

Santa Maria High School Demographics

Student population: 3,000

- 96.4% of Students are Hispanic
- Over 86% of Students are Economically Disadvantaged
- 16% of Students are experiencing homelessness
- 21.2% of Students are English Learners (Santa Maria High School Website, 2024)



2023 Visual Art sections offered:

- ART 1: 14 sections
- Intermediate Drawing: 1 section
- Digital Arts 1: 1 section
- PHOTO 2: 1 section
- PHOTO 1: 3 sections

Student's Response Towards Ceramics

Student interest in various aspects in ceramics.

Technique	Hand-building	Wheel Throwing	Glazing and decorating	Firing process	Types of Clay
Interest	235	150	171	106	131
No Interest	96	181	160	225	200
Total	331	331	331	331	331

Student response how likely they would take a ceramics class if being offered.

	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Very Unlikely
Student response	102	102	81	46
Total	331	331	331	331

Number of students regarding their prior knowledge of ceramics by grade level.

Grade	9th	10th	11th	12th
With	40	18	38	46
Without	34	29	56	70
Total	74	47	94	116

Number of who have taken a ceramics class by grade level.

Grade	9th	10th	11th	12th
Class Taken	0	0	1	6
No Prior Class	74	47	93	110
Total	74	47	94	116

The Benefits of Ceramics

Numerous benefits result from our students having the opportunity to take a ceramics course. First, it helps regulate students' emotions and allows them another avenue to express themselves (Martin, 2022, p. 167). This is especially important when many of our students are English Learners. This helps students turn to drugs for mental relief (NASAA, 2019, p. 1). The Santa Maria Joint Union District has focused a lot on building student awareness of drugs. The ability for the students to work with both hands when creating artwork is essential when connecting with artwork. It is also vital to provide education highlighting all cultural backgrounds to ensure students can think more globally (Banks, 2016, p. 33).



The Case for Ceramics

Problem of Practice

Students at Santa Maria High School have limited opportunities to take higher-level visual art courses that allow students to receive the appropriate range of all subjects. A limited visual arts offering will limit all students' professional and upper education opportunities. Many students have an ethnicity with a deep cultural connection to ceramics that we should honor in our visual arts offerings.

Vision for Change

The Vision of this change is to allow students to grow in the arts and discover if this subject fits into their career goals. This change aims to inspire students to try something new, be challenged, and enjoy going to school. The second focus is to show that the arts program recognizes the students' cultural backgrounds. The last and final stage is institutionalization, in which we will ensure everything is up and running for the course during the school year.

Teacher's Lens and Positionality

In the fall of 2022, I student taught at Carpinteria High School teaching ceramics while learning the practice simultaneously. I loved playing with clay and learning new skills in creating practical artwork. At this school, the demographic of the students was similar to that of the Santa Maria students, and I had the opportunity to watch these students enjoy the process of creating with clay. When I started my teacher position as a first-year teacher at Santa Maria High School with knowledge of other visual arts programs, I thought the students would have the same enjoyment for ceramics as my previous students.



Change Planning

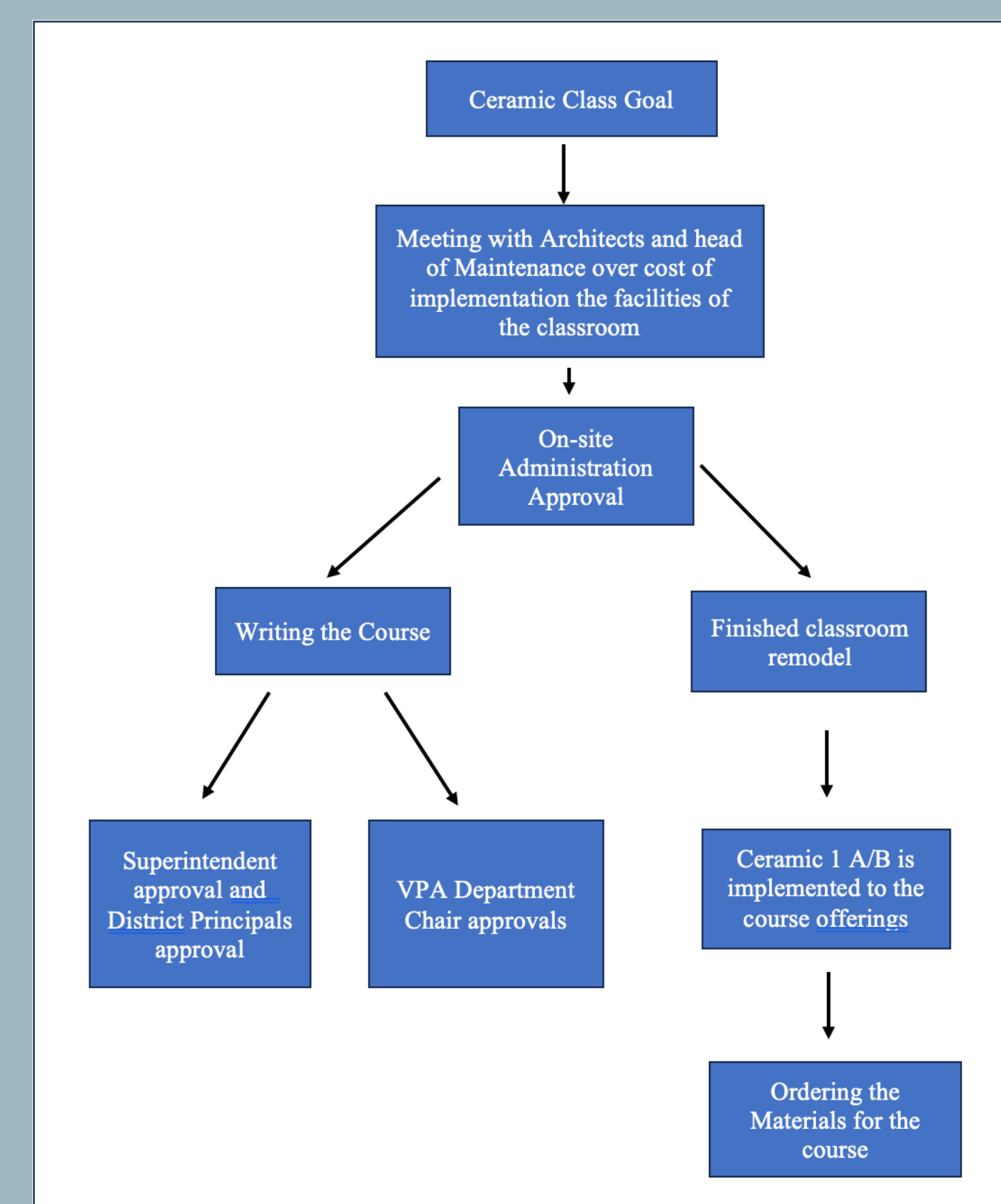
Internal Drivers: The Visual Arts Teachers, the Assistant Principal of the Visual and Performing Arts, and the Assistant Principal of Curriculum.
External Drivers: The want for academic opportunities for all students, student-centered learning within the curriculum
Readiness for Change: All are open to change, which was previously offered years ago.
Key Stakeholders: Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and counselors.
Challenges: The overall cost of the course, building constraints, and lack of interest from students.

Next Steps: The Ceramics Course is being approved by the Administrators and Visual and Performing Arts Department Chairs. We are also waiting for the new building to be remodeled.

Change Path Model

The change path model ensures the proper steps to create a long-lasting change for the students. The Awakening phase is the first stage of the process, which occurred from August 2023, when conversations first started in the VPA department, to January 2024, when the Santa Maria School Administrators confirmed the want for the course as well as the financial support to put it in place. The second stage of the Change Path Model is Mobilization, which is ongoing with the goal of more detail-oriented preparation for implementing the ceramics course. The third stage of the Change Path Model is Acceleration, when we celebrate the win of writing the course and focus on the next steps (Deszca et al., 2020, p. 52).

Flowchart on the Steps Towards Change



Reflective Epilogue

The conclusions of my thesis confirm the need for the art course. The administration's support and desire to implement the course have been fulfilling. As of now, I wonder why so few students move on to taking consecutive art classes. The number of signups for the 2024 to 2025 students is heavily skewed toward high school seniors. Having seniors in an Art 1 course is not uncommon, but other schools also have high members of lower-grade students enrolled in Art 1. I have gotten to know the Santa Maria High Students as the year has ended. Our problem is more about inspiring students to care about school in which they are able to pass their classes and have more opportunities for higher-level electives.

Units and Projects of the Ceramics Course

Unit 1: Elements of Art and Principles of Design

Project: Drawing visual representations of each of the vocabulary definitions.

Unit 2: Maintaining the Studio

Project: Students will make posters on the knowledge of making ceramics and general rules

Unit 3: Pinch

Two Stamps to create patterns

Two Pinch Pots

Pinch Pot Creatures

Unit 4: Coil

Coil Vessel

Unit 5: Slab

Mug Project

Slab Box Project

Tri-Fold Nerikomi Bowl Project

Set of Coasters Project

Lantern Project

Unit 6: Sculpture

Family Heritage Mask Project

Day of Dead Ceramic Skull Project

Food Sculpture Project

Unit 7: Wheel Throwing

Thrown Vessel of Choice

Unit 8: Portfolio

Teapot and Coaster Set

Collection of Photos of all projects.

Unit 9: Art Display

Setting up a gallery

Artist Statement

(University of California A-G Course Management Portal, 2024).

Classroom Layout

