



Arts Education in
Maryland Schools

Stakeholder Engagement Presentation

Rachel McGrain

Executive Director

Peter Dayton

Director of Operations

Maryland State Board of Education

Baltimore, MD

March 25, 2025

Celebrating

ARTS IN OUR SCHOOLS

VISUAL ARTS DANCE MEDIA ARTS MUSIC THEATRE



MARCH 2025



Arts Education in Maryland Schools



“Untitled”

Yuly E. Cuevas Cordero

Frederick Douglass

High School

Currently on display at

Baltimore Unity Hall,

Part of Arts Every Day’s

“10 x 10” exhibition of

Baltimore City Public

Schools student artwork

About Arts Education in Maryland Schools

WHO WE ARE

- Statewide nonprofit 501(c)(3), founded in 1997
- Based in Baltimore
- Collaborates with statewide arts organizations, regional organizations, fine arts supervisors, and the State Department of Education

VISION

We envision a public education system in Maryland that supports, cultivates, nurtures, and uplifts ALL students' creativity through a robust arts education experience so that they can thrive in a healthy society.

MISSION

AEMS is committed to ensuring that all students in the state of Maryland have access to high quality arts education by mobilizing power to communities through advocacy programs, professional and leadership programs, and resource building and sharing.

AEMS Staff



Rachel McGrain
Executive Director



Peter Dayton
Director of Operations



Alissa Gittens
Communications Manager

Patrick O'Reilly
Policy & Operations Assistant

LOCAL NEWS

Howard County community rallies against proposed cuts to music, gifted and talented programs

ALERT CENTERPIECE

Updated: School board labors over cuts programs to fill \$50M budget gap

By Sylvia Carignan scarignan@newspost.com May 15, 2024 Updated May 29, 2024 2



ELLICOTT CITY, Md. — Reading the lines of a sheet of music is a whole lot different from reading the lines of a budget.

But on Wednesday night, the two came together in Ellicott City; dozens of parents and students joined together at the George Howard Building in support of greater school funding as music students played string instruments.

EDUCATION

Frederick County Schools won't axe music programs over budget concerns

FREDERICK, Md. — The music program at a Maryland school district is off the chopping block for now after an hours-long school budget hearing that lasted into the [late hours of Wednesday night](#). Now, Frederick County Public Schools still has to figure out a way to close a \$50 million budget gap.

Excitement from thousands of students and several teachers who were concerned about their jobs and the band and orchestra being cut. This was a part of the discussion during the Frederick County School Board budget meeting that lasted over five hours.



State Government
(Governor's Office,
Legislature, SBOE)



maryland citizens for the arts



Maryland
Education
Coalition



Fine Arts Education
Advisory Panel



MARYLAND CENTERS FOR
CREATIVE CLASSROOMS



MSAC
maryland state arts council

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Well Rounded Education: Title VIII, Section 8002

Passed in 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the latest iteration of ESEA

“(52) WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION

The term ‘well-rounded education’ means courses, activities, and programming in subjects such as English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, physical education, and any other subject, as determined by the State or local educational agency, with the purpose of providing all students access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience.”

COMAR Sec. 13a.04.16.01.

Requirements for Fine Arts Instructional Programs for Pre Kindergarten - Grade 12 (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Art)

A. Each local school system shall:

(1) Provide an instructional program in fine arts each year for all students in grades pre kindergarten - 8 as follows:

(a) Within the prekindergarten-5 grade span, students shall have experiences in the fine art forms of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art; and

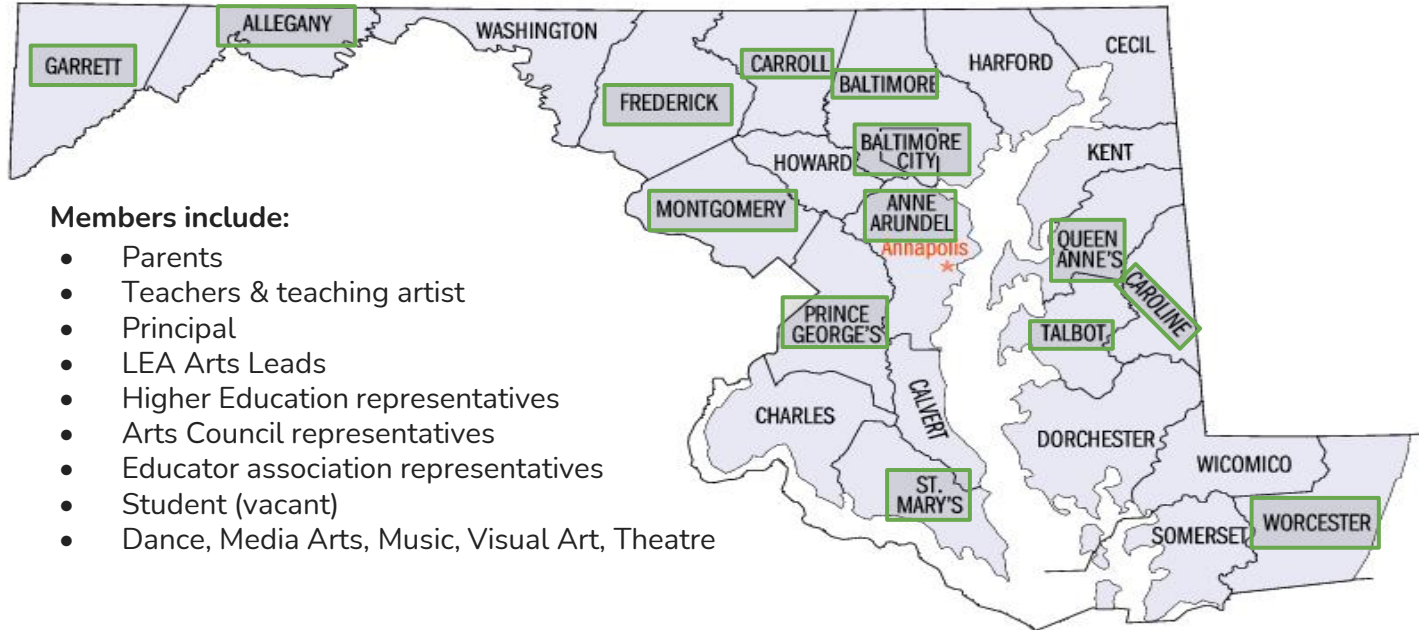
(b) Within grades 6-8, students may specialize in one or more of the fine art forms of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art; and

(2) Provide an instructional program that enables all students in grades 9-12 to meet graduation requirements, and to select from among fine arts elective courses of dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art that will prepare them for post-secondary education and careers.

COMAR Sec. 13a.04.16.02.

Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel

The State Superintendent of Schools shall maintain a Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel that shall advise the Superintendent on issues and best practices relevant to fine arts education for students in Maryland.



COMAR Sec. 13a.04.16.02.

Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel Recommendation Topics

- Supporting conditionally licensed arts educators
- Arts endorsement for high school diploma
- Arts representation on local Blueprint implementation teams
- Transparency and support to help LEAs increase high-quality and sequential program offerings in a way that best serves students in their LEA

Blueprint For Maryland's Future

Statutory References to the Arts

“Schools may use funds provided under this section to provide the programs required under COMAR 13A.04.16.01.”

(2020, HB1300, §5-212(b), Pg. 24)

“The personnel and per pupil grant may be used through Fiscal Year 2027 to provide the programs required under COMAR 13A.04.16.01.”

(2022, HB1450, §5-223(c)(9), Pg. 3)

Blueprint For Maryland's Future

Comprehensive Implementation Plan

([Section 3.1.1b, p103](#))

“The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future and the updated CCR standard are **not intended to alter the need for high quality programs and content in fine arts**, civics, physical education, and other **areas that are necessary to provide a holistic education** and enable every student to be **well-rounded** and meet the CCR standard.

Blueprint law specifically authorizes the use of Foundation formula funds and Concentration of Poverty grant funds (through FY27) for LEAs **to meet the requirements of Code of Maryland Regulations: Title 13A, Subtitle 04, SPECIFIC SUBJECTS, including 13A.04.16.01, which includes the arts.**”



WHERE IS ARTS EDUCATION ALIGNED WITH THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE?

In their local Blueprint implementation plans submitted in May 2024, LEAs identified ways in which the arts and the Blueprint support each other. These examples are a glimpse into the many ways the policies and funding from the Blueprint are able to support student learning through the arts.

PILLAR 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Expansion to full-day Pre-K through significant investments in high-quality early childhood education has provided our youngest students new and transformative opportunities to participate in arts learning.

ALLEGANY COUNTY

The expansion to full-day [pre-k] has allowed for instructional enhancements by incorporation of more explicitly taught resource classes, such as **art**, physical education, **music**, guidance and **media** into the weekly schedule.

WORCESTER COUNTY

WCPS allocated Title IV grant funding for a new elementary physical health initiative and connected its Stronger Connections grant funds for a new **music-and-movement teacher** at WCPS' highest poverty Title I elementary school.

CHARLES COUNTY

We now add full day Pre-K projections into the school staffing allocations, including **staffing for art, music** and physical education.

PILLAR 3 - COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

The arts foster skills and competencies that top business and industry leaders have reported are sorely needed - arts learning is beneficial to any college and career pathway.

FREDERICK COUNTY

Some of FCPS's selective admissions programs (e.g., Fine Arts and CTE), which are available to students from all high schools, offer high school based **dual enrollment classes**.

CARROLL COUNTY

Schools work hard to encourage students to participate in clubs, **fine arts**, and athletics **to increase attendance and academic achievement**.

AP COURSES

Across the state, counties list AP course offerings in Art and Design 3D, Music Theory, Studio Art, Art History, and Studio Art & Design: 2-D.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY

To be an **Academy of Visual and Performing Arts** (AVPA) [pathway] completer [at all 3 comprehensive high schools], students must complete **6 credits** or more of any Fine Arts course... and receive eight points from a **"menu" of optional SMCPs Fine Arts opportunities**.

To ensure that students have access to all of the arts disciplines that are outlined in the Maryland Fine Arts COMAR, SMCPs is pursuing a **dance dual enrollment** opportunity with the College of Southern Maryland. It should also be noted that all SMCPs students have **access to 55 relevant and rigorous fine arts courses**.

PILLAR 4 -MORE RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Investments in extended learning offers additional access to unique, community-based and affirming arts learning opportunities.

BALTIMORE CITY

After-school and summer programming, tutoring, and **fine arts** opportunities are consistently **identified by families** in Community School needs assessments and other polling as **vital services that support student learning**. Concentration of Poverty funds will allow City Schools to continue our investment in these critical services.

SOMERSET COUNTY

Students have had the opportunity to participate in clubs such as STEM, **art**, cooking, boxing, sports, **theater, music**, novels, and a wide variety of other interests. While many of our staff are running clubs, community schools are also partnering with local organizations to provide some of these after- school experiences.

WASHINGTON COUNTY

WCPS extended learning programs collaborate with multiple **partners** (including Washington County **Fine Arts Museum**), to provide enrichment activities to students in addition to the academic activities within the program. These enrichment activities range from **musical and theater arts** to athletic clubs.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Summer, college-bearing program for English Learners: An additional component for **arts integration** was incorporated in the summer of 2023, culminating in a **student art show** at the college. In a reflection assignment, many students remarked they were the first in their families to earn college credit.

Blueprint Implementation Concerns

- Over-emphasis on **standardized tested subjects** throughout the legislation
- When misunderstood, College & Career Readiness (CCR) can be used to justify scheduling that **disrupts access to and continuity of learning in the arts**
- LEAs are considering **cuts to arts education in order to meet budget goals** that accomplish specific Blueprint mandates
- New teacher preparation requirements are resulting in **challenges to the teacher pipeline**

“Blueprint is encouraging many of my best students to take AP courses and/or participate in opportunities outside of the building. This is great for individual students but negatively impacts school culture. I've been stressing the value of staying in a performing ensemble and becoming a leader. My efforts seem to be working, as evidenced by student attitudes and increased enrollment.”

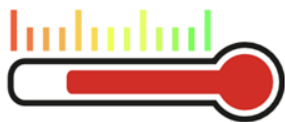
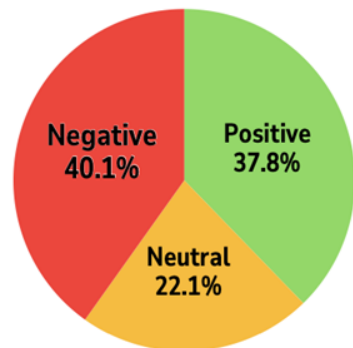
-Carroll County Secondary Music Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

2023-24 ARTS EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

In Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, arts educators volunteered to complete the AEMS Arts Educator Feedback Survey to share insights about their classroom experiences. The 260 respondents represented 19 out of the 24 local education agencies in Maryland. Here are some of the most notable trends and feedback given.

TEMPERATURE CHECK

How did arts educators feel about the 2023-24 school year?



"I love coming to work everyday to engage with my students, and I love how eager they are to continue working on art even during their free time."

"There have been some bad changes structurally that have impacted my students and I... my numbers are up and kids are excited. I just wish I could do what is best for them instead of just make it work."

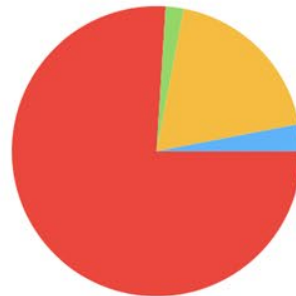
"I also feel extremely undermined as an arts educator, like I am reduced to being a warm body in a classroom to reduce discipline referral rates instead of doing what I am highly specialized and trained to do."

THE FORECAST

Do arts educators intend to stay in their current position and school next year?



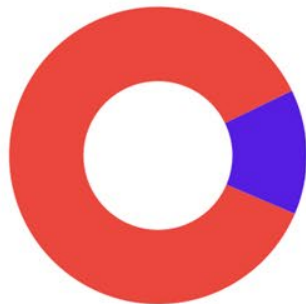
YES - 76%
MAYBE - 18.6%
RETIRING - 3%
NO - 2.4%



BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Are arts educators facing any challenges to providing high-quality and equitable arts education to students at their school?

Yes
86.4%



No
13.6%

TOP PRIORITIES

1

Training and support for a diverse range of learning needs

2

Administrative support, especially with student scheduling

3

Time to focus on instruction, rather than non-arts duties

4

Support to address student behavioral concerns

Scheduling & Support

- Arts classes are not simply a break for other subject area teachers, they are core subjects
- Effective arts scheduling requires unique and early consideration in school and student schedules
- Arts + ____ is possible: arts and other opportunities don't have to be mutually exclusive

“My upperclassmen are very invested in Band/Orchestra. They have been volunteering to talk with my freshman ensembles about the importance of music and give them advice to help them keep music in their schedule all four years of high school.”

-Carroll County Music Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

“Schedules have been getting repeatedly altered. Access to arts education has been reduced in my building by half.”

-St. Mary's County Elementary Music Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

Scheduling & Support

Administrative support makes a big difference for:

- Evaluations
- Scheduling
- Blueprint implementation
- Facilities
- Materials

“Space in my school is limited, and I only have access to my cafetorium for about 1 month a year unless I have students come back to school after 6pm, which limits what we can do both technically and performance-wise in my school.”

-Cecil County Theatre Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

“My administration has done an amazing job providing me opportunities to long-range plan, so I am very grateful to them for that. I have been able to acquire a lot of art materials via Exchangeree, our most recent art teacher meeting, and an amazing partnership with my art teacher friend at a neighboring school who donated lots of yarn to use. Usually getting enough materials to get through the year feels close to impossible.”

-Baltimore County Elementary Art Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

Lean in to the Arts

The many benefits of arts education align with some of the state's top priorities:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Attendance

“Students have been able to transfer their knowledge of Visual Thinking to their classroom w the new ELA curriculum - Wit and Wisdom.”

*-Worcester County Elementary Art Educator,
AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024*



mcps_md Attendance matters EVERY single day. Drop a comment on why YOU show up to school 🙌🔥

#MCPSforward

8w



semele_cook "I SHOW UP FOR BAND" 🙌🔥🔥🔥 100%

8w 36 likes Reply

Good News From the Classroom

Successes so far this school year include...

- Excellence & Joy
- Relationship & Community Building
- Growth

"I am excited that my students are creating music without reservation or fear. I am seeing them be excited about the challenge of creating something new, and that they get to make it unique to them and their experiences."

-Prince George's County Elementary Music Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

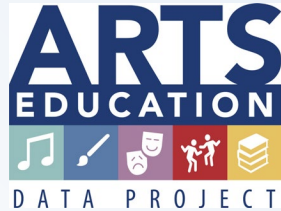
"Some of the relationships I have been able to have with my in-person students have been so meaningful and I have really enjoyed watching my students who thought they were not good at art really embrace the creative process and learn and grow from it and then feel very proud of their artwork"

-Baltimore County Secondary/Alternative School Art Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

"The support and encouragement that the students have for one another in the dance classroom is amazing and very inspiring."

-Montgomery County Secondary Dance & Media Arts Educator, AEMS Educator Survey Fall 2024

Maryland Arts Education Data Project



On April 2, 2024 AEMS launched the **Arts Education Data Project** (AEDP) for Maryland.

MAEDP gathers data from MSDE to display in public dashboards to answer the following questions:

- Which schools provide access to arts education and in what disciplines: (Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, Media Arts)?
- How many students are participating?
- How many arts teachers are providing instruction?
- Who has access to arts instruction?
- Who does not have access to arts instruction?
- How have the answers to these questions changed over time?

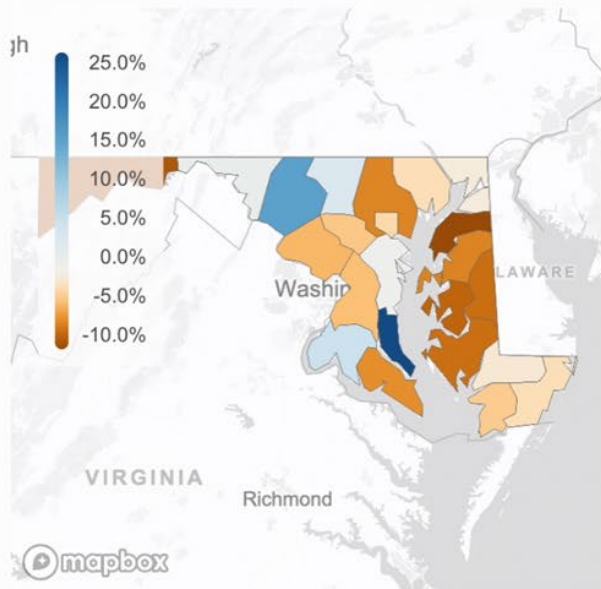
Maryland Arts Education Data Project



Data Highlights

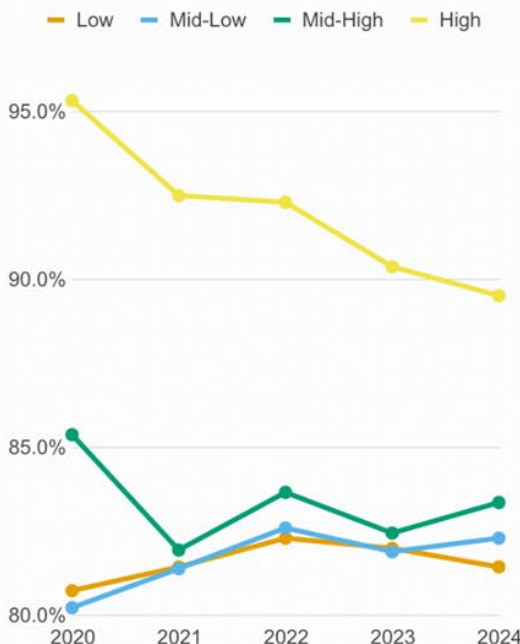


- 83.6% of Maryland K-12 public school students were enrolled in an arts course in SY23-24 (719,230 out of 860,315 students)
- All 24 school districts provide access to courses in Music, Visual Arts, and Theatre, while Dance and Media Arts courses are not offered in every district.
(COMAR requires students in grades 6-12 have a choice of courses from among ALL 5 fine arts disciplines)
- In SY23-24:
 - Approx. 5% of students were enrolled in Vocal Music courses
 - Approx. 15% of students were enrolled in Instrumental Music courses
 - Approx. 51% of students were enrolled in General Music courses

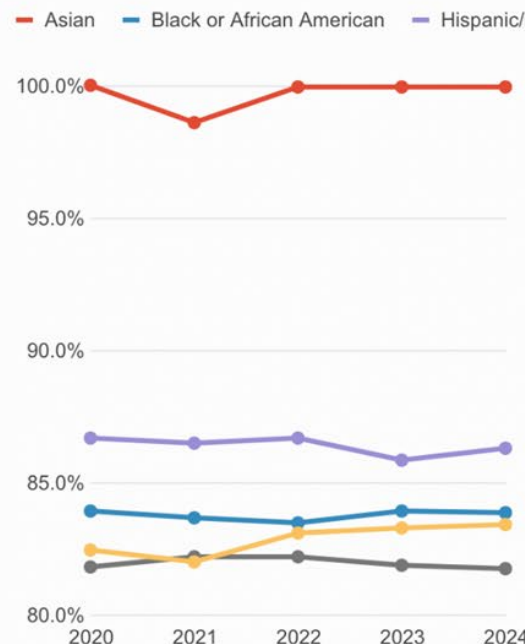


Arts Students

Arts Enrollment Rate by Free... ⓘ




Arts Enrollment Rate by Rac... ⓘ




Professional Learning



MARYLAND CENTERS FOR CREATIVE CLASSROOMS



“ Great program! I like that we can also incorporate our own artistic processes and see others processes -MCPS Arts Educator ”

 **MCREDS**

TRAUMA INFORMED

ARTS EDUCATION THROUGH A TRAUMA INFORMED LENS

3.23.25
3.30.25



 **MASTERCLASS**

When Students Teach
Creating Solo Performances from Transformative Moments in the Classroom

Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain by Zaretta Hammond

Virtual Book Club | 4-6 PM

Work collaboratively to make connections between brain-based learning and rigorous culturally responsive teaching to better serve students critically and creatively.

Professional Learning



MARYLAND CENTERS FOR CREATIVE CLASSROOMS



Professional Learning



As a result of this professional development experience, I feel...

- more confident and equipped to support students with a variety of needs and backgrounds
- equipped to bring new competencies, knowledge and skills to my school community
- more connected to other arts educators/artists.
- more supported as an educator/artist.

1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

All questions average 4.5

You're Invited!



MARYLAND
MIDDLE SCHOOL
DANCE
SHOWCASE

**APRIL
8
2025**

CHESAPEAKE ARTS CENTER &
BROOKLYN PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
12 PM - 9 PM

For more information:
mddanceed.org



**STEP INTO THE
SPOTLIGHT**

SUPPORT THE ARTS
in
YOUR COMMUNITY



**MARYLAND
ARTS
SUMMIT 2025**

2025
June 17th & 18th

New Location
Same Great Event

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE
CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS
301 Largo Road | Largo, MD 20774



Thank You!



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