center to connect cultural partners with higher needs schools. By making this partnership-coordinating role explicit, VAPA

department will ensure that appropriate time is allocated, and that the role is permanently integrated into VAPA HR decisions.

Step 2: Assess needs and expand categories of partners

The next step after establishing a partnership coordinator role is to work with teachers to understand the existing gaps in current program and service delivery (beyond paperwork and knowledge of the program) that prevent them from accessing those resources. As mentioned in Goal 2, Strategic Action 1, this will be done through the Teacher Support and Program Survey at the beginning of the school year.

By understanding where the gaps are (i.e., transportation to service providers and cultural partner locations), the VAPA team will be able to actively search for and recruit providers that go beyond arts enrichment.

Step 3: Build an equity distribution list

The goal of this list is to help guide partner organizations to distribute resources. Ideally, this list will prioritize or otherwise identify schools based on some clearly identified equity considerations. It is important to note that this list does not mean that partner organizations cannot choose to work with low-priority schools, it is simply meant to be a guide to help with decision-making and to further align partners to VAPA organizational priorities.

When building this list, we recommend you consider things such as:

- School demographics
- Enrollment percentage in VAPA courses
- VAPA teacher-to-student ratio
- Number of existing VAPA partnerships
- Access (or lack thereof) to other outside resources

Once a district-level data collection strategy (as mentioned in Goal 1) has been established and implemented, this information can be used to update this equity priority list.

Step 4: Workshop with partners

As mentioned in Goal 1, Strategic Action 2, “Coordinate with outside partners on the district’s strategic priorities,” you will utilize the partner workshop to help bridge the gap between schools and partners.

The workshops can be used to communicate to VAPA partners that equity will be a guiding principle for program allocation for VAPA. Here is also the time to share this new centralized approach towards partnership-making which includes a clear commitment from partners to:

- Attend and participate in matchmaking events once or twice a year.

- Adapt and orient their program and service portfolio to VAPA department goals.
- Use an arts equity distribution list to prioritize how they distribute their services.
- Periodically report on programs and services, and inform the VAPA department partnership coordinator of new programming and or grants. Periodicity of reporting should either be decided with partner input, or determined before this meeting and appropriately communicated to partners.
- Agree that all services and programming will be approved by the VAPA department prior to its implementation.

Step 5: Design and deploy partner reporting

Once partners have been involved, design and deploy the partner-programming reporting system. We recommend you automate this process and have partner organizations self report programming through a cloud-based service or survey link. Additional or personalized support can be provided by the partnership coordinator to new partners.

This partner reporting system should be simple enough for partners to fill out, but should also provide the partnership coordinator with enough information to properly inform schools about opportunities.

Step 6: Facilitate school-based stakeholder and partner interactions

It is the VAPA department responsibility to facilitate teacher and administrator interaction with cultural partners and service providers. These opportunities for partners and teachers to come together will help increase each side’s understanding of each other’s work and needs while also exposing more teachers to what is available.

Some potential meetings we recommend are:

- Professional Development sessions provided by partner organizations to increase exposure from said organizations to teachers.
- Matchmaking events: The goal of “speed dating” or “career fair” type events is to introduce teachers to available programming and create direct connections between the organizations and teachers.

Additionally, to ensure these meetings are as productive as possible, we encourage you to act as a translator and guide between both worlds. Often, teachers and partners speak different languages



and use sector-specific vocabulary. Provide partners with the language and knowledge of context and systems necessary to speak with school-based stakeholders and inform them of the “customer-service” based approach that VAPA is committed to establishing.

Step 7: Ongoing support

It is important to note that this will not be a one-time effort. With high teacher turnover and new programs and services being created for schools, meetings between school-based stakeholders and cultural partners need to happen periodically to ensure their success.

This final step of ongoing support includes:

- Continuous maintenance of internal partner-programming-and-service database.
- Biweekly newsletters with pertinent partner-programming information.
- Periodic review of the process to find opportunities to lower any burden on teachers or partners, or improve outcomes for students.

Invest in a culturally responsive VAPA education initiative

Develop and pilot a culturally responsive teaching and programming initiative that reflects the needs and cultural backgrounds of the diverse populations of MNPS students.

MNPS has grown into a highly diverse district with students from 130 countries who speak 139 languages.¹² As more students from culturally diverse backgrounds enter schools, there is an increased need for cultural responsiveness practices in the VAPA classroom. Furthermore, the district has made an explicit commitment to “cultivating an environment that produces excellence for a diverse student body” (MNPS Diversity)¹³ with two of the district’s nine core values referring to the district’s commitment to its cultural, racial, ethnic, and language diversity.

Figure 8: MNPS Core Values

EQUITY – We believe in equitable access and opportunities for all students from early childhood through graduation.

DIVERSITY – We value, respect, and celebrate students, staff, and educators from different backgrounds.

It is important to note that lack of diversity, representation, or inclusivity in VAPA programming was not highlighted in Spark’s research and only tangentially referred to in the Music Education Needs Assessment. However, programs that are culturally representative, such as the MNPS Mariachi Band program¹⁴, were consistently recognized as some of the most valuable, innovative, and sought after programs for schools. Many stakeholders identified these programs as one of the VAPA strengths in the district. MNPS should build on this work by further incorporating culturally responsive teaching practices into existing programming and designing and implementing new culturally responsive programs that meet the needs and interests of students with culturally diverse backgrounds and expand on existing partnerships.

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¹² MNPS. Quick Guide to Metro Schools, 2019–2020

¹³ MNPS Diversity <https://www.mnps.org/diversit>

¹⁴ For more information refer to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBXVLXKb2Vg&feature=youtu.be>

Program Spotlight: Culturally Responsive VAPA Programs in MNPS*



Mariachi

This class provides an opportunity for students to learn the music and culture of Mariachi. Students learn instrumental and vocal skills to perform and preserve the traditional music of Mexico. The class provides instruction in Violin, Trumpet, Harp, Guitarrón, Vihuela, Guitar, Voice and Music Theory. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals.



World Percussion

Students learn standards based percussion technical and performance skills, enhanced by historical and cultural background knowledge of percussion instruments. Public performances may serve as a culmination of specific instructional goals.



Discussions for Learning

D4L Is an oral vocabulary and learning program. Works of fine art and real-world photographs from around the world form the visual foundation of the program. These images have been carefully chosen for their visual impact, their thought-provoking content, and their appeal for students. They represent diverse cultures, time periods, art media, and perspectives.



Theater for Social Change

Theatre for social change games are designed to create community and engage that community in dialogue. The techniques used come from Augusto Boal who designed his methodology for all citizens, not just actors. He said, "We are all actors. Being a citizen does not mean living in the world, it is changing it."

*Other culturally responsive programs include: West African Dance and Rock Band.

Step 1: Understanding teachers cultural competency and programming needs

As described above, the Teacher Support and Program Survey (initially introduced in Goal 2, Strategic Action 1), should include questions about

1. teachers cultural competency, and
2. schools programming needs.

The responses from these questions can be analyzed in order to establish a baseline cultural-competency among VAPA teachers, including areas of opportunity for improvement, existing resources and expertise among them, and identifying what cultural competency needs are most pressing.

This survey should also be used to identify gaps in programming, areas of opportunity for improvement, and what additional content will need to be developed. Finally, this will also be an important resource when identifying best schools for the pilot program in step 3.

Step 2: Identify resources

As we have mentioned multiple times in this strategic plan, the VAPA department has for many years harnessed deep and meaningful partnerships with a wide variety of partners with different expertise. Utilize these relationships and conduct targeted outreach to new and existing partners who offer culturally responsive programs, tools, and training on culturally responsive practices.

Choose best-fit available programming and assess whether changes are necessary or if a new curriculum needs to be created.

Step 3: Identify schools for pilot program

Implementing a district-wide culturally responsive initiative is a vast and expensive undertaking which is why we recommend piloting with a small cohort of schools. This will keep the process more manageable as well as allow you to test and revise curriculum and partnerships more rapidly, and to consider lessons learned from the pilot in any expansion.

Ideal schools for the pilot will be those with little culturally responsive programs currently being offered, those with a high percentage of immigrant students, and under-resourced schools. They should also be those with stable administrations, and enthusiastic principals and VAPA teachers. The final number of pilot schools selected for this phase will depend on the capacity and resources you are able to allocate to this work.

Step 4: Adapt curriculum for context-specific needs

Work with partners previously identified to adapt the identified curriculum for professional

development on culturally responsive teaching practices as well as new programs, for the context-specific needs of the pilot schools. Take into consideration the nature of the pilot schools' diversity, including relevant information like the backgrounds of the students and their native or second languages.

Step 4: Implementation

Implement pilot programming in selected schools for two years starting in the 2021–2022 school year. This will include:

- Making investments in professional development for VAPA teachers at pilot schools at all levels. Two types of professional development will be needed
 - a. Program specific (for new programs developed): When starting new culturally responsive programs at each school, it is critical teachers understand the cultures they are teaching and demonstrate the capacity to impart lessons respectfully.
 - b. Culturally responsive practices: Ensure that all teachers are implementing culturally responsive practices into existing courses.
- Directing a portion of the new instrument budget each year toward establishing new or strengthening existing culturally responsive programs.

Step 5: Highlight this culturally responsive programming initiative to parent and community groups

As mentioned in Goal 1, parent and community engagement in VAPA is fundamental to ensure program sustainability. Outside of the classroom, VAPA activities are intimately connected to values and customs and are one way we transmit our values and customs from generation to generation; culturally responsive programming is a great vehicle to get parents, especially immigrants, engaged.

Step 6: Further incorporate culturally responsive programming into sequential learning and expand into phase two schools

On year 1.5 of the pilot program, start collecting lessons learned from pilot schools, teachers, and students. Throughout the semester, work to integrate these lessons learned, and adjust curriculum and program implementation for cohort two schools.

Apply the same Teacher Support and Program Survey implemented in Step 1 to pilot and non-pilot VAPA teachers. This will allow you to understand how the program has impacted teachers in the pilot program, identify areas for improvement, and identify schools to be selected for cohort 2 of the program.

GOAL 2 BENCHMARKS

Goal 2: VAPA resources are allocated and priorities are set with equity in mind

Strategic Actions

SA2.1 Implement a customer service approach

SA2.2 Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources

SA2.3 Invest in a culturally responsive VAPA education initiative

Benchmarks

Year 1

1. Teacher Support and Program Survey implemented with customer service focused questions
2. Majority of partners (>50%) successfully participating in new partnership coordination strategy

Year 3

1. Culturally responsive programming implemented in pilot schools
2. 80% of partners successfully participating in new partnership coordination strategy
3. Schools categorized as high priority have at least 3 partnerships
4. Annual increase in average teacher satisfaction in Teacher Support and Program Survey

Year 5

1. Culturally responsive programming implemented in cohort 2 schools
2. Yearly decrease in VAPA education inequity as shown in the annual VAPA school rating
3. Decrease in teacher turnover



GOAL 3: VAPA RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED AND PRIORITIES ARE SET WITH EQUITY IN MIND

Many schools are having to end long-standing programs at their schools due to low student enrollment, reasons for which include double blocking in high schools, lack of culturally responsive curricular offerings, and a lack of formal feeder programs to ensure sequential enrollment. As a result, class sizes and student participation are down. Then, in order to keep their head count up, VAPA teachers are being required to teach other subjects rather than their specialty, impacting both access and quality.

Strategic Actions:

1. Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning: Addressing the impacts of double blocking and freshman seminars by vociferously advocating for new scheduling practices.
2. Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs: Create a coordinated strategy at the cluster level to guarantee sequential arts learning.
3. Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers: Better align supply and demand for professional development, and ensure VAPA teachers have ready access to the PD available to them.

Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning

Addressing the impacts of double blocking and freshman seminars through advocating for new scheduling practices.

Double blocking of ELA and math classes has significantly reduced student choice by decreasing and sometimes eliminating the number of electives a student can take. Since this is mostly focused on freshman and sophomore year students, it is having a downstream effect on VAPA participation in junior and senior year classes.

Step 1: Advocate

Communicate with district leadership about the known issues of double blocking and potential strategies to address them.

As the district is currently considering eliminating double blocking for high school students, the VAPA department must become a strong advocate for change. Assess whether it is possible to get buy-in for incremental or systemic changes to current double-blocking rules. Find and foster allies to help advocate for the desired change.

Step 2: Assess feasibility of above

If feasible, pursue changes to double-blocking rules as outlined in Step 3 below, otherwise, explore a backup plan. How will you make sure that students will have the option of participating in VAPA courses? Consider half-semester courses, increased after-school programming, arts integration, or online options for other required courses, amongst other options.

Step 3: Work with a scheduling consultant that can help find ways to address and assess critical needs, failures, and constraints

This work will benefit greatly from outside expertise on scheduling. A scheduling consultant can help find appropriate alternatives to double blocking that address core-subject test scores without compromising available time for electives and VAPA courses. Specifically address the phasing out or diminishing of double blocking, or mitigation of its effects if not possible.

MNPS already partners with multiple organizations, such as Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, who provide this type of service to school districts and can act as an external partner to advocate and provide tangible options to address the needs of the district and the needs of the VAPA department.

Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs

Create a coordinated strategy at the cluster level to guarantee sequential arts learning.

Currently, there is little to no coordination between elementary, middle, and high schools designed to create a cohesive and sequential arts program for students from elementary through high school. These types of programs are usually referred to as feeder programs. Feeder programs refer “most commonly to programs for students in earlier grades that are designed to prepare them for higher level participation in a particular area of study. For example, students enrolled in elementary band would then “feed into” middle school or high school band programs. The elimination of such feeder programs has a detrimental effect on further music participation in higher grades.” (Benham, 2010, p.198)¹⁵

Many students reach high school without the knowledge or experience they need to successfully participate in certain programs. Other students participate in great programs in elementary or middle school only to attend middle or high schools where they don’t have an opportunity to further their interest and deepen their skills because the schools do not offer such programs.

This situation has significant trickle-down effects. Lack of a feeder program reduces enrollment in more advanced classes. Low enrollment signals to the school that a specific course is not in demand, which is often used as justification for budget and course cuts. This often means that talented, motivated teachers with highly specialized knowledge who were recruited to strengthen VAPA opportunities for students are underutilized and their abilities squandered. This, in turn, leads to additional challenges to teacher retention.

Fortunately, MNPS clusters provide a unique way to create clear feeder programs that respond to individual schools’ unique populations, identities, and circumstances as well as the needs of the specific and diverse communities they serve. While this plan, if successfully implemented, will positively impact a great many MNPS students, it does not address these problems for students that go to magnet schools or non-zoned schools. We’ve chosen to focus on this as the key near-term priority because it has the potential to impact the most students—with secondary impacts on magnet school students as well.

Step 1: Assess the situation and identify the barriers with cluster-level meetings with principals and executive directors and agree on a plan and strategy

In line with Metro Schools’ ReimaginED initiative, which seeks to reimagine how to strengthen academic pathways with a focus on cluster climate and culture, this first step will require VAPA to work with each cluster to diagnose its current situation and create individualized cluster-level plans to create feeder programs.

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¹⁵ Benham, J.L. (2010). Music Advocacy: Moving From Survival to Vision.

During these initial meetings, the VAPA department will present the issue to school administrators and start an assessment of the current situation within the cluster. Important aspects that should be covered include:

- What classes are available at each level in each of the cluster schools? Use this to identify gaps in the cluster.
- Are any of the courses in high and middle schools having issues with enrollment that could be addressed through this feeder program?
- Are there any important considerations regarding the quality of any of the courses?
- Are any of the schools in the cluster moving towards adding/removing courses?
- Where is exceptional teaching occurring in the cluster that MNPS may want to build on?
- What is the cultural makeup of the cluster and how should that be considered in pursuing cluster-wide curriculum development for feeder programs?
- Is there any program that should be prioritized?

It will also be important for principals to include VAPA teachers at each school in the discussions.

With the completed diagnostic, the cluster will then agree on a strategy to add, modify, or restructure existing courses. Where possible, prioritize addressing issues with existing classes on a school-by-school basis before adding any new classes.

Step 2: Identify additional resources

Although it is important to restructure existing VAPA programming and resources in the schools to align with the cluster-specific feeder program, some additional resources will be necessary to properly equip new courses. These can include additional staff, instruments, professional development, or facilities adequation.

1. Identify funding (partners) for necessary staff/resources, or other resources
2. Procure funding from district for additional teachers or other resources
3. Communicate with parents and partners to increase advocacy

Step 3: Embed customer-service principles to support any changes

As described above, a customer-service approach will be critical to improving outcomes for teachers and students. Here, our customers are both teachers and students. VAPA team members, and school administrators alike should be working together with customer-service principles in mind to ensure that teachers are able to coordinate the curriculum into a cluster-wide feeder system as much as possible. The more teachers are able to raise issues to administrators with confidence, the easier it will be to remove those obstacles and improve teacher satisfaction in the process.

Consider establishing some clear, written principles of customer-service approaches that school administrators and MNPS and VAPA staff agree to pursue.

Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers

Better align supply and demand for professional development, and ensure VAPA teachers have ready access to the PD available to them.

Within the district, there is a disconnect between supply and demand for VAPA teacher professional development. Although the district organizes professional development sessions targeted towards VAPA teachers, there is a perception among teachers that PDs are conducted mostly by other district teachers because it is difficult to bring in outside clinicians. This perception contributes to low teacher attendance. Due to low teacher attendance at PD, the district finds it difficult to justify the cost involved in bringing in outside clinicians. This means that in order to comply with the required hours of PD, most VAPA teachers are attending full-school PD sessions. However, these sessions are designed for core-subject teachers and not fully relevant for them.

Additionally, teachers and principals want to attend more outside VAPA professional development that is provided by arts-education organizations. However, partner organizations that provide professional development for VAPA teachers are having trouble finding teachers to attend. This shows, once more, the disconnect between schools and partner organizations.

Further coordination between schools, district, teachers, and partners is needed to create a cohesive PD action plan that addresses teachers' needs and desires while also working within logistical and financial constraints for the district and schools.

Step 1: Communicate with teachers and schools about the problem and need for a solution

Since this is as much of a demand as it is a supply issue, teachers and school administrators must be consulted from the beginning. For school administrators, communicate with principals about the problem and need for a solution. For VAPA teachers, start by communicating your plans to include their feedback into PD planning on a yearly basis and their input to improve the relevance of and access to PD for them.

It is important that teachers feel part of the process in order to increase teacher attendance. Not only will you ensure that you are properly addressing any barriers to access, but teachers will also be more likely to attend as the topics will be more closely aligned with their needs.

Step 2: Convene or survey teachers about what kind of PD they want and identify barriers to PD access

Solicit teacher input to improve relevance of and access to PD for them through either a survey or during a VAPA teacher convening.

The advantage of conducting regularly scheduled surveys is that you will be able to collect unbiased information from a wider range of teachers, something that is harder to obtain during in-person convenings. To make sure that this survey does not become an extra strain on teachers' already limited time, it should be a maximum of five questions, easily answered in three minutes with no open-ended questions, and the results of the survey must be communicated back to teachers, along with clear steps for how VAPA will address the identified needs.

Some of this work was already done with music teachers during the needs assessment conducted for MMU. Figure 9 shows music teachers' most requested PD sessions. Figure 10 shows the music teachers' responses to why they did not complete all 5 days of required PD. Although these questions can and should be slightly rephrased and implemented on a regular basis, they do provide a jumping off point for the VAPA department to start working from.

Figure 9: Music Teachers' Requested Professional Development Supports (2017-2018).
 Source: MMU Needs Assessment Report

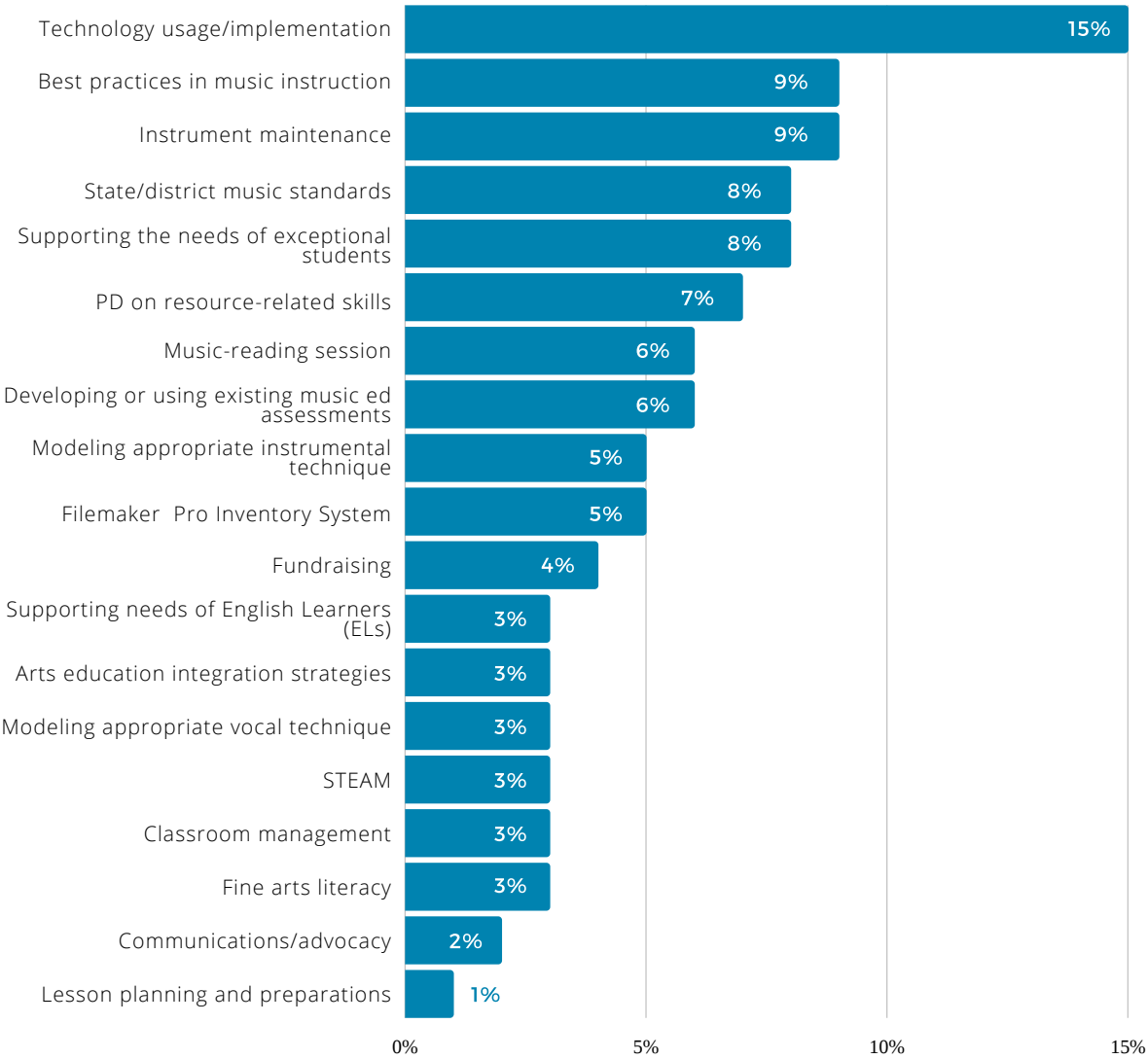
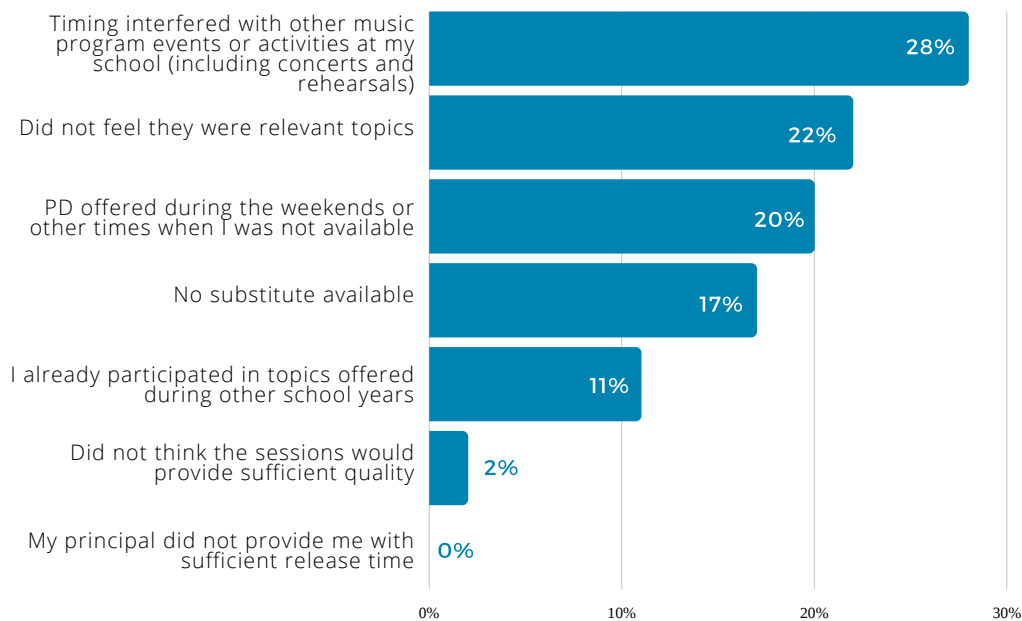


Figure 10: Reasons Teachers Did Not Complete All Five PD Days (2017–2018).

Source: MMU Needs Assessment Report



Step 3: Build a PD plan for the year

With barriers and topics of interest identified during the previous step, use this information to create a discipline-specific and age-specific VAPA PD plan that is not dependent on other district teachers. Ideally, this plan should start with at least one in-person “rockstar” PD in one of the subjects identified by teachers as a priority. The idea behind this is to get teachers excited about the VAPA department PD offerings in order to increase attendance. Ensuring higher attendance to PD sessions will make it easier for the VAPA department to justify expenses on PD sessions with outside moderators.

Other aspects that should be considered in this PD plan:

- Further integrate arts providers into the PD plan: As mentioned previously, teachers are not taking full advantage of current PD provided by external partner organizations such as Quaver Music, Tennessee Performing Arts Center (TPAC), Nashville Shakespeare Festival, Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, and Nashville Ballet.
- This is a clear opportunity to increase alignment between partner organizations and the district by integrating them in a cohesive way into the district’s professional development plans (Goal 1, Strategic Action 2).
- Work with principals in order to make this possible: Increasing teacher attendance will require principal buy-in. Work with them to make sure teachers have the resources to attend the sessions. This includes, but is not limited to, permission or time off, substitute-teacher availability, and other scheduling flexibility this may require.
- Work with principals on arts-focused in-school PD. No teacher should have to attend PD that isn’t relevant to them or be forced to be a study hall monitor because other teachers’ needs are being prioritized.

GOAL 3 BENCHMARKS

Goal 3: Ensure that access to high-quality sequential VAPA learning is available to all MNPS students

Strategic Actions

SA3.1 Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning

SA3.2 Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs

SA3.3 Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers

Benchmarks

Year 1

1. Sequential arts-learning feeder plans designed in 1 cluster
2. 15% increase in teachers attending district PD
3. PD satisfaction survey implemented

Year 3

1. Annual increase in enrollment to VAPA courses
2. Sequential arts-learning feeder plans designed in 6 clusters and being implemented in 3 clusters
3. Annual increase in PD satisfaction survey.

Year 5

1. Annual increase in enrollment to VAPA courses
2. Sequential arts-learning feeder plans being implemented in 6 clusters
3. Average number of district-provided PD days used by VAPA teachers is above 4 days

IMPACT OF COVID-19

This strategic plan was begun in the fall of 2019 and largely complete by February of 2020. It is intended to be an adaptable, long-term roadmap that highlights and addresses the most pressing systemic needs and opportunities. While intended to be easily adapted to current and unexpected situations, the work was effectively completed before the onset of Covid-19, and so strategic thinking here does not revolve around the new and pressing issues that the Covid-19 crisis has created.

At the time of this writing, when and how students will return to school, what changes may be made in the school day, how much distance learning will continue and for how long, and what impacts extended isolation will have on students are all largely unclear and unknown. We have included this additional section with a few thoughts about how this strategic plan could be impacted by or adapted to the current situation brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic, and how VAPA programs may be most helpful in responding to the impact on students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Distance learning

Many of the values, benefits, and joys of participation in visual and performing arts activities involve self-expression and collaboration. Some modalities of VAPA instruction are more easily adapted to distance learning than others. As the district pursues the goals of sequential learning and culturally responsive programming, in particular, special consideration should be given to how to implement a VAPA curriculum that is flexible enough that it can thrive in distance learning and in-person contexts. For example, drawing classes that are not material-intensive present fewer obstacles in a distance learning context than the popular pottery classes.

Exacerbation of existing inequities among MNPS students

The impact of Covid-19 may well be to exacerbate existing inequities, and this extends to VAPA as well. Those students with resources may have access to private arts lessons, better instruments or materials, or even simply space enough to dance, play music, or create visual art. Beyond this, obviously, is the impact of unequal access to computers and other technologies that facilitate learning. These are societal issues, and beyond the scope of this document to meaningfully address, but important to mention here is the need to consider these inequities when planning for VAPA during Covid-19 and beyond. Lower dependency on specialized materials or tools, and lesser need for internet access during instruction time or to complete assignments will be beneficial.

Increased value of SEL initiatives

Finally, while the impacts of this on students' emotional wellbeing and their social development are uncertain, we do know that this experience is isolating and traumatic for many. Visual and performing arts as a way to express, process, and communicate about traumatic experiences is well documented. Students are likely to be hungry for outlets where they can be expressive in dynamic ways that are limited at the moment for most of us. Coming together through the arts has long been one way that people deal with, process, and move through complex societal experiences. The more space that the district and MNPS VAPA teachers can make for expressive, dynamic, collaborative VAPA experiences that permit young people to have individualized experiences within a group setting, the better. VAPA should be seen as a powerful tool to help students reconnect with their peers and the school community, and process the changes in their lives in constructive ways.

ANNEXES



Annex 1: Strategic Plan Overview

Goal 1: VAPA is a priority for the district and is integrated into district planning

Goal 1: VAPA is a priority for the district and is integrated into district planning

Goal 1: VAPA is a priority for the district and is integrated into district planning

Strategic actions

SA1.1 Position VAPA as a district Social emotional learning (SEL) leader

SA1.2 Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities

SA1.3 Reorient Music Makes Us (MMU) Advisory Council

SA1.4 Foster stakeholder and community engagement

SA1.5 Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol

SA1.6 Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville

SA2.1 Implement a customer service approach

SA2.2 Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources

SA2.3 Invest in a culturally responsive VAPA education initiative

SA3.1 Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning

SA3.2 Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs

SA3.3 Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers

Year 1

- 20% of partners report having adjusted offerings to meet district strategic priorities
- Importance of VAPA is highlighted at regular parent meetings and other parent communication opportunities.
- At least one VAPA PD is SEL related

- Teacher Support and Program Survey implemented with customer service focused questions
- Majority of partners (>50%) successfully participating in new partnership coordination strategy

- Sequential arts-learning feeder plans designed in 1 cluster
- 15% increase in teachers attending district PD
- PD satisfaction survey implemented

Year 3

- 50% of partners report providing offerings to meet district strategic priorities
- Increased arts integration in STEAM schools relative to Year 1
- Advisory board members report using talking points in their communication with others as they advocate for district priorities
- Communication plans and tools regularly used by each respective stakeholder group. Evidence of stakeholder coordination on key messages
- VAPA are integrated in district SEL framework
- Partners mention MNPS VAPA objectives in their end of year report or other communication or marketing materials

- Culturally responsive programming implemented in pilot schools
- 80% of partners successfully participating in new partnership coordination strategy
- Schools categorized as high priority have at least 3 partnerships
- Annual increase in average teacher satisfaction in Teacher Support and Program Survey

- Annual increase in enrollment to VAPA courses
- Sequential arts-learning feeder plans designed in 6 clusters and being implemented in 3 clusters
- Annual increase in PD satisfaction survey.

Year 5

- 90% of partners report providing offerings that meet district strategic priorities
- Further increased arts integration in STEAM schools
- Principals across the district recognize VAPA as a key tool for SEL implementation in their schools. ED's regularly discussing VAPA SEL with their teams and superiors in the district.
- VAPA are explicitly included in district priorities

- Culturally responsive programming implemented in cohort 2 schools
- Yearly decrease in VAPA education inequity as shown in the annual VAPA school rating
- Decrease in teacher turnover

- Annual increase in enrollment to VAPA courses
- Sequential arts-learning feeder plans being implemented in 6 clusters
- Average number of district-provided PD days used by VAPA teachers is above 4 days

Annex 2: Yearly Action Plan—Goal 1

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Year 1	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	SEL support documents prepared	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	SEL-focused collaborative working session conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	Ongoing support and advocacy for SEL through VAPA	Ongoing
Year 1	Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities	Partner meeting for increased coordination held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities	Primary areas of partner support Identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities	Work with partner organizations to adjust offerings to identified areas of support	Ongoing
Year 1	Reorient Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council	Reorientation meeting with MMU Advisory Council held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Reorient Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council	Advocacy goals established for MMU Advisory Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Reorient Music Makes Us® (MMU) Advisory Council	MMU Advisory Council talking points created and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Communication plans and tools developed for each stakeholder	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Ongoing communication with parents regarding importance of VAPA	Ongoing
Year 1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Parent advocacy committee created	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Partner organization for teacher advocacy enlisted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Teacher leadership enlisted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating system designed and workshopped with select schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Strategy conversation with district leadership about Academies-related opportunities conducted, specific action steps developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Meeting with Academies related stakeholders to discuss the issue and identify potential areas of increased coordination held. Specific action steps developed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing starting Y1	Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Continue collaborating with the STEAM department and advocating for increased arts participation in STEAM programming. Implementation of first action steps.	Ongoing

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Ongoing starting Y1	Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Additional VAPA partners included in the STEAM Expeditions program	Ongoing
Ongoing starting Y1	Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Ongoing advocacy for increased arts integration in STEAM schools	Ongoing
Year 1	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Communication plans and tools distributed to each stakeholder group	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	Annual review of VAPA-SEL initiatives conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Teacher advocacy plan created, including benchmarks for success	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating system piloted with select schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing starting Y3	Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Ongoing implementation and assessment of teacher advocacy plan based on benchmarks developed in Y2	Ongoing
Year 3	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	VAPA section of District-wide SEL framework designed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	VAPA-SEL professional development for teachers held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	Annual review of VAPA-SEL initiatives conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating system adjusted according to pilot results	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating system implemented district-wide	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating collected and results communicated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	Annual review of VAPA-SEL initiatives conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating collected and results communicated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5	Position VAPA as a district social-emotional learning (SEL) leader	Annual review of VAPA-SEL initiatives conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5	Implement a district-level data collection protocol	VAPA-education rating collected and results communicated	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex 3: Yearly Action Plan—Goal 2

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach	Study the “customer- service” style approach from other sectors or districts	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach	Customer service questions included in yearly principal survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach	Yearly principal survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Teacher Support and Program Survey designed and deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach	Workshops with teachers and administrators to identify challenges for increased customer service conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Implement a customer-service approach	Top 10 customer challenges identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Implement a customer-service approach	Ongoing reinforcement of the importance of a cultural shift within the VAPA team towards “customer-service” approach	Ongoing
Year 1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	New partnership model presented during partner workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partnership coordinator officially designated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner categories expanded to fill identified gaps during Teacher Support and Program Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Equity Distribution list built and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner programming and service reporting designed and deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Biweekly newsletters with pertinent partner-programming information sent	Ongoing
Year 1	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Resources identified for pilot program implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 1	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Culturally responsive curriculum adapted to context specific needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Continuous maintenance of internal partner-programming-and-service database conducted	Ongoing

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Year 2	Implement a customer-service approach Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Teacher Support and Program Survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Implement a customer-service approach	Yearly principal survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Implement a customer-service approach	Work with the district to address customer service barriers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y2	Implement a customer-service approach	Institute a long-term continuous improvement process. Documents reviewed regularly and implementation of identified improvement opportunities.	Ongoing
Year 2	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Equity distribution list updated and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner programming and service reporting deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	School-based stakeholder and partner meetings held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	School for pilot program identified and bought-in	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Pilot program implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Implement a customer-service approach Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Teacher Support and Program Survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y3	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Highlight culturally responsive programming initiative to parent and community groups	Ongoing
Year 3	Implement a customer-service approach	Yearly principal survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Equity distribution list updated and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner programming and service reporting deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	School-based stakeholder and partner meetings held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Lessons learned from pilot program collected and analyzed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 3	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Cohort 2 school identified and bought in	<input type="checkbox"/>

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Year 4	Implement a customer-service approach Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Teacher Support and Program Survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Implement a customer-service approach	Yearly principal survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Equity distribution list updated and distributed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner programming and service reporting deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	School-based stakeholder and partner meetings held	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 4	Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Program expanded into Cohort 2 schools	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 2	Implement a customer-service approach Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources Invest in a culturally responsive curriculum and programming initiative	Teacher Support and Program Survey deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Equity distribution list updated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	Partner programming and service reporting deployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Year 5	Invest in processes to ensure equitable access to resources	School-based stakeholder and partner meetings held	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex 4: Yearly Action Plan—Goal 3

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Y1	Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Communicate with district leadership about the known issues of double blocking and potential strategies to address them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Feasibility of eliminating double blocking assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Scheduling consultant hired	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y1	Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Ongoing advocacy with school administrators to address VAPA scheduling concerns	Ongoing
Y1	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Cluster level meetings to identify barriers to a sequential arts-learning feeder program at all MNPS cluster conducted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Sequential arts-learning feeder program diagnosis completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Teacher and school administrator feedback regarding VAPA PD gathered	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Teachers and school administrators bought in	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Yearly PD plan designed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Cultural partners integrated within yearly PD plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y1	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Arts-focused in-school PD designed and ready to implement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y2	Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Scheduling suggestions implemented	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y2	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Cluster level plans designed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y2	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Additional resources for program implementation identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ongoing Starting Y2	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Ongoing implementation of cluster level plans	Ongoing
Ongoing Starting Y2	Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Embed customer-service principles to support any changes	Ongoing
Y2	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Yearly PD plan designed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Timeline	Strategic Actions	Actions	Checklist
Y3	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Yearly PD plan designed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y4	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Yearly PD plan designed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Y5	Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Yearly PD plan designed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Annex 5: Strategic Actions by Stakeholder Matrix

	VAPA Department	Teachers	Parents	School Administrators	Partners	District Leadership	MMU Advisory Council	Others
Goal 1: VAPA are a priority for the district and are integrated into district planning								
SA1.1 Position VAPA as a district Social emotional learning (SEL) leader	Secondary Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder		Secondary Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	
SA1.2 Coordinate with outside partners on the district's strategic priorities	Key Stakeholder				Key Stakeholder			
SA1.3 Reorient Music Makes Us (MMU) Advisory Council	Secondary Stakeholder						Key Stakeholder	
SA1.4 Foster stakeholder and community engagement	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder			Mayor's Office
SA1.5 Implement a district-level VAPA data collection protocol	Key Stakeholder			Secondary Stakeholder		Secondary Stakeholder	Potentially Involved	School District, Arts Administrators
SA1.6 Coordinate with the STEAM department and the Academies of Nashville	Key Stakeholder				Secondary Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder		Academy Partners
Goal 1: VAPA are a priority for the district and are integrated into district planning								
SA2.1 Implement a customer service approach	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder		Secondary Stakeholder				
SA2.2 Invest in processes to assure equitable access to resources	Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder			Key Stakeholder			
SA2.3 Invest in a culturally responsive VAPA education initiative	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder			
Goal 1: VAPA are a priority for the district and are integrated into district planning								
SA3.1 Address and resolve scheduling-related impediments to equitable access to VAPA learning	Key Stakeholder					Potentially Involved	Key Stakeholder	External Consultant
SA3.2 Design and implement sequential arts-learning feeder programs	Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder	Potentially Involved	
SA3.3 Increase access to professional development for VAPA teachers	Key Stakeholder	Key Stakeholder		Key Stakeholder	Secondary Stakeholder			

Annex 6: VAPA SEL Resources

- Allensworth, E.M., Farrington, C.A., Gordon, M.F., Johnson, D.W., Klein, K., McDaniel, B., & Nagaoka, J. (2018). Supporting social, emotional, & academic development: Research implications for educators. University of Chicago Consortium on School Research. <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/supporting-social-emotional-academic-development-research-implications-educators>
- Anderson, A. Dance/Movement Therapy's Influence on Adolescents Mathematics, Social-Emotional and Dance Skills. *The Educational Forum* 79, no. 3 (2015): 230-47.
- Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development. (2018) From a nation at risk to a nation of hope. <http://nationathope.org/report-from-the-nation/>
- Edgar, S.N. (2013). Introducing Social Emotional Learning to Music Education Professional Development
- Edgar, S.N. (2017). Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching Music. National Association for Music Education. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.863.2521&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Farrington, C., Maurer, J, Aska McBride, M, Nagaoka, J, Puller, J.S., Shewfelt, S, Weiss, E.M. & Wright, L. (2019). Arts Education and Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes among K-12 Students: Developing a Theory of Action. Ingenuity & University of Chicago. <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/2019-05/Arts%20Education%20and%20Social-Emotional-June2019-Consortium%20and%20Ingenuity.pdf>
- Greenberg M, & Weissberg R. (2018). Social and Emotional Development Matters: Taking Action Now for Future Generations. Pennsylvania State University & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2018/12/social-and-emotional-development-matters.html>
- Layne, S. (2017). Acting Right: Building a Cooperative, Collaborative, Creative Classroom Community Through Drama
- Martin, A.J., Mansour, M., Anderson, M., Gibson, R., Liem, G.A.D., & Sudmalis, D. (2013). The role of arts participation in students' academic and nonacademic outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258100829_The_Role_of_Arts_Participation_in_Students'_Academic_and_Nonacademic_Outcomes_A_Longitudinal_Study_of_School_Home_and_Community_Factors

Further resources on social-emotional and therapeutic use of the arts collected by Turnaround Arts can be found here: <https://turnaroundartsca.org/social-emotional-and-therapeutic-use-of-arts/>

An example of a successful program which integrates SEL and VAPA is the UCLA Arts & Healing program "beat the odds®: social and emotional skill building delivered in a framework of drumming" more information on the program can be found here: <https://uclartsandhealing.org/services/professional-development/beat-the-odds-drumming-program/>