

From: [Regina Szilak](#)
To: [Melissa Zak](#)
Subject: FW: 438 San Vicente Blvd October 28 Public Hearing Carlthorp
Date: Thursday, October 15, 2020 2:54:54 PM

Correspondence 438 San Vicente Blvd.

-----Original Message-----

From: Doug <doug@ddi.ms>
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 1:04 PM
To: Regina Szilak <Regina.Szilak@SMGOV.NET>
Subject: 438 San Vicente Blvd October 28 Public Hearing Carlthorp

EXTERNAL

Hi Regina,

I have received a notice there will be a hearing regarding Conditional Use Permit for Carlthorp School. As you are aware Carlthorp is attempting to sidestep regulations regarding parking spaces via a variety of methods.

The last plans submitted by Carlthorp in May had multiple conflicts with law and common sense, including attempting to define a classroom as a multi purpose room.

Have the plans submitted by Carlthorp for the October 28 hearing been revised from plans submitted in May?

Please let me know

Thanks

Doug

Douglas Brian Martin
Doug@douglasbrianmartin.us

From: [Zack Figlin](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#); [Leslie Lambert](#); [Ellis Raskin](#); [Mario Fonda-Bonardi](#); [Shawn Landres](#); [Nina Fresco](#); [Jim Ries](#); [Elisa Paster](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); [Regina Szilak](#)
Subject: Agenda item #9-A – Carlthorp student in favor
Date: Saturday, October 17, 2020 12:28:08 PM

EXTERNAL

Dear Planning Commissioners:

My name is Zack Figlin, I am 12, in 6th grade and I have been at Carlthorp School since kindergarten. My favorite classes at school are math and history. I have also enjoyed playing sports and P.E., especially playing soccer on the small field with my friends. At times we have had two different games going in opposite directions, but it was still fun. I have felt very supported by my teachers and the administration since the very beginning of my education. The environment is caring and allows me to explore and excel. Despite the support, the school has some limitations due to the small campus, which the remodel will help fix.

The planned renovations to Carlthorp include the addition of an auditorium, an admissions wing, more play space, and the lunch area being enclosed so students can eat outside rain or shine. These additions will allow students to get more out of the campus so they can better learn, grow and interact. The architects have also thought about the neighbors in the design so that the disruption from the school will be minimal. Although I didn't have as much space in my time at Carlthorp, I think the addition will very much benefit the students that will attend in the future. Thank you for your consideration and please vote yes.

Sincerely,

Zack Figlin

From: [Sophia Moreno](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#); [Leslie Lambert](#); [Ellis Raskin](#); [Mario Fonda-Bonardi](#); [Shawn Landres](#); [Nina Fresco](#); [Jim Ries](#); [Elisa Paster](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); [Regina Szilak](#)
Subject: Carlthorp Masterplan
Date: Sunday, October 18, 2020 5:04:11 PM

EXTERNAL

Dear Chair Landres and Planning Commissioners:

My name is Sophia Moreno. I am eleven years old and in sixth grade. I am starting my seventh year at Carlthorp school, an elementary school located in Santa Monica. I would like to begin by saying I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to discuss the Carlthorp master plan topic with you.

Having been at Carlthorp for such a long time, I can say that without a doubt, I love my school. It values community, confidence, kindness, and independence. Our academics are exceptional and in depth, and we learn lessons that shape both our scholastic and personal character enhancing our perspective and understanding of the world. However, one constraint that Carlthorp has is the size of its campus. We've made the most of what we've had to date, but the small footprint poses a problem in many situations, which I have outlined below.

Some of the subjects in school I am most interested in are writing, literature, and history. I also enjoy soccer and lacrosse as sports and have played them competitively for quite some time. During the soccer season, our field is too small to hold games, and we have to drive many miles to play the sport we love. Such activities would be easier to play on a new field. Even if this wouldn't be for me, personally, I know that many of the grades below me are full of competitive athletes with the same passion for these sports. Our physical education would also allow for an expanded curriculum with a larger space and will help us access our full potential in athletics.

Another way that this Masterplan will benefit our students is with a bigger multi-purpose room. During school presentations or theatrical performances, all 280 students plus parents are squeezed into the one level auditorium, barely being able to see and not having enough seating. As a pianist, I play music to bring happiness to myself and hopefully others. One event where I get to demonstrate my skill is during the Carlthorp talent show. But once again, with both students and dozens of parents trying to fit in the cramped space, it is both uncomfortable and unsatisfying for audiences when they are too far back to even see their child or grandchild. During these events, people are standing out the door and up the stairs, where they can hardly hear what's going on. Parents are missing some of their child's most prideful moments because of the small space. If you vote yes, students will get to play music and put on performances much more comfortably, and in a spacious

room where they can see their mom or dad cheering them on.

I am also in favor of a covered lunch area, which students could use in rainy or hot weather. The Carlthorp lunch tables have multiple blue tables with a tarp over it, which provides shade during sunny days. However, rainy weather forces us inside during lunch periods, which can be incredibly inconvenient for both us and the janitors, who have to wipe down the tables every time it rains and the kids are required to stay in their classrooms (or the small multipurpose room) with little to no change of scenery or ability to exercise. With our plan, however, this will not be a problem, and, once again, will benefit the students and faculty.

As you can see, the plan will greatly enhance our school and help both the students and staff. Even though I am graduating this year, I am still so in favor of Carthorp's master plan because it will benefit the community I adore for future generations. Personally, I have two younger brothers, who will continue to attend Carlthorp for the next several years. If you agree to our proposition, this will greatly enhance their experience and that of the other 280 students that continue to attend Carlthorp.

Please vote yes on the Carlthorp Master Plan. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Sophia Moreno

From: [Stephanie Reich](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Agenda Item 9-A (Carlthorp School), 19ENT-0250 and 20ENT-0066 (Conditional Use Permit, Minor Modification)
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 11:26:04 AM

[Stephanie Reich, AIA, LEED AP](#)
[Design and Historic Preservation Planner](#)
[Community Development](#)
[City of Santa Monica](#)
[1685 Main Street, Mail Stop 28](#)
[Santa Monica, CA 90401](#)

From: Steven Salsberg <salsbergs@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 10:03 AM
To: Mario Fonda-Bonardi <Mario.Fonda-Bonardi@SMGOV.NET>; Nina Fresco <Nina.Fresco@SMGOV.NET>; Leslie Lambert <Leslie.Lambert@SMGOV.NET>; Shawn Landres <Shawn.Landres@SMGOV.NET>; Jim Ries <Jim.Ries@SMGOV.NET>; Elisa Paster <Elisa.Paster@SMGOV.NET>; Ellis Raskin <Ellis.Raskin@SMGOV.NET>
Cc: David Martin <David.Martin@SMGOV.NET>; Jing Yeo <Jing.Yeo@SMGOV.NET>; Lane Dilg <Lane.Dilg@SMGOV.NET>; Stephanie Reich <Stephanie.Reich@SMGOV.NET>; Regina Szilak <Regina.Szilak@SMGOV.NET>; Heidi von Tongeln <Heidi.vonTongeln@SMGOV.NET>
Subject: Agenda Item 9-A (Carlthorp School), 19ENT-0250 and 20ENT-0066 (Conditional Use Permit, Minor Modification)

EXTERNAL

Dear Commissioners:

Please postpone this item. The process has been completely unfair and appears to be corrupt. The Planning Division has orchestrated the process to highly favor the applicant to the extreme detriment of the hundreds of neighbors and others who oppose this project and me and including all of those who are relying upon me to respond with comments.

There are related relevant documents that I have been requesting to see since as far back as last February, which I was told by the City that I could see at some point but thus far I have been denied the opportunity to see them. For a while, last spring, Stephanie Reich was helpful in answering many of my questions regarding the project and providing me in a timely manner with what I understood to be all related documents, which she and Regina Szilak had committed to do. However, last June she committed to me to provide me with substantial information and answers, asking me to be patient. Instead, they failed to answer any of my questions (from last June) or provide me with any of the new documents until late last week. And, most of my important questions from last June have still gone unanswered. The Planning Department hoodwinked me.

This item had been scheduled for last May 20, but as Jing Yeo told me that afternoon, it was

being postponed due to comments that I made that morning. The applicant (Carlthorp School) spent almost five months over the summer preparing a response and modifying its application due to my comments. Instead of answering my questions, providing me with documents that I had already asked for, and promptly providing me with copies of the new documents that the applicant had submitted throughout the summer and fall – as the Planning Department had committed to do – the Planning Department kept me in the dark and deceived me.

I have emailed both David Martin and Jing Yeo several times describing these events in more detail, asking for a postponement of this item from the Planning Commission hearing, however, they have failed to respond. Please postpone this item until I gain access to such documents, receive answers to my questions, and have ample time to review such information and all of the numerous other documents that I received late last week and this morning and to draft my comments and response. Otherwise, the process is grossly unfair. The applicant had five months and I'm being afforded only three business days and I still haven't received everything that I have asked for.

Sincerely,
Steven Salsberg
310-395-7186

From: [Amanda Sasso](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); "[Regina.Szilak@smgov.net](#)"@mx0a-00399d01.pphosted.com
Subject: Support for Item 9-A (Carlthorp Plan)
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 4:11:27 PM

EXTERNAL

Dear Santa Monica Planning Commission,

My name is Amanda Sasso, and I am the Director of Teacher, Student, and Parent Affairs at Carlthorp School. I am a resident of West Los Angeles and grew up in the Pacific Palisades. My brother, sister-in-law and nephew are current residents of Santa Monica. I feel a deep connection to Santa Monica, as it has been a part of my life since a young age. Not only have I worked at Carlthorp School for 18 years, but I am a proud alumna, graduating in 1989, and my daughter was a student at the school. As part of the school community, I have been involved in many events related to Santa Monica over the years including support of Upward Bound House and the Upward Bound House Urban Farm, beach clean-ups & Adopt a Beach through Heal the Bay, Girl Scout Troops, Inclusion Matters by Shane's Inspiration, and so much more. I grew up shopping at the 3rd Street Promenade and Santa Monica Mall, and I even worked at Johnny Rockets on the 3rd Street Promenade in High School. My commitment to Carlthorp School and the greater Santa Monica community is steadfast, and I am writing to you today to share my strong support of the Carlthorp School Master Plan.

I urge you to vote to approve the Carlthorp improvement project, as it will make a difference for the residents of Santa Monica who attend the school among others. Your YES vote will not only improve the learning environment for students by creating a quieter, updated campus, but it will also have little to no impact on the neighborhood due to the fact that no increase in enrollment is proposed. Carlthorp School has been a part of the Santa Monica educational community since 1939. In those 80+ years, the school has been a good neighbor and has been an ally to the greater community by getting involved and giving back. To be more specific, I wanted to show my support for the following proposed improvements:

1. The creation of an outdoor rooftop play court area above the rear wing of the existing school building, which will enable students to have an improved physical education program. Building out this additional play space will also enhance our scheduling capabilities by allowing more grade levels the freedom to utilize outdoor space concurrently, which will provide more flexibility in our academic scheduling. Now more than ever as we navigate a potential return to campus during a global pandemic we are aware of the necessity for additional functional outdoor, open space.
- 2.

The design for a new, subterranean multipurpose room, which will provide much more functional space for the school's music program, performing arts, and other activities. The school has never had a true space designed for performing arts and all school assemblies, and this will provide that much needed addition. This space will also allow us to host events that would usually occur on the field in a soundproof room, alleviating noise heard by the neighbors. I know my daughter would have enjoyed this as she was involved with Carlthorp's performing arts program.

3.

The enclosure of our student lunch area, which will enable students to enjoy their meals outside in rain or hot weather and also provide an additional sound barrier for the neighbors. The enclosure will also allow for the addition of further office space and breakout rooms for school personnel and students on our second level.

Carlthorp School has always been intentional and thoughtful in their planning. This new plan is strategically designed to minimize disruption to the neighborhood by limiting noise from children's outdoor activities.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention a little about Carlthorp's mission and values. Carlthorp School's mission states: Carlthorp School provides a strong academic foundation in a diverse and nurturing school community that emphasizes respectful values, responsible work habits, and excellence in order to prepare children to achieve their highest potential in education and life. Our greatest gift to our students is to create lifelong learners that will get involved and become leaders in their communities. Thank you for your time and consideration, and please think about how a vote of YES will impact our school and Santa Monica community members for generations to come.

Warmly,

Amanda Sasso

Amanda Sasso | Director of Teacher, Student and Parent Affairs
Carlthorp School | 438 San Vicente Boulevard, Santa Monica CA 90402

During the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. teachers will be focused on classroom instruction and student support. Therefore, you may experience a delayed response to emails that are received during the school day. We appreciate both your patience in waiting for a response and your support of this policy. If you have an emergency that is school-related, please contact the main office at (310) 451-1332..

From: [Sophie](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#); [Leslie Lambert](#); [Ellis Raskin](#); [Mario Fonda-Bonardi](#); [Shawn Landres](#); [Nina Fresco](#); [Jim Ries](#); [Elisa Paster](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); [Regina Szilak](#)
Subject: Carlthorp Master Plan
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 4:28:04 PM

EXTERNAL

Hi, I'm Sophie Chang, a sixth grade student at Carlthorp. I have been a Carlthorp student for seven years and over this time I have grown both academically and socially. During this journey at Carlthorp, I started with basic reading and math skills in Kindergarten to learning how to write essays and do algebra and slope now in sixth grade. I have also made so many great friends that I hope to keep with me in the future. Although my years at Carlthorp have been great, they would have been even better with a real auditorium and expanded playing field to further foster my athletic and musical passions. These changes would help students in the grades below and years to come.

Having an auditorium at Carlthorp would be beneficial to the school community in so many ways. We could use it to hold more theatrical and musical performances, allow students to be more engaged in music class and provide more room for more guests so all families would be able to attend. In addition, an auditorium would provide a space to safely assemble indoors when we go back to school. Right now, we can only assemble as a school outdoors, which makes it challenging to gather during inclement weather or bad air.

A dedicated playspace at Carlthorp would help the school community as well. This playspace would help students pursue their athletic passions and create room for multiple sports to be played at once. It could also help prevent accidents and injuries by providing more space. This could encourage students to get more exercise and foster a healthier community.

In summary, the proposed additions to Carlthorp could help foster a greater sense of community spirit, allow students greater opportunity to pursue their passions and provide a safer environment. The auditorium can help students hold more theatrical and musical performances and serve as safe space to gather as a school indoors and the playing field can help students get in their daily exercise, explore their different interests, and help prevent accidents from happening. These changes would

foster a happier, deeper and safer community at Carlthorp and its surrounding neighborhood.

From: [Christopher Lemieux](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Re: Support for Carlthorp School plan – Item 9-A
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 1:09:07 PM

EXTERNAL

Thank you!

The first paragraph should say *student body, not study body.

Best,

Chris

On Tue, Oct 20, 2020 at 12:53 PM Planning Commission Comments
<planningcomment@smgov.net> wrote:

Thank you for your comments. Item 9-A (438 San Vicente Blvd.) has been continued to the November 4 Planning Commission meeting at 5:30 PM at the request of City staff. Your comments will be included in the record for the November 4 Planning Commission meeting.

From: Christopher Lemieux <clemieux@carlthorp.org>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 8:25 PM
To: Planning Commission Comments <planningcomment@smgov.net>; Leslie Lambert <Leslie.Lambert@SMGOV.NET>; Ellis Raskin <Ellis.Raskin@SMGOV.NET>; Mario Fonda-Bonardi <Mario.Fonda-Bonardi@SMGOV.NET>; Shawn Landres <Shawn.Landres@SMGOV.NET>; Nina Fresco <Nina.Fresco@SMGOV.NET>; Jim Ries <Jim.Ries@SMGOV.NET>; Elisa Paster <Elisa.Paster@SMGOV.NET>
Cc: David Martin <David.Martin@SMGOV.NET>; Regina Szilak <Regina.Szilak@SMGOV.NET>
Subject: Support for Carlthorp School plan – Item 9-A

EXTERNAL

To Shawn Landres, Chair and Planning Commissioners:

My name is Chris Lemieux. I have been a Physical Education teacher and coach at Carlthorp school for six years. I have enjoyed working with the students at Carlthorp since I joined the Carlthorp faculty. We have a study body of about 280 students, and they receive tremendous attention and understanding from our three full-time PE teachers.

From the youngest to the oldest kids, Carlthorp students are real strivers. Prior to COVID restrictions, they participated in various sports and afterschool physical activities – basketball, soccer, volleyball, flag football, an assortment of afterschool physical activity clubs and even a golf program. We help our students understand the importance of play fair and the lifelong benefits of physical activity. Just as important, they come off the playfield better prepared to learn. We hope that the COVID threat will pass soon, and that we can all get back to PE as usual.

With regard to item 9-A, our current playfield is simply too small and is a safety hazard for students on a daily basis (large number of kids in a small space with balls flying). The proposed addition would increase safety and drastically affect our schedule in a positive manner. I was greatly encouraged when the School proposed an expanded, raised playfield. After reviewing the plan, I felt that the designers had done a great job anticipating our needs and making sure that the new playfield would be as unobtrusive as possible, both for our neighbors and the campus users – administration, teachers and learners. The plan has my wholehearted support. I believe it allows our school to effectively meet the needs of our child's physical activity during the day while increasing safety. Considering the current world situation, that is one measure we can all agree on is essential at schools.

One final note: I am encouraged that the proposed plan adds 12 new bicycle spaces, bringing the total to 32. The environmental and fitness benefits of safe bicycling are well understood by the City of Santa Monica City, a fact that I appreciate.

Please vote yes to approve the plan. Thank you in advance.

Best regards,

Chris Lemieux

--

Christopher Lemieux | Physical Education

Carlthorp School | [438 San Vicente Boulevard Santa Monica, CA 90402](https://www.santa-monica.ca.gov/438/Santa-Vicente-Boulevard-Santa-Monica-CA-90402)

--

Christopher Lemieux | Physical Education

Carlthorp School | [438 San Vicente Boulevard Santa Monica, CA 90402](#)

From: [Dan Gaines](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#)
Subject: Comment on Carlthorp School 19ENT-0250, 20ENT-0066
Date: Monday, October 19, 2020 8:36:45 PM

EXTERNAL

Hi, I am a neighbor a few buildings away from the Calthorp School and I think this is a wise, reasonable improvement for the school. It will make the school more effective and will cause no trouble for the neighborhood. Thank you.

-Dan

Daniel Gaines



Virus-free. www.avast.com

From: [Thao](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#); iplanningcomments@smgov.net; [Leslie Lambert](#); [Ellis Raskin](#); [Mario Fonda-Bonardi](#); [Shawn Landres](#); [Nina Fresco](#); [Jim Ries](#); [Elisa Paster](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); [Regina Szilak](#)
Subject: Carlthorp School Improvement - Item 9B
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 4:59:26 PM

EXTERNAL

Dear Planning Commissioners,

We write this message to express our full and unconditional support of Carlthorp School and their request for improvement to the property at 438 San Vicente Blvd.

We are not only neighbors of the school, but our four oldest children currently attend Carlthorp. We live four blocks away and walk or ride our bikes to school. Being able to see the same neighbors around the same time everyday creates a sense of community and belonging for our children and for the people and pets that we often greet in the morning.

The proposed enhancements to Carlthorp School's campus are vital to the role the school plays in providing a high-quality education for local elementary-aged children. The school has broadened and improved its arts and music program substantially over the past five years, and the construction of a subterranean multi-purpose room will provide a much-needed space for children's music and performing arts programming and performances.

Carlthorp's plans also include building an enclosure around the existing outdoor cafeteria seating, which would allow children to have their lunch outside in all weather conditions. Currently, any inclement weather requires the students and staff to move inside during lunchtime. The school also aims to build an elevated outdoor sports and recreational space that will provide much-needed additional outdoor space for play and exercise. These two enhancements will materially improve Carlthorp's ability to educate students safely, in a way that minimises the risk of COVID infection by increasing the usage of outdoor spaces during the school day.

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments regarding our unreserved support for this project.

Best regards,

Thao and Sherman Ma

From: [Nita Baxani](#)
To: [Planning Commission Comments](#); [Leslie Lambert](#); [Ellis Raskin](#); [Mario Fonda-Bonardi](#); [Shawn Landres](#); [Nina Fresco](#); [Jim Ries](#); [Elisa Paster](#)
Cc: [David Martin](#); [Regina Szilak](#)
Subject: Letter of Support for Carlthorp School's Master Plan (PDF copy attached)
Date: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 7:07:21 PM
Attachments: [Baxani Letter Carlthorp Master Plan.pdf](#)

EXTERNAL

Dear Community and Planning Commission of Santa Monica,

My name is Dr. Nita Baxani. I am a professional singer, educator, and researcher. I hold a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education, a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance, and a Doctor of Education degree. In my capacity as an educator, I have held leadership and teaching roles in arts programs and schools in both the U.S. and abroad. I relocated from New York City in summer of 2019 in order to become the Director of Music Education at Carlthorp School. As a resident of Santa Monica, I am writing to declare my support of Carlthorp School's Master Plan to expand its campus. This letter of support will address why this master plan is essential in three areas: music instruction, performance and events, and music relevancy.

Music Instruction

At Carlthorp, students in all grade levels (K-6) engage in a comprehensive music program that incorporates healthy singing, movement exploration, group dances, ear training, music literacy, and dramatic arts. Students also develop skills through playing instruments, and Carlthorp houses a resource-rich classroom set of

- A wide range of percussion instruments, including a range of barred instruments (xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, etc.)
- Violins
- Recorders
- Keyboards
- Ukuleles
- Tubano drums (full size)
- Many other instruments and music instruction resources (flute, clarinet, cello, saxophone, guitars, piano, boomwhackers, instruments from around the world, etc.)

Performances

Carlthorp's Music Program is robust. Process- and performance- based presentations include and are not limited to

- Individual grade level performances (Kindergarten through 6th grade)
- Chorus and Orchestra performances
- Theatre performances
- African Music and Culture residency
- The Student Council Run Talent Show (supported by the Music Department)
- Grandparents and Special Friends Morning (K-6 musical performances)
- Graduation (Kindergarten, 6th Grade)

Our music curriculum requires adequate space for movement exploration and development and quality acoustic feedback for listening, singing, and playing. Music class currently takes place in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). On days when the MPR is required for other instructional or event related purposes (recess, dismissal, P.E., school presentation events, etc.), the MPR is, understandably, taken over. The music space is compromised, and we push

into the homeroom classroom where there is less space. The MPR is indeed “multi-purpose”. We do not have an alternative space that supports children’s musical development. Additionally, when individuals pass through the MPR to reach another part of the school, it is disruptive to the students and to the music instruction.

Quality performance presentations require lighting, set/backdrop, stage handling, space for rehearsals, and acoustic space for quality sound, as well as space for family, friends, and faculty to attend. With our current set up, audience members stand at the back or in aisles due to space restrictions for seating, and the view of the platform that is used as a stage in the MPR is obstructed. The Music Department is extremely grateful to the Facilities team for accommodating the music instruction space by rebuilding both the platform and the portable wall that helps to partition off the music space at times throughout the year.

If the Planning Commission would grant approval of Carlthorp’s plan of expansion, children would have the acoustic and physical space to thrive musically. Furthermore, this will allow me to develop, create, and expand the program, providing a variety of entry points into Music, serving the needs of children.

Music is Essential

Music is relevant not only for children but for all of us. In my experience as a researcher and music facilitator, I have witnessed how music builds community and allows individuals to communicate and express themselves. I have worked with developmentally challenged individuals, and I have observed individuals who have lost their verbal skills due to having a stroke. In both instances, I have seen how they engage in music, displaying camaraderie and joyful emotion. My own doctoral research reveals that for young children, music serves multiple functions while building connections both with their families and with their peers. Music is a pathway for communicative and emotional engagement, and it is a community builder from birth onwards. Music is also a pathway for examining the rich heritage not only of our own cultures, but a wide variety of cultures from around the world. Children learning about music from diverse cultures brings so much joy to my teaching.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the Arts are necessary and crucial for the healthy development of children and for community engagement. I believe that all people should be able to participate in music, and as an educator, I strive to provide an environment for students to feel they have something to offer and that they have a voice. I vote for the Master Plan expansion of Carlthorp School’s campus so that it can support and enhance the music learning experience for children.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nita Baxani, Ed. D.
Singer/Performer, Educator, Researcher
Director of Music, Carlthorp School, Santa Monica

--

Nita Baxani, Ed.D. | Music Teacher and Director of Music

Carlthorp School | [438 San Vicente Boulevard Santa Monica, CA 90402](https://www.carlthorpschool.org/)

During the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. teachers will be focused on classroom instruction and student support. Therefore, you may experience a delayed response to emails that are received during the school day. We appreciate both your patience in waiting for a response and your support of this policy. If you have an emergency that is school-related, please contact the main office at (310) 451-1332.

Dear Community and Planning Commission of Santa Monica,

My name is Dr. Nita Baxani. I am a professional singer, educator, and researcher. I hold a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education, a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance, and a Doctor of Education degree. In my capacity as an educator, I have held leadership and teaching roles in arts programs and schools in both the U.S. and abroad. I relocated from New York City in summer of 2019 in order to become the Director of Music Education at Carlthorp School. As a resident of Santa Monica, I am writing to declare my support of Carlthorp School's Master Plan to expand its campus. This letter of support will address why this master plan is essential in three areas: music instruction, performance and events, and music relevancy.

Music Instruction

At Carlthorp, students in all grade levels (K-6) engage in a comprehensive music program that incorporates healthy singing, movement exploration, group dances, ear training, music literacy, and dramatic arts. Students also develop skills through playing instruments, and Carlthorp houses a resource-rich classroom set of

- A wide range of percussion instruments, including a range of barred instruments (xylophones, metallophones, glockenspiels, etc.)
- Violins
- Recorders
- Keyboards
- Ukuleles
- Tubano drums (full size)
- Many other instruments and music instruction resources (flute, clarinet, cello, saxophone, guitars, piano, boomwhackers, instruments from around the world, etc.)

Performances

Carlthorp's Music Program is robust. Process- and performance- based presentations include and are not limited to

- Individual grade level performances (Kindergarten through 6th grade)
- Chorus and Orchestra performances
- Theatre performances
- African Music and Culture residency
- The Student Council Run Talent Show (supported by the Music Department)
- Grandparents and Special Friends Morning (K-6 musical performances)
- Graduation (Kindergarten, 6th Grade)

Our music curriculum requires adequate space for movement exploration and development and quality acoustic feedback for listening, singing, and playing. Music class currently takes place in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR). On days when the MPR is required for other instructional or event related purposes (recess, dismissal, P.E., school presentation events, etc.), the MPR is, understandably, taken over. The music space is compromised, and we push into the homeroom classroom where there is less space. The MPR is indeed "multi-purpose". We do not have an alternative space that supports children's musical development. Additionally, when individuals pass through the MPR to reach another part of the school, it is disruptive to the students and to the music instruction.

Quality performance presentations require lighting, set/backdrop, stage handling, space for rehearsals, and acoustic space for quality sound, as well as space for family, friends, and faculty to attend. With our current set up, audience members stand at the back or in aisles due to space restrictions for seating, and the view of the platform that is used as a stage in the MPR is obstructed. The Music Department is extremely grateful to the Facilities team for accommodating the music instruction space by rebuilding both the platform and the portable wall that helps to partition off the music space at times throughout the year.

If the Planning Commission would grant approval of Carlthorp's plan of expansion, children would have the acoustic and physical space to thrive musically. Furthermore, this will allow me to develop, create, and expand the program, providing a variety of entry points into Music, serving the needs of children.

Music is Essential

Music is relevant not only for children but for all of us. In my experience as a researcher and music facilitator, I have witnessed how music builds community and allows individuals to communicate and express themselves. I have worked with developmentally challenged individuals, and I have observed individuals who have lost their verbal skills due to having a stroke. In both instances, I have seen how they engage in music, displaying camaraderie and joyful emotion. My own doctoral research reveals that for young children, music serves multiple functions while building connections both with their families and with their peers. Music is a pathway for communicative and emotional engagement, and it is a community builder from birth onwards. Music is also a pathway for examining the rich heritage not only of our own cultures, but a wide variety of cultures from around the world. Children learning about music from diverse cultures brings so much joy to my teaching.

In conclusion, I reiterate that the Arts are necessary and crucial for the healthy development of children and for community engagement. I believe that all people should be able to participate in music, and as an educator, I strive to provide an environment for students to feel they have something to offer and that they have a voice. I vote for the Master Plan expansion of Carlthorp School's campus so that it can support and enhance the music learning experience for children.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nita Baxani, Ed. D.
Singer/Performer, Educator, Researcher
Director of Music, Carlthorp School, Santa Monica