



SAN GABRIEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

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San Gabriel Unified Elementary Music Immersion Program Adds Folkloric Dance Elective

SAN GABRIEL, CA – Roosevelt Elementary’s award-winning Music Immersion Experience (MIE) program has launched a folkloric dance elective to accompany more than a dozen electives that enhance student learning and achievement through music education.

“When we structure our elective classes, we are always thinking about what kind of new cultural and artistic opportunities we can provide to our students,” MIE Coordinator Samantha Theisen said. “We are proud to have a diverse array of MIE classes that help students establish a connection to their community and cultures.”

Baile folklorico is a series of traditional Mexican dances that emphasize local folk culture with ballet characteristics, such as highly choreographed routines, pointed toes and exaggerated movements.

The folklorico class was introduced as a complement to a Mariachi band elective established in fall 2017. The idea for the latest class emerged after Roosevelt’s show choir students performed folklorico alongside the Mariachi band in the spring and showed interest in the art form.

Mariachi director Paulina Nunez approached Theisen about introducing folklorico as an elective. Currently, 16 students in grades two through five are enrolled in the course.

Formed in 2015, the MIE program enhances student learning and achievement through music education. All students receive fundamental music lessons daily; and second- through fifth-graders can sign up for three elective courses that meet one to three times a week.

Roosevelt also plans to expand its Mariachi band to include Jefferson Middle School and Gabrielino High School music students in the future. The eventual goal, Theisen said, is to establish a District Mariachi band.

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Folklorico students will give their first public performance alongside other MIE elective groups at the school's Winter Wonderland event on Dec. 1.

"Music is a vital part of our students' well-rounded educational experience and we are thrilled to see Roosevelt's comprehensive music program expand and provide new learning opportunities," SGUSD Superintendent Dr. John Pappalardo said. "We look forward to watching our students develop new skills through these electives and discover their interests as we prepare them for lifelong learning."

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