



Arts Education in  
Maryland Schools

# Stakeholder Engagement Presentation

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**Maryland State Board of Education**

Baltimore, MD

April 30, 2024

# 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



# Arts Education in Maryland Schools



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

Advocates through coalitions, testimony on legislation, proposed legislation

Advocates on behalf of arts education interests in the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.



Also monitors local Blueprint implementation and possible negative consequences for arts education



Publicly visualizes state arts education data in alignment with Recommendation B of the 2014 Governor's P-20 Taskforce on Arts Education in Maryland Schools. Funded in part through legislation (funding expired 2023)



Collaboration initiated, managed by AEMS. Sponsored by AEMS.



Fine Arts Initiative-funded suite of professional development for Maryland's arts educators, teaching artists, and arts integration educators.



COMAR-mandated panel to advise the Superintendent on arts education policy.



Arts Educator Professional Associations



MD Arts Educators

Convenes leadership for collective advocacy, presents advocacy workshops at annual conferences

Provides advocacy trainings, solicits stakeholder feedback, responds to local arts education issues, disseminates reports and advocacy alerts

Collaborates with and advocates to on behalf of MD Arts Educators

# LEADING STATEWIDE ADVOCACY



**March 2023: AEMS submitted a letter to Superintendent Choudhury in collaboration with MAEA, MDEA, MMEA, and MTEA, asking for action on the following issues:**

- Lack of convenings of Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel (over a year vacant)
- Vacancy at the Office of Fine Arts at MSDE (over a year vacant, starting December 2021)
- State of Maryland does not have P-6 Theater Educator Certification (only 7-12)
- Lack of transparency and communication from MSDE over policy and granting changes, no meaningful stakeholder engagement

By June 2023:	By March 2024:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● MSDE worked with AEMS to re-empanel FAEAP</li><li>● Lizzie Devereux announced as Director of Comprehensive Arts Education at MSDE (new position title)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Communication and stakeholder engagement greatly improved with MSDE</li><li>● Approved P-12 Theater Educator Certification announced (starting July 2024)</li><li>● Additional member added to Comprehensive Arts Education Branch</li><li>● Recommendations sent from FAEAP to Interim Superintendent Wright</li></ul>

**All issues from March 2023 letter resolved.**

# 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.

# BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

## Comprehensive Implementation Plan

### (Section 3.1.1b)

“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.”**

# AEMS' BLUEPRINT CONCERNS

- Over-emphasis on **standardized tested subjects** throughout the legislation
- **College & Career Readiness (CCR)** by end of 10th grade requirements may **jeopardize continuity of learning** for the arts due to scheduling difficulties
- LEAs are considering **cuts to arts education in order to meet budget goals** that accomplish specific Blueprint mandates
- Inaccurate reporting on public AIB appearances is **reinforcing engrained mindsets that the arts are expendable**
- New teacher preparation requirements are resulting in **challenges to the higher education pipeline for teacher recruitment**

"The Blueprint for Maryland's Future aims to transform our public schools into a world-class education system, benefiting all Maryland students. The arts, with their unique ability to foster community, discipline, and creativity, play a crucial role in realizing this vision."

- Lizzie Devereux, MSDE Director of Comprehensive Arts Education

# ARTS EDUCATORS' FEEDBACK

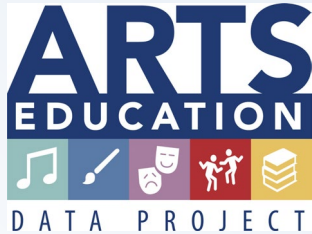
This list has been collected from AEMS virtual town halls, online surveys, and stakeholder feedback from AEMS appearances at arts educator professional development conferences. The Community Listening Session Report on the 2022-23 findings was released November 2023.

## Key Issues:

- Arts **undervalued** as valid area of learning and career pathway
- Arts Educator **Recruitment** and **Retention**
- Effects of the **Implementation of the Blueprint** on arts funding/access
- **Funding** for Arts Programs
- Adequate, designated **facilities**
- **Compensation** for Arts Educators
- **Student Behavioral** Issues and **Para-Educator Support**



# MARYLAND ARTS EDUCATION DATA PROJECT

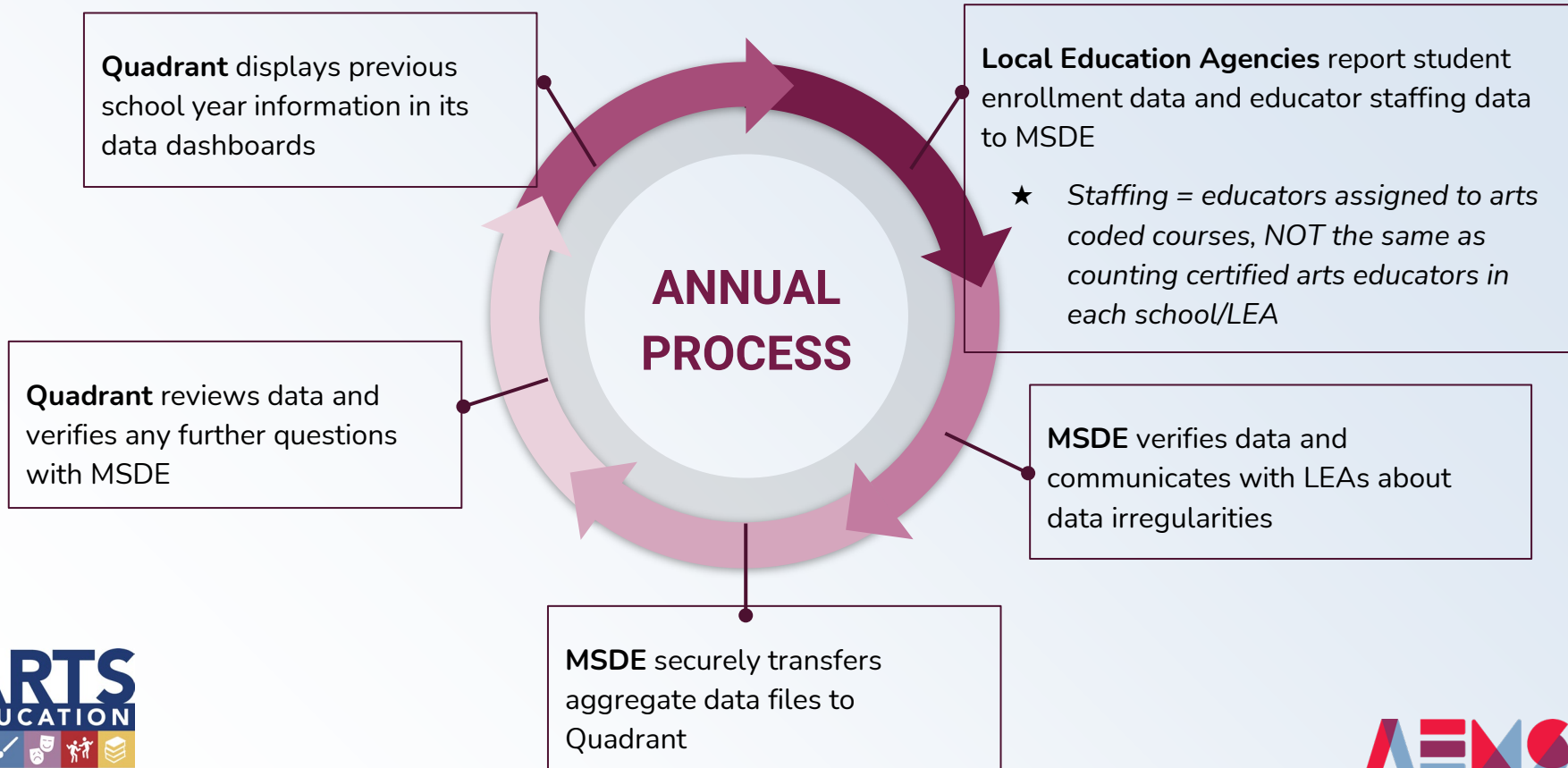


On April 2, 2024 AEMS launched the **Arts Education Data Project** (AEDP) for Maryland.

**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



# MARYLAND ARTS EDUCATION DATA PROJECT



## Data Highlights



- 83.5% of Maryland K-12 public school students were enrolled in an arts course in SY21-22 (714,704 out of 856,100 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 SY21-22:
  - 4.7% of Maryland Public School students were enrolled in vocal or choral performance courses
  - 11.6% of Maryland Public School students were enrolled in instrumental performance
  - 51.9% of Maryland Public School students were enrolled in general music courses

# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



## Media Arts Masterclass:

- From Brush to Algorithm: Redefining Art in the AI Age

## Anti-Racist Educators of the Arts Learning Lab:

- Book Club: Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain

## Virtual Trainings:

- Supporting LGBTQ+ Students and Families
- Arts Education Through a Trauma-Informed Lens

# YOU'RE INVITED!



MARYLAND CITIZENS FOR THE ARTS

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## Maryland Arts Summit June 20-21, 2024

A statewide conference presented by and  
for the Maryland arts sector.



# THANK YOU



Arts Education in Maryland Schools

## CONTACT US

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March 11, 2024

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**Subject:** Key Issues Affecting Maryland Arts Educators

To Interim Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright:

Across the country, schools are celebrating Dance in Your Schools Month, Theatre in Our Schools Month, Music in Our Schools Month, and Youth Arts Month, highlighting the arts achievements of students and arts programs. March is a time replete with county-wide and statewide competitions, spring musical performances, and art exhibitions. It was also in March of last year that AEMS and the leadership of the Maryland Dance Education Association, Maryland Music Educators Association, Maryland Art Education Association, and the Maryland Theatre Education Association wrote a [letter to the previous Superintendent](#) regarding key issues affecting arts educators in the state of Maryland and requesting action on these key issues. We are happy to provide a summary of these key issues and to report that each of them has been meaningfully addressed in the past 12 months!

- **State Arts Education Leadership (MSDE):** The MSDE position supervising the content area of Fine Arts was vacant from December 2021 until June 2023. We were overjoyed to welcome Lizzie Devereux to the newly-created Director-level position of Director of Comprehensive Arts Education and have deeply valued Lizzie's collaboration, partnership, and communication in addressing the needs and concerns of Maryland's arts educators. We are also grateful for additional MSDE Comprehensive Arts Education Office staffing that has further increased capacity.
- **State Arts Education Leadership:** An additional consequence of the extended delays in the process of hiring state-level leadership for the content area of fine arts was that the Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel, a state-mandated entity (COMAR 13A.04.16.02) had not been convened since December 2021. In response to AEMS' letter, MSDE staff worked with AEMS to empanel a new Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel, which has since met three times and will be producing recommendations this month.
- **Certification for Elementary Theatre Educators:** The Maryland Theatre Education Association (MTEA) delivered a letter to MSDE in December 2021 regarding the lack of P-6 Theatre certification in the state of Maryland, containing recommendations to rectify this lack and the interconnected issues in Maryland's infrastructure which perpetuate this. Early in 2024, the approval of a P-12 Theatre educator certification was announced and we look forward to learning more details about the availability of this certification in the coming days and sharing with theatre educators in our network.
- **Transparency and Communication:** The extent to which you have made yourself available to meet with, listen to, and respond to advocates within the education sector is a refreshing contrast to the situation which prevailed a year ago. We are grateful for the openness of communication that has



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characterized your short time at MSDE and we hope this set the precedent for years to come.

In addition to reporting on these outcomes, we are writing to inform you of the launch of an exciting tool for Maryland educators, administrators, and advocates: the Maryland Arts Education Data Project. Starting on April 2, 2024, AEMS' website will publicly display data from Maryland's Longitudinal Data Sets regarding Maryland arts enrollment, access, course offerings, staffing, and demographics from School Years 18/19 through 21/22. The process of bringing this project to fruition started a full decade ago with Recommendation B of the 2014 Governor's P-20 Leadership Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools: "Establish a comprehensive, statewide data system that collects elementary, middle, and high school data on fine arts instruction."

With the assistance of the MSDE Data Office and the Comprehensive Arts Education Branch, we are proud to announce this project will finally be achieved! We are using the month of March and its celebration of the arts in our schools to build public awareness of the project, provide tools for navigating these dashboards, share key findings on arts education enrollment and access, and to provide key context and nuance that are necessary when facing such an abundance of information. This will be accomplished through daily and weekly content that engages and informs the public on the potentials of this platform and the state of arts education in Maryland's Schools. This entire project has been predicated upon an MOU between MSDE and Quadrant Research, the vendor of the Arts Education Data Project. While AEMS played a key role in facilitating that relationship, we are extremely grateful for the cooperation and collaboration of MSDE, without whom this project would have been impossible.

This is an exciting and transformational time for Maryland public education and for arts education in Maryland's schools. We look forward to further work together to advance access to quality arts education for Maryland's public school students.

Sincerely,

**Rachel McGrain**  
**Executive Director, AEMS**

For more information on national celebrations of the arts in each discipline, see the following links:

- [Dance in Our Schools Month](#)
- [Music in Our Schools Month](#)
- [Theatre in Our Schools Month](#)
- [Youth Art Month \(Visual Art\)](#)

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# ARTS EDUCATION IN MARYLAND SCHOOLS POLICY RESOURCES

## CODE OF MARYLAND REGULATIONS (COMAR)

- From Pre-K to 12, Maryland students are required to have access to arts learning in **ALL** 5 arts disciplines: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts, & Theatre
- Pre K-5, students are required to have arts experiences in ALL 5 arts disciplines Grades
- 6-12, students are required to have access to a choice of classes from among the 5 arts disciplines for college & career readiness
- 1 arts credit required for graduation

[mdrules.elaws.us/comar/13a.04.16.01](http://mdrules.elaws.us/comar/13a.04.16.01)



## BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

The Comprehensive Implementation Plan, published by the AIB in December 2022, states:

**3.1.1b, page 95:** "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."

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**4.4.2b, page 145:** **arts programming is specifically listed** as one of the wraparound services to be provided by community schools.

[aems-edu.org/blueprint-aib](http://aems-edu.org/blueprint-aib)



## ARTS EDUCATORS' FEEDBACK



AEMS conducts community listening sessions and townhalls to hear directly from educators about their successes and challenges. Central themes from the 2022-23 report include the continued transformational impact of the arts on students and the perseverance of educators as they navigate structures and attitudes that devalue their craft and impact.



[Read the report](#)

## MARYLAND ARTS ED DATA PROJECT



Using data as a catalyst to increase arts education access across in Maryland public schools.

**Learn more:**  
[aems-edu.org/artseddata](http://aems-edu.org/artseddata)



## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



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[mc3arts.org](http://mc3arts.org)

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