

Whittier Union High School District

Strategic Arts Plan for 2025-2030

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The development of the WUHSD Strategic Plan for Arts Education is a partnership between the Los Angeles County Arts Education Collective and Whittier Union High School District. In 2024-2025 the WUHSD VAPA CIT formed a planning team that worked with Arts Ed Collective Coach, Sandy Seufert, and worked to create this Strategic Arts Plan, which is the third Strategic Arts Plan Ms. Seufert has done with WUHSD. The team met on three full days with follow up support.

Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture – Arts Education Collective

In 2002, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors established the Arts Education Collective to align efforts across the region with the ambitious goal that LA County's 1.5 million public school students receive a well-rounded education that includes the arts.

The Arts Ed Collective is comprised of policy makers, educators, arts organizations, teaching artists, funders, business leaders and community advocates. Strategic direction for the initiative is guided by the Leadership Council and Funders Council. The Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, formerly called the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, offers administrative support and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) provides curriculum and instructional services for educators Countywide. **LACountyArtsEdCollective.org**

The History of Arts Education and Project Background in WUHSD

History of Strategic Arts Plans in WUHSD

WUHSD had the great privilege to be the first high school only district to create a District Strategic Arts Plan. Since that time, WUHSD's plans have inspired other districts around Los Angeles County. The bullets below represent key outcomes from each of those plans.

Spring 2011	First WUHSD VAPA CIT meets to begin WUHSD Strategic Arts Plan Creation
Spring 2014	First WUHSD Strategic Arts Plan adopted—three year cycle Key actions included: ● Creation: WUHSD VAPA Vision, Mission, and Core Values ● Creation: Annual VAPA Department Gala ● Band Instruments
Spring 2016	Second WUHSD Strategic Arts Plan adopted—three year cycle Key actions included: ● Creation: Arts Lead TOSA position for 1 release period ● Formation: Performing Arts Center Cohort ● Expansion: VAPA Student Field Experiences
Spring 2020	WUHSD Strategic Arts Plan 2020-2025 adopted—five year cycle Key actions included: ● Expansion: Arts Lead TOSA position to 2 release periods (2024/2025) ● Creation: District VAPA Student Survey ● Creation: Ethnic Studies: An Artistic Approach curriculum ● Initiation: VAPA Course Description Updates ● New Computers for all VAPA Staff ● VAPA Articulation with Partner School Districts ● VAPA-specific PD ● Visual Art Display Upgrades ● Theatre Storage
Spring 2025	WUHSD Strategic Arts Plan 2025-2030 adoption anticipated

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WUHS District Vision and Statement of Beliefs/Core Values, Expectations and Outcomes, and VAPA Core Values

Vision Statement

The Whittier Union High School District will provide all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement, WHATEVER IT TAKES.

Statement of Beliefs (Core Values)

- Every individual has worth and dignity.
- Every student can and will learn, regardless of factors beyond their control.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are at the core of our mission, policy & practice.
- Students will be directed to participate in the most rigorous course of study consistent with their abilities and future goals.

- There is strength inherent in the ethnic and cultural diversity of the students, parents, and community we serve.
- The WUHSD staff is accountable to students, parents, and the community for student academic and personal growth.
- Parents are essential partners in the education of their children.
- Collaboration and articulation with the K-16 education community is essential to ensuring a quality education.

- We are integral partners in the business and the cultural life of the community.
- There is value, power, and synergy in a collaborative culture.
- The success of our district is measured solely by the academic and social emotional success of our students

Expectations and Outcomes

- Our students will be effective communicators, quality producers, self-directed lifelong learners, community contributors, collaborative workers, and complex thinkers.
- Our students will be prepared to meet the challenges and changing needs of society.
- Our schools will be safe and secure learning environments.
- Our students will be taught by a well-trained, competent staff with a deep personal commitment to the academic and personal success of their students.

- All of our students will have ACCESS to the most rigorous, challenging courses of study.
- Our students will learn in high quality, modern facilities in a physical environment equipped with state-of-the-art technology.
- Our schools will be places where students establish and develop positive relationships with other students and adult role models.
- Our schools will provide timely, focused academic support and the interventions necessary for the success of all students

Whittier Union High School District recognizes and believes that all students deserve a comprehensive Arts Education that values critical thinking and creative expression. An organized infrastructure and informed network of support for arts instruction and programs is essential. Our students will be best served by the adoption of our seven (7) core values:

- Visual and Performing Arts are core subjects
- Students involved in arts education will become better citizens
- Systemic support for sequential arts education is essential
- Arts programs need consistent access to facilities, resources, and funding

- VAPA teachers require relevant art-specific professional development
- Rigorous and relevant standards-based arts instruction is integral
- Collaboration and promotion with District and Community-wide arts organizations is fundamental

Executive Summary

Practical Vision Goals

The Curriculum and Instruction Team met and answered the question, “If all things were possible, what would we want to have in place in five years in arts education as the result of our plan?” The following Goals were created from a brainstorming session based on their vision for WUHSD on September 17, 2024. The CIT shared this Vision at their site departments for feedback. The full Practical Vision document can be found in the Appendix.

Empowered VAPA Champions	Vibrant VAPA Culture	Equitable and Inclusive VAPA Access	Thriving VAPA Programs	Optimized VAPA Infrastructure	Strategic VAPA Partnerships	Intentional VAPA Professional Development
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Current Reality

The Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Curriculum and Instruction Team (CIT) of WUHSD reflected on the Current Reality in the District. These reflections helped the CIT generate actions to move closer to the Vision. Here is a summary.

Strengths Moving Us Closer to Our Vision:

Our dedication to arts education is evident in the protected collaborative time for arts planning, the exciting potential of Prop 28 funding, and the unwavering commitment of our passionate staff, even amidst declining enrollment. The value placed on the arts is further amplified by vital support from all personnel, alongside the invaluable experience of our veteran teachers and the support provided to newer educators. Key assets such as our upcoming Performing Arts Center, an expanded Arts Coordinator role, the vibrant VAPA Gala, and the promising integration of arts within district professional development pathways are gaining momentum. Recent increases in the Arts Coordinator's time, the growth of arts programs in partner schools, the continued support through the Advancement Grant, and updated course descriptions guided by expert consultation are all significant steps forward. The innovative "Ethnic Studies: An Artistic Approach" and the slightly higher graduation rates of our VAPA students underscore the positive impact of arts engagement.

Challenges Blocking Our Progress:

Navigating a landscape of multiple district priorities, including CTE pathways, AVID/Puente, academies, dual enrollment, and Advanced Placement courses presents a scheduling hurdle. This is compounded by the pressing reality of declining enrollment. The absence of an onboarding process for new teachers that

aligns with the district's VAPA vision hinders curriculum coordination. Finally, addressing the tendency for students to delay arts courses until their senior year, alongside a disproportionate placement in visual arts, are crucial areas for attention.

Opportunities We Can Explore:

We have a remarkable opportunity to strengthen arts education through increased collaboration and planning with various district stakeholders. The articulation possibilities with partner schools, particularly with the influx of Prop 28 funding, hold immense promise. Our Performing Arts Center stands as a central hub for showcasing student talent and fostering community engagement. The evident enthusiasm of our students in classes, clubs, after-school programs, and practice provides a strong foundation to build upon. Prop 28 offers a tangible pathway to address staffing needs and expand our VAPA team. By amplifying student voices through the PAC, surveys, and the Gala, and by leveraging the Advancement Grant, we can cultivate a more vibrant and impactful arts education program.

Strategic Directions

The team answered the question, “What innovative actions can we take to move closer to our vision, help us take advantage of our strengths, and overcome our challenges. From those actions, they generated the following Strategic Directions and Goals, including LCAP alignments. (The full document is in the appendix)

Strategic Direction 1: Cultivate a Thriving and Vibrant VAPA Culture LCAP Goal 1 (1.6); Goal 2 (2.4, 2.8, 2.9); Goal 3 (3.3)	Goal 1: Amplify VAPA Advocacy and Visibility Goal 2: Foster VAPA Student Leadership Goal 3: Deepen Community and District Engagement
Strategic Direction 2: Ensure Equitable and Inclusive Access to High-Quality VAPA Programs LCAP Goal 1 (1.2, 1.6); Goal 2 (2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.7); Goal 3 (3.1, 3.3); Goal 4 (4.8); Goal 5 (5.1, 5.4)	Goal 1: Optimize Scheduling and Staffing Goal 2: Increase Equity and Access in VAPA Scheduling Goal 3: Enhance VAPA Curriculum and Instruction
Strategic Direction 3: Develop and Support Excellent VAPA Educators LCAP Goal 1 (1.6); Goal 2 (2.2, 2.5, 2.10); Goal 3 (3.3); Goal 4 (4.1)	Goal 1: Provide Comprehensive VAPA Professional Development Goal 2: Invest in VAPA Leadership and Infrastructure Goal 3: Secure and Manage Resources

Whittier Union High School District

Action Plan

Phase 1 - 2025-2027

Phase 2 - 2027-2029

Phase 3 - 2029-2030

Strategic Direction #1: Cultivate a Thriving and Vibrant VAPA Culture

Goal 1: Amplify VAPA Advocacy and Visibility

Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Encourage district leaders to attend arts events and participate in arts-related activities	Create district calendar of VAPA events and activities Prioritize events that should be attended Communicate events to district leaders	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT	Increased attendance to a minimum threshold of 1 district leader per major event (based on prioritized list)	Phase 1: Initiate Phase 2: Review and Revise Phase 3: Assessment
Develop a communication plan to highlight the value and impact of various programs	Survey alumni Find data to support the impact of arts on student education	Sub Days	Arts Coordinator Alumni Survey Cohort	Development of a plan in a variety of media (print, video)	Phase 1: Cohort creation; survey creation; research delivery methods Phase 2: Send out survey; compile data

Make short promotional videos to support VAPA enrollment	Create Gala agenda item Hire video producer	\$10-15,000	Arts Coordinator CIT Video Cohort	Increased VAPA interest Community knowledge of WUHSD VAPA offerings	Phase 1: Planning Phase 2: Creation Phase 3: Efficacy Review
Invite admin to visit VAPA classrooms with greater frequency	Create a digital invitation letter to send out on open visitation days	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT	Increased visibility of admin involvement in VAPA	Phase 1: Planning, implementation, and review Phases 2-3: Ongoing
Continue and expand District-wide and site-level arts showcases to include community involvement (partner schools)	Bi-annually update our partner school VAPA contact list Contact partner schools annually to communicate and organize events	Sub Days After School Hours	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT VAPA Program Directors	Inclusion of partner school participation Increased freshman VAPA enrollment Increased community involvement	Phase 1/Year 1: Plan Phase 1/Year 2: Implement Phase 2 & 3: Review, edit, and continue
Enlist ASB (Student Council) to support and promote the arts	Communicate VAPA events to ASB Prepare promo materials in advance of events to share with ASB	Period Sub	VAPA CITs Site ASB Advisors	Increased attendance of ASB at VAPA events Increased promotion of VAPA on ASB social media and communications	Phase 1: Implement and Review Phase 2 & 3: Ongoing
Goal 2: Foster VAPA Student Leadership					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Conduct an annual VAPA Summit for students to support student leadership	Choose date and venue for summit Select students	Sub days After school hours	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT	Exit Survey Board Presentation	Phase 1/Year 1: Plan Phase 1/Year 2: Implement

	Organize event, agenda, goals Work with student representatives to draft and implement a Board Presentation		Site APCs		Phase 2 & 3: Ongoing
Goal 3: Deepen Community and District Engagement					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Articulate with partner schools	Bi-annually update our partner school VAPA contact list and admin list Having an initial meet & greet Design professional development for Joint District PD	Sub days After school hours	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT Site VAPA teacher Director of Professional Learning	Joint Districts PD Day/discipline	Phase 1: Plan and Implement Phase 2: Review and Ongoing Phase 3: Ongoing
Increase visits of teachers and students to partner school campuses and classrooms	Schedule Fall or early Spring campus visits to promote WUHSD enrollment Inform Arts Coordinator of scheduled visits Utilize student VAPA leadership as partner school ambassadors Conduct exit survey Consider adding question to VAPA student survey to see if partner school visits had an impact on student choice	Busses Subs	VAPA CIT Site VAPA teachers Arts Coordinator	Number of scheduled partner school visits Exit survey results and recommendations	Phase 1: Plan and Implement Phase 2 and 3: Review and Ongoing

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Phase 3 - 2029-2030

Strategic Direction #2: Ensure Equitable and Inclusive Access to High-Quality VAPA Programs

Goal 1: Optimize Scheduling and Staffing

Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Include arts representation at Master Scheduling meetings at all school sites	Ask for a full PD Day for building the master schedule with all department chairs and other leadership	Subs	Director of Assessment & Accountability Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT	VAPA representatives invited to the table at all master scheduling meetings to advocate for the arts	Phase 2: Implement Phase 3: Assess
Include VAPA representation on the committees looking at updating graduation requirements	Let your site administration know that you are interested in joining the committee	Subs	Director of Assessment & Accountability Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT	VAPA representation in place on committees reviewing graduation requirements 2 years of VAPA required for graduation	Phase 1: Implement Phases 2 & 3: Ongoing
Explore arts instruction models that can support student school schedules	Research other district models for scheduling of arts courses Create a report with recommendations	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator	Present to VAPA CIT research findings for possible implementation	Phase 1: Implement

Goal 2: Increase Equity and Access in VAPA Scheduling					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	
Set up safeguards to require teacher approval for students who request to drop a VAPA class	VAPA teachers meet to draft recommendations for steps counselors should take before dropping a student from VAPA classes Meet with counselors/APG to hash out procedures	Subs	Arts Coordinator Director of Assessment & Accountability APGs Site Counselor Cohort	Procedure in place for communication between counselors and teachers before arts students are dropped	Phase 1: Create and Implement Phase 2: Review Efficacy and Reconfigure (if necessary) and Ongoing Phase 3: Ongoing
Create and launch a slide deck about VAPA with counselors and APGs	Meet with department members to determine what needs to be included. Each singleton teacher creates a slide to represent their class. (include images) Refine and revise Meet with guidance to share	Subs	VAPA CIT Site VAPA members	Increased enrollment in classes.	Phase 1: Create and Implement Phase 2: Review Efficacy and Reconfigure (if necessary) and Ongoing Phase 3: Ongoing
Update VAPA course descriptions in Aries (counseling software). This is what counselors see when they program students	Counselors need to print or give access to current descriptions, so we know what needs to be changed VAPA teachers meet to update descriptions & work with IT/Ed Tech to get them updated in Aeries	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator VAPA disciplines IT department	Course descriptions updated in Aries	Phase 1: Create and Implement Phase 2 and 3: Ongoing
Explore establishing 2 mandatory years of VAPA	Create presentation for District Administration expounding data regarding the benefits of a full VAPA education	Unknown	Arts Coordinator	WUHSD students mandated to successfully complete two years of VAPA to graduate	Phase 1: Create Phase 2: Implement

			Director of Assessment & Accountability Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum		Phase 3: Assess and Revise; Ongoing
Goal 3: Enhance VAPA Curriculum and Instruction					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	
Continue course updates	Inventory courses to determine what needs to be upgraded Department leaders reach out to teachers to determine an ETA	Release time to work at district Subs	Arts Coordinator VAPA CIT (possible Arts Coach)	All VAPA courses being updated with the new California VAPA standards	Phase 1: Ongoing Phase 2: Completed
Continue subject-alike collaboration at the District and explore common benchmarks and/or performance assessments	Create an assessment pilot in one arts genre (Semester one, some elements and principles/techniques) Investigate what already exists	Release time for subject-like teachers to meet Subs	Arts Coordinator Discipline Teachers	Teachers could create a site- based common project (or district wide) then share results and best practices	Phase 1: Create cohort Phase 2: Create, Implement, and Review Data for assessment Phase 3: Ongoing and Create in second discipline/class
Ensure all advanced VAPA courses to meet CTE graduation requirements	Ensure updated District graduation requirement Find out from administration viability and recommendations	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator Director of Assessment and Accountability	More students enrolled in VAPA classes beyond 1st year & able to fulfill Practical Arts/CTE credits	Phase 1: Initiate and complete

	Ask teachers who worked on course descriptions to add CTE standards to course descriptions.				
Research use of digital technology to support instruction	Survey teachers on use and need of digital technology supports Research technology options/adoption through IT Provide PD for teachers to learn technology and create curriculum integrating the technology	Subs	Discipline educator cohorts	Integration of digital technology across disciplines	Phase 1: Research and Implement Phase 2: Review/Continue
Hold discussions on common assessments as part of the course update process and/or in the summer content weeks	Find teachers interested in working on common assessments Assessment development PD days at the district	Subs	Director of Assessment & Accountability Arts Coordinator CIT Discipline Educators	Phase 1: One common assessment in at least one VA and one PA per year Phase 2: More VA and PA classes initiate common assessment practice	See area to the left
Offer Ethnic Studies: An Arts Approach	Meet with pilot teacher to discuss successes and possible curricular changes	Subs	Pilot VAPA Educator Arts Coordinator	Implementation of a one-semester pilot	Phase 1: Pilot and Review

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Strategic Direction #3: Develop and Support Excellent VAPA Educators

Goal 1: Provide Comprehensive VAPA Professional Development

Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Research and plan PD for administration (school and district leaders) and/or a way to share best practices from other administrators at arts-rich districts	Encourage attendance at LA County Arts meetings for regular Admin. Offer PD for district admin to help them better support and understand the arts	LCAP/Title I	Arts Coordinator CIT Director of Assessment & Accountability	Administration attendance at PD List of recommended actions	Phase 1: Research Phase 2 & 3: Implement
Continue discussions regarding teacher stipends for work done outside the school day	Work with WSEA Research stipends in like-districts Discuss Prop. 28 stipend equity VAPA vs Athletics—they are not the same	No budget implications	Arts Coordinator CIT WSEA Personnel	Written job descriptions delineating classwork done outside the school day vs. club work	Phase 1: Research Phase 2 & 3: Implement
Create support systems/documents for new VAPA hires	Certificated Staff VAPA Coaches	LCAP	Arts Coordinator	Completed Documents for new hires	Phase 1: Initiate Phase 2 & 3: Review and update

	Visual Art Tutors				
Explore AI training for teachers to support curriculum development and to support AI guidelines	Source AI PD Identify teachers interested in PD within each discipline Hold AI PD sessions Implement AI lessons Hold AI lessons Review PD	Subs	Arts Coordinator CIT VAPA educators	Schedule of PDs AI VAPA implementation	Phase 1: Research and hold educator PD Phase 2 & 3: Implement and Review
Provide professional development on new technological tools	Source PD Identify teachers interested in PD within each discipline Hold PD sessions Implement lessons Hold lessons Review PD	Subs PD Facilitator hires Apps and Programs	Discipline-specific educators Arts Coordinator	Schedule of PDs VAPA technology implementation	Phase 1: Research and hold educator PD Phase 2 & 3: Implement and Review
Goal 2: Invest in VAPA Leadership and Infrastructure					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Make the VAPA Lead (Arts Coordinator) position full time	Work with WSEA Find full time VAPA lead job description from other districts How much of what current WUHSD Arts Coordinator does aligns with other districts' F/T duties?	LCAP	Arts Coordinator CIT WSEA Personnel	Creation of a FT Arts Coordinator position	Phase 1 - Initiate

Establish Art I Tutors	Work with site administration Review WHS Pilot semester Survey other sites for interest	Prop 28	Arts Coordinator WHS Dept. Chair WHS VA teachers CIT	Adoption of Visual Arts Tutors at all sites over time	Phase 1: Initiate & Expand Phase 2 & 3: Review and update
Goal 3: Secure and Manage Resources					
Actions	Tasks	Budget	Point Person(s)	Measurable Outcomes (Evidence of Success)	Phase
Tap into best practices used by other school districts	Ask Arts Ed Collective to create a searchable database of Strategic Arts Plan actions and elements Set up meetings with other District VAPA Coordinators Propose new purchasing process based on recommendations	Subs	Arts Coordinator	List of recommendations shared with District Admin	Phase 1: Research Phase 2: Prepare list of recommendations Phase 3: Implement

Appendix

Practical Vision (Full Document): The Curriculum Instruction Team met and answered the question, “If all things were possible, what would we want to have in place in five years as the result of our plan in arts education?” The following Goals were created from a brainstorming session based on their vision for WUHSD on September 17, 2024.

Empowered VAPA Champions	Vibrant VAPA Culture	Equitable and Inclusive VAPA Access	Thriving VAPA Programs	Optimized VAPA Infrastructure	Strategic VAPA Partnerships	Intentional VAPA Professional Development
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I. Empowered VAPA Champions ○ Admin, counselor, and board VAPA education and involvement ○ Full-time arts coordinator ○ Greater parent support and advocacy ○ Community stakeholders actively look to WUHSD as a model for arts instruction ○ Inclusion of administration in arts planning	IV. Thriving VAPA Programs ○ VAPA is an opportunity to enhance a high school education ○ Creative process purposefully incorporated into all academic curriculums ○ Students Requesting multiple years of art ○ Greater enrollment in advanced coursework ○ Counselors actively encouraging arts ○ Cross-curricular inclusion and collaboration
II. Vibrant VAPA Culture ○ Continuing a campaign to present the importance of VAPA to students ○ Culture shift using VAPA as a common language ○ Increase VAPA visibility ○ WUHSD has a reputation of being an arts-focused district ○ Greater visibility of student artwork in and out of school	V. Optimized VAPA Infrastructure ○ Transparency in ordering and the warehouse ○ Maintenance of equipment and facilities ○ Access to appropriate performance spaces ○ Classrooms appropriately outfitted for arts instruction ○ Ongoing PROP 28 Communication & Action- STEP UP! ○ Streamlined district support systems aligned with VAPA goals

○ Visibility of district board members at art events ○ Greater attendance of the ecosystem (all stakeholders) at arts events	○ Open Master Schedule—need for open discussions prior to building
III. Equitable and Inclusive VAPA Access ○ Equity of VAPA opportunities at each site ○ Equity of VAPA Educational Weight within District Scheduling and Culture ○ Access to all art disciplines at all sites ○ Commitment to full inclusion for all learners, including students in special day classes ○ Guided Study—use VAPA classes to support at-promise youth ○ SEL—use VAPA classes/strategies to infuse SEL across disciplines ○ Open Master Schedule—need for open discussions prior to building	VI. Strategic VAPA Partnerships ● Understanding the goals of each counseling department to understand what colleges are requesting and to foster a partnership ● Full VAPA articulation with partner school districts ● Robust articulation with partner schools ● Community Arts Partners ● Higher Ed Arts Programs/Arts Training Programs
VII. Intentional VAPA Professional Development ○ More intentional PD action. Some teachers are very good at seeking opportunities. A specific meeting to research opportunities and request PD ○ District PD spotlight on Arts strategies and creative process	