
TO: Maryland State Board of Education
FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools
DATE: March 25, 2025
SUBJECT: MSDE State of the Arts



Purpose

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Comprehensive Arts Education Branch is eager to introduce itself and the team's work to the State Board of Education during the month of March, which is nationally recognized as Arts In Our Schools Month. We will provide updates to the Board on key arts education projects and share a summary of recently submitted COMAR Certifications for Fine Arts Programs.

Background

The Comprehensive Arts Branch is comprised of members who have joined MSDE since July 2023. Prior to that time, MSDE had a gap in state-level arts leadership staffing for over a year and a half. As a result, it has been a number of years since an MSDE arts representative has provided updates to the State Board about trends, priorities, and projects related to arts education in the state.

In addition, COMAR 13A.04.16.03 mandates that every five years, beginning in 2019, Maryland's local superintendents must certify to the State Superintendent of Schools that the instructional programming within grades PK-12 meets, at a minimum, the requirements set forth in Regulation 13A.04.16.01. The Comprehensive Arts Branch will share a summary of the certifications submitted in 2024.

Executive Summary

The Comprehensive Arts Branch presentation to the State Board will cover the following items:

1. An overview of the Comprehensive Arts Branch, including a data snapshot of arts educators and offerings in Maryland public schools;
2. A summary of COMAR 13A.04.16.03, Certification Procedures for Fine Arts Instructional Programs, and the information submitted by local education agencies in 2024;
3. An informational update on Secondary Arts Pathways for students to be college and career ready in any of the five arts disciplines (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art);
4. A brief description of the many ways in which MSDE celebrates and elevates Maryland's student artists and performers, during March and throughout the year.

If you have any questions regarding the information above, please contact Elizabeth Devereux, Director of Comprehensive Arts Education, at elizabeth.devereux@maryland.gov.

Action

No action is required; this information is for discussion only.

Attachments

March2025 ArtsUpdates SBOE pdf

OFFICE OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

MSDE State of the Arts

March 25, 2025

Presented By | Lizzie Devereux, Director of Comprehensive Arts Education

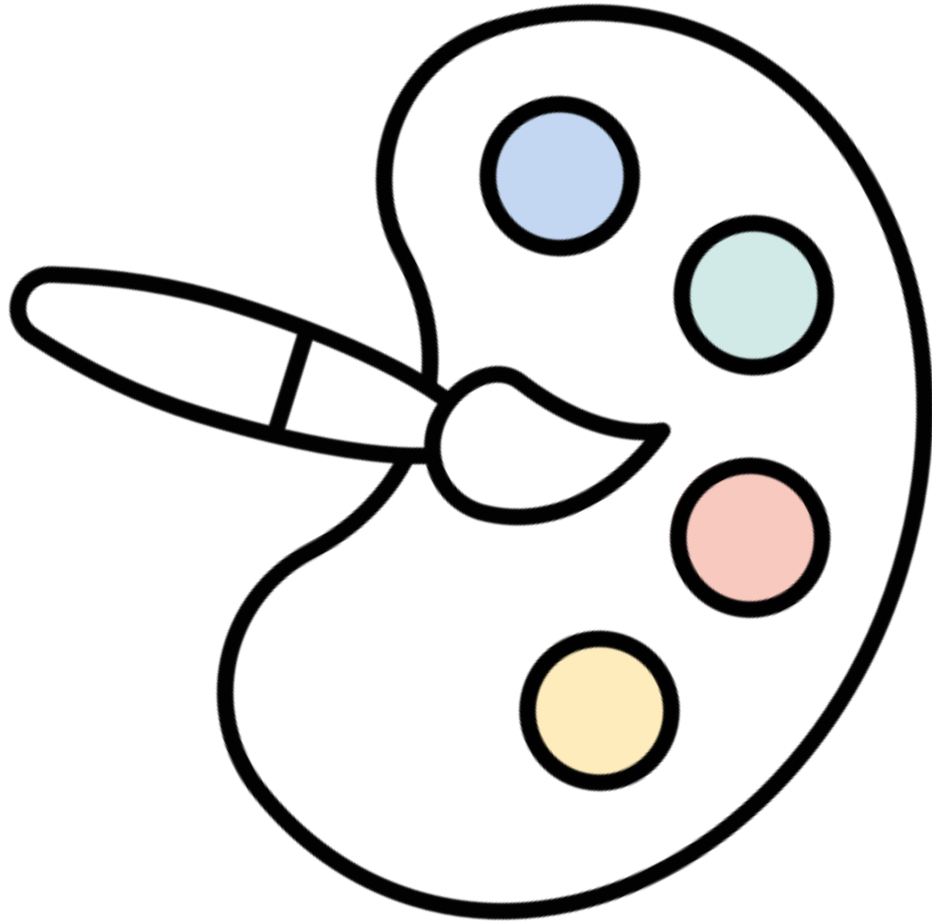




Presentation Outline

1. Comprehensive Arts Branch Overview
2. COMAR Certification Procedures Summary
3. Secondary Arts Pathways
4. Elevating Student Artists & Performers

Snapshot of Our Work



Provide leadership to ensure a high-quality arts education for all Maryland students in dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts

Organize, design, and deliver **arts professional learning** for teachers, supervisors, and school leaders

Support accountability for **COMAR 13A.04.16 Programs in Fine Arts**

Manage all **arts grant funds**, including Fine Arts Initiative and Maggie McIntosh state grants

Maryland Arts Landscape (1 of 2)

National benchmarks as of 2024

3rd

in public
support for
the arts



5th

in overall
arts
vibrancy

[SMU DataArts](#) (2024)

Maryland Arts Landscape (2 of 2)

Thriving creative economy

\$12.9B

arts
contribution
to MD
economy



80K+

jobs in MD
creative
economy

Maryland's arts sector ranks high in value, Amanda Winters (2024)

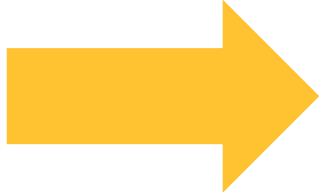
Arts Education in Maryland Schools

Schools & teachers as of 2024¹

~30K arts classes taught by **5,876** arts educators

147 types of art courses taught at **1,414** Maryland schools

Students in the arts¹

99.9% access rate  **83.6%** enrollment rate

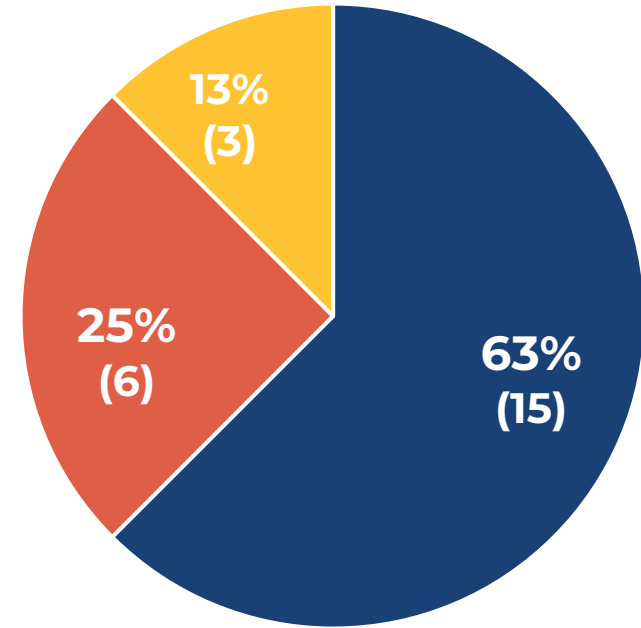
1. [Maryland Arts Education Data Project](#) (2024)

Trends in Maryland Arts Education¹

Changes in arts staffing from 2020 to 2024

UP 4.3%

	Percent Change (2020 to 2024)
Dance	+26%
Media Arts	+51%
Music	+3%
Theatre	+27%
Visual Art	+4%



- LEAs **Increased** Arts Staffing
- LEAs **Decreased** Arts Staffing
- LEA Arts Staffing **Remained Same**

1. [Maryland Arts Education Data Project](#) (2024)

COMAR 13A.04.16 – Programs in Fine Arts

.01 Requirements for Fine Arts (Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Art) Instructional Programs for Grades Prekindergarten—12.

A. Each local school system shall:

(1) Provide an instructional program in fine arts each year for all students in grades prekindergarten—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.

§B, C, D, and E require dedicated time allotment for arts, alignment to UDL principles and Maryland State Fine Arts Standards, provision of curriculum materials, and universal student participation in §A.

COMAR 13A.04.16 – In Action

Summary of 2024 Certification Submissions

Number of LEAs that met COMAR

Discipline

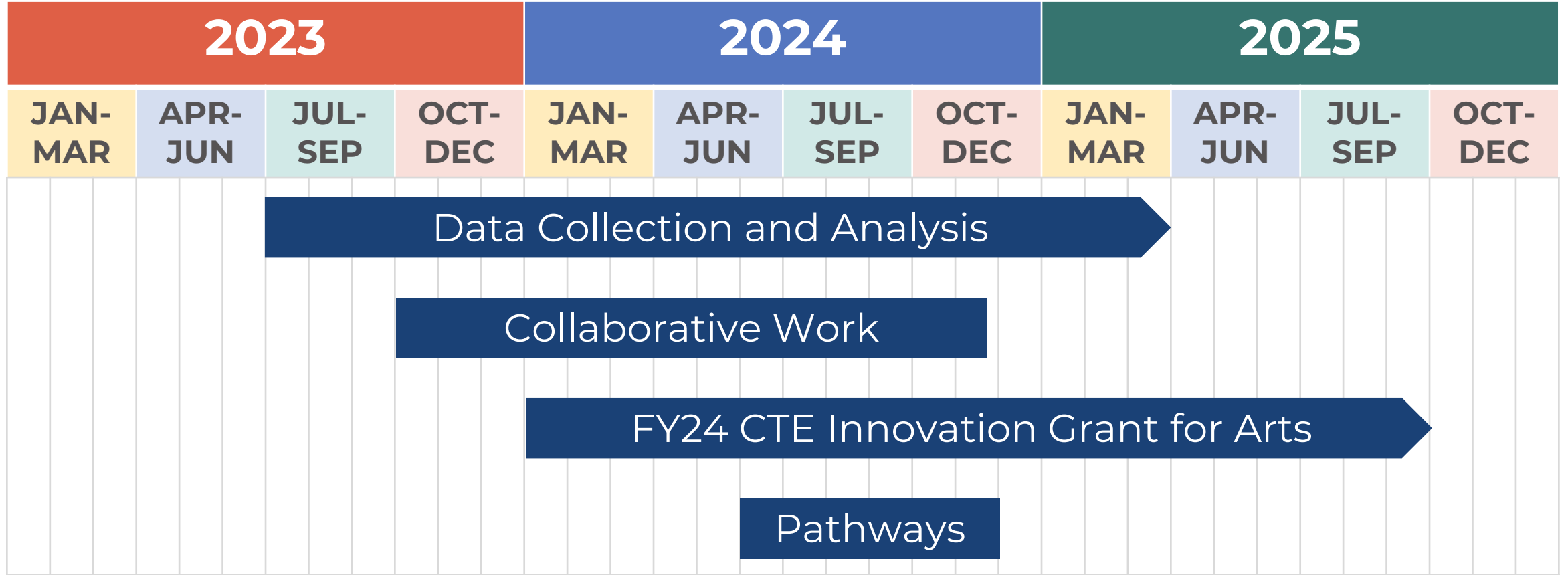
	n	%
Dance	6	27%
Media Arts	10	45%
Music	22	100%
Theatre	9	41%
Visual Art	22	100%

Grade Band

	n	%
Elementary	11	52%
Middle	6	27%
High	12	55%

22 of 24 LEAs submitted forms

Secondary Arts Pathways Development Timeline



Rationale for Arts Pathways Guidance



Misconceptions
Around
Blueprint and
the Arts



Fine Arts
Graduation
Requirement



Student Arts
Enrollment Drops
**99% (elementary) to
55% (high school)**

Local Challenges to Secondary Arts Instruction

- Scheduling large ensemble classes (band, chorus, orchestra; larger dance or theatre programs)
- De-prioritization of arts by school leaders and college and career counselors
- Staffing diverse arts courses in rural/remote LEAs

<https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/13A.03.02.03.aspx> and <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2022RS/bills/hb/hb1450E.pdf>

Proposed Secondary Arts Pathway Overview

- **4 credits** in 9th-12th-grade arts courses (dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual art)
- **3 credits** should be in the same arts discipline (dance, media arts, music, theatre, visual art)
- **At least one of the following** is required in addition to the arts course requirements above:
 - Participation in county-, region-, and/or state-wide exhibition, performance, or audition, where applicable
 - Completion of a capstone arts project, performance, or exhibition
 - Earning an arts-aligned industry-recognized credential and/or completing a high school level registered apprenticeship or internship



Arts diploma seal/endorsement earned upon graduation

Secondary Arts Pathway Sample Schedules

General: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, or Visual Art, or Multiple Arts

Based on COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements, a minimum of 22 credits

	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
COMAR →	English 9 (1)	English 10 (1)	English 11 (1)	English 12 (1)
	Foundational Math Course (1)	Foundational Math Course (2)	Advanced Math Pathway Course (1)	Advanced Math Pathway Course (1)
	Science Requirement (1)	Science Requirement (1)	Science Requirement (1)	Elective
	American Govn/US History/World History (1)	American Govn/US History/World History (1)	American Govn/US History/World History (1)	Elective
	PE I (0.5)/Health (0.5)	Tech Ed Requirement (1)	Health II (0.5)/Local Graduation Requirement or Elective (0.5)	Elective
Both →	World Language (1)/CTE Approved Program	World Language (1)/CTE Approved Program	Arts Elective (Optional)	Arts Elective (Optional)
	Fine Arts I Requirement	Arts II	Arts III	Arts IV



Secondary Arts Pathways Key Take-Aways



Prioritize 9th-Grade Arts

- Taps into proven arts benefits
- Keeps student pathway options open



Arts Pathway Options are Blueprint-Aligned

- College Preparatory guidance aligns with Maryland AP Option and will enable LEAs to build out advanced options for arts without applicable AP courses (performing arts)
- New and expanded options for CTE Arts Pathways within the Arts, Media, Communications Career Cluster

MSDE Celebrates Maryland's Young Artists



State Superintendent's Student Gallery

