



# NORWALK-LA MIRADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Norwalk-La Mirada Unified Expands Music Instruction to All Elementary Schools, Launches Glenn High Choir**

**La Mirada** – All Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District elementary school students will have the opportunity to develop their inner Beethoven or Adele thanks to the District’s ambitious 2015-16 expansion of its Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) music program.

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified has hired four certified elementary school music teachers – bringing the total number of full-time instructors to five and allowing students at all 17 elementary to take a weekly music classes with the goal of preparing them for advanced music courses in middle and high school.

“It’s awesome,” said Escalona Elementary School fourth-grader Alyssa Montoya. “I’ve always wanted to study and play music.”

Transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first-graders will study singing and percussion; second-graders will study hand bells; third- and fourth-graders will study recorders; and fifth-graders will study ukulele, learning music theory and sight-reading in the process.

“Developing creative minds through our Visual and Performing Arts program is a crucial component of the District’s core curriculum,” NLMUSD Board President Jesse Urquidi said. “We find that students are more motivated to study and focus better when they are encouraged to express themselves creatively.”

The District also hired a teacher to build a choir program at John Glenn High School. Choir teacher Anne Kim-Williams will also teach at Glenn’s two feeder schools, Los Alisos and Waite middle schools.

“My hope is for my students to learn to read music and feel confident about singing in public and owning their own voice,” Kim-Williams said.

Glenn students are greeting the new choir program with enthusiasm.

“I was so excited when I heard we were going to have a choir teacher,” Glenn senior Nicole Baez said. “It’s the best class of my day.”

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified's diverse Visual and Performing Arts curriculum is overseen by VAPA Director Karen Calhoun. In her 18 years at the District, Calhoun has worked to foster student appreciation for music and expand access to instruction.

"We are justifiably proud of our arts and music education programs, which we feel contribute greatly to developing the whole child, and preparing our students to excel in college and career," NLMUSD Superintendent Dr. Hasmik Danielian said. "Our mission is to nurture the creative side of our students so that they will be encouraged to conceive the new sounds and technologies of our future."

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*Photo Captions:*

1. *Escalona Elementary 5<sup>th</sup> grade students study ukulele with music teacher Lorie Higgins*
2. *Glenn High School choir students*