A REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FINE ARTS STRATEGIC PLANS IN MARYLAND SCHOOL SYSTEMS
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IN
MARYLAND SCHOOL SYSTEMS

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Credits

Design of Maryland maps and cover art work: Legg Mason

Photos: Courtesy of Maryland school systems’ teachers, parents and staff. Used with permission.
“Art has taught me perseverance and never to give up.”

Jermayne Largent
Windsor Farm Elementary School

“I have learned a lot about myself through the arts program. I developed artistic talent that before I could merely dream of, and I have also opened up many windows of opportunity for my future.”

Jenna Holloway, student, James M. Bennett High School

“If I couldn’t do art, then I wouldn’t have any way of expressing myself.”

Brooke West
West Meade Elementary School

“Without art life would be boring.”

Roy Sherbert
Germantown East Elementary School
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Introduction

Since 1998, Maryland’s twenty-four school systems have been involved in the process of developing and implementing strategic, long-range plans that will enable all Maryland students to achieve or exceed state standards in the fine arts. This report describes the progress systems have had in implementing these Fine Arts Strategic Plans (FASPs) and the impact of the plans on fine arts education in Maryland.

The review is the culmination of a two-year project focusing on identifying:
• Exemplary implementation processes,
• Procedures, practices and policies resulting from the fine arts strategic planning effort, and
• Next steps that AEMS: Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance, the Maryland State Department of Education, and AEMS Alliance Steering Committee partner organizations could take to further support the development, expansion, and implementation of Fine Arts Strategic Plans.

This report describes:
• Progress in implementing FASPs and the positive effect of legislative financial support provided to all systems,
• The impact of FASPs in key areas of curriculum design, professional development, infrastructure and partnerships,
• Ingredients found in effective implementation as identified by systems and project investigators,
• Challenges to FASP implementation, and
• Next steps related to furthering effective FASP implementation.

Fine Arts Strategic Plans Chronology

1995 - Maryland State Board of Education adopts the goal that “100% of Maryland’s students will participate in fine arts programs that enable them to meet the content and achievement standards established by State standards for the arts.”

1997 - Maryland State Board of Education approves the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts (ELOs).

1998 - AEMS: Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance successfully advocates for the initial funding to support the development of five-year Fine Arts Strategic Plans. This Fine Arts Initiatives grants program, funded by the Maryland General Assembly, focuses on promoting curriculum alignment with the Maryland ELOs.

1999 - Maryland State Department of Education conducts a comprehensive review of arts education programs in Maryland’s school systems that indicates that systems need help in a number of areas, including curriculum expansion and design, teacher training, equipment and facilities needs, staffing, and assessment instruments.

2000 - Funding from the Maryland General Assembly enables the Department of Education to fund Fine Arts Initiatives in all school systems, using a formula that includes a basic grant of $20,000 plus $0.75 per enrolled student. Grant awards are contingent upon each school system’s development of a strategic, long-range plan for enabling all students to achieve or exceed state standards in the arts. The plans are overseen by local steering committees comprised of system superintendents, fine arts supervisors, teachers, representatives of community organizations and other members of the community.

2002 - AEMS: Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance initiates a two-year project to examine the effect of the fine arts strategic planning process. The project is funded with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland State Arts Council, and numerous Maryland corporations and foundations.
The Review Project

The first year of the review project, 2002-2003, was devoted to developing, piloting and refining the evaluation process. An initial quantitative survey instrument was formulated to collect data from six pilot sites chosen for their geographic, demographic and plan content diversity. Site visits to meet with local school system fine arts personnel and community representatives were conducted by AEMS Alliance steering committee members using a set of questions designed to gather anecdotal evidence concerning a system’s plan implementation. Subsequent to each visit, feedback was collected from each system on the entire review process.

Based on suggestions from system personnel, steering committee members and the project director, both quantitative and qualitative instruments were modified to focus more specifically on the implementation of each system’s Fine Arts Strategic Plan. A chart asking systems to detail the progress of their plans’ goals and objectives was added to the survey instrument. The qualitative instrument used in site interviews included two sections; a set of questions clarifying system’s responses to the quantitative instrument and a second set of questions probing their implementation process.

Quantitative surveys were completed by each school system in the fall of 2003, and site visits were conducted in January and February 2004. System personnel attending each site interview varied. All of the visits included the coordinator for the system’s Fine Arts Strategic Plan (who may or may not be the school system’s Fine Arts Supervisor). Other participants included school system superintendents; assistant superintendents; dance, music, theatre, visual arts supervisors and/or specialists; system grant writers; system researchers; and arts teachers (including lead teachers). (See Appendix for a list of Fine Arts Strategic Plan coordinators.)

To assure consistency from interview to interview, the project coordinators assumed the role of lead interviewer and recorder in each site visit while AEMS Alliance steering committee members participated in the process by asking clarifying questions and taking summary notes.

Pilot Sites
Allegany County
Baltimore City
Cecil County
Dorchester County
Frederick County
Prince George’s County

The following questions have provided the framework for the review report:
• What are systems’ Fine Arts Strategic Plans goals and objectives?
• What FASP goals and objectives have been accomplished?
• What has been the impact on systems of working towards accomplishing their FASP goals and objectives?
• How have systems worked towards accomplishing their FASP goals and objectives?
• What processes have been effective in their work to implement their FASP goals and objectives?
• What are the next steps needed to help systems support the continued accomplishment of their FASP goals and objectives?
Summary of Findings

The implementation of Fine Arts Strategic Plans is transforming fine arts education in Maryland’s twenty-four school systems. Through the collaborative process of writing a plan with school and community representatives and working on carrying out its strategies, school systems have:

- aligned curriculum with state standards;
- developed accompanying assessment instruments;
- dramatically increased opportunities for students to participate in the fine arts;
- created effective professional development for teachers that supports the delivery of standards-based instruction;
- made significant progress in improving infrastructure that supports a variety of arts experiences; and
- established dynamic school-community partnerships that have had significant impact in every area of FASP implementation.

Teachers and fine arts supervisors working with each other, higher education faculty and professional artists, have implemented curricular and assessment goals that have raised performance standards in dance, music, theatre and visual arts. They have analyzed what is being taught, written new curricula, provided in-service training, examined the impact of new instruction and identified infrastructure needs to support it. Teachers and supervisory staff have worked with outside partners to expand fine arts opportunities for students both in-school and in the community. These partnership initiatives have played an important role in strengthening existing programs as well as establishing new programs in dance and theatre.

FASP goals and objectives have been tailored to meet school systems’ specific needs. Most goals and objectives are in the process of being implemented with slightly more than thirty-one percent (31.6%) having been completed.* In many instances, goals and objectives in the areas of curriculum revision, assessment, infrastructure, professional development and partnerships are continually “ongoing.”

More than two-thirds of the systems report one hundred percent alignment in music and visual arts (K-12) and more than forty-five percent indicate one

* In answering a survey question that asked about current goals and objectives, some systems reported only those goals and objectives that were included in their annually-revised FASP for 2003-2004. Others listed all items that have been included in their FASP documents since 1998. This percentage - 31.6% - results from an analysis of only those goals and objectives reported by each system on the survey and during the site visit.
hundred percent alignment in dance and theatre at the high school level. Most systems have not developed assessment instruments in any discipline, although fifty percent state that they have completed assessment work in music at the middle school level. In systems that have worked on assessment, the process has formed the foundation for all systemic curricular change.

In addition to emphasizing the areas of curriculum, infrastructure, professional development and partnerships, FASP development and implementation have increased the visibility and importance of the fine arts within school systems and legitimized the academic standing of the fine arts. These factors have, in turn, increased the potential for goal achievement by increasing system and community support. In many systems, the existence of FASPs has helped incorporate the fine arts into system master plans.

The implementation of FASPs has affected systemic process in other ways. It has led to:

- Bringing fine arts representatives to the table with other academic personnel,
- Providing the foundation for decision making,
- Using FASPs as a basis for administrative review,
- Justifying scheduling requirements for the fine arts,
- Changing school culture by heightening the importance of the fine arts in individual schools,
- Increasing opportunities for advanced study in high schools, and
- Setting standards for textbook selection.

Numerous factors have facilitated the success of FASPs. Fine arts personnel cite strong administrative support as crucial, while system leaders recognize the invaluable contribution of fine arts teachers to the entire process. Both emphasize the importance of fine arts strategic planning in strengthening the depth and breadth of curricular arts experiences in their systems. They credit FASPs and the state’s financial support of FASPs with helping them create a vision and a process for realizing their system’s commitment to quality, standards-based fine arts education for all students.

Much of what systems have been able to accomplish has been the result of collaborative efforts
between systems and communities. Because schools and communities have worked together, they have substantially increased the number of fine arts opportunities for students and given significant recognition for student achievements. Such far-reaching impact from partnerships is a direct result of FASP implementation, and in many cases, the product of involved and active steering committees.

Other factors precipitating system FASP accomplishments include the implementation of processes that motivate teachers, students and steering committee members to succeed and the ability of fine arts personnel to think of creative solutions to challenges. In addition, state grant money has been used to leverage local funds for arts education and as seed money to establish new programs. Further, state financial support has made it possible for systems to continue programs seeded by other sources.

At the same time they celebrate what their FASP implementation has enabled them to accomplish and cite as crucial state financial support, systems point to three major challenges to furthering their success -- not enough time, staff and/or funding. Many systems believe that state and federal assessment priorities have diverted all three from the fine arts. These challenges have made it difficult to enhance existing programs as well as develop new ones. Systems indicate that they need additional resources to complete curriculum alignment and assessment and additional funds for professional development and infrastructure. They would welcome opportunities to share their successful strategies with other systems and would appreciate forums to exchange models and procedures. Some suggest sharing curriculum, resources and personnel to accomplish even more.

Despite the challenges, it is clear that arts education in Maryland schools has benefited significantly from the implementation of FASPs. The process has increased both the quantity and quality of opportunities for education in the arts. Such success supports the continuation of efforts to fund further strategic planning for improving arts education -- system by system.

Why FASPs?

Fine arts education programs have been strengthened through the development and implementation of long-range, strategic plans (FASPs) because they:

• assist systems in setting program priorities and strategies to carry out goals and objectives,
• require systems to evaluate fine arts programs annually,
• provide a vehicle for informing communities about fine arts education, its goals and its successes,
• encourage the creation of community partnerships,
• offer systems the opportunity to develop the means to measure the effectiveness of their fine arts programs,
• help systems establish funding priorities, and
• motivate teacher commitment to taking an active role in directing program development and improvement.
Both the process of articulating a Fine Arts Strategic Plan and implementing it are viewed by many systems as having transformed fine arts education for their students. The entire process has accelerated, if not totally supported, curriculum development; increased opportunities for students; stimulated effective staff development; facilitated the update of materials, equipment and technical resources; and created effective school-community partnerships. Although the level of successful goal realization statewide is only a little more than thirty-one percent (31.6%), the effects of implementing FASPs have been positive and far-reaching. The efforts to achieve curriculum alignment (including assessment) and staff development goals are seen by the majority of systems to have had the greatest impact on their fine arts programs. Other significant goals and objectives are in the areas of increasing opportunities for students (offering arts experiences in all of the disciplines, developing dance and theatre programs, developing early childhood arts experiences), improving infrastructure (staffing, updating inadequate equipment and facilities, providing technology), and creating mutually beneficial school-community partnerships.

The implementation of FASPs has raised standards in dance, music, theatre and visual arts. Through curriculum and assessment work as well as professional development activities to support newly aligned curricula, systems have inspired teachers and given them the tools and support to implement state standards in the fine arts.

Plan implementation has encouraged the analysis of what is being taught in the fine arts, and as a result, has precipitated focus on standards and accountability for meeting those standards. It has insured the adoption of consistent educational standards among all schools in a system and helped promote a consistent caliber of fine arts instruction. FASPs are viewed as having improved teaching and student learning throughout the state.

1 In the following description of Maryland school systems’ Fine Arts Strategic Plans and the processes of their implementation, many specific examples are used from individual systems. Note that these are not the only examples of a particular strategy, rather, they have been chosen from many that were shared with the project coordinators in order to illustrate different processes and strategies that systems have used to achieve their fine arts goals and objectives.

2 In answering a survey question that asked about current goals and objectives, some systems reported only those goals and objectives that were included in their annually-revised FASP for 2003-2004. Others listed all items that have been included in their FASP documents since 1998. This percentage - 31.6% - results from an analysis of only those goals and objectives reported by each system on the survey and during the site visit.
Fine Arts Strategic Plans’ Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives in Maryland’s twenty-four FASPs vary significantly from system to system reflecting the unique needs and priorities of each system. Encompassing a variety of strategies and benchmarks, the goals and objectives fall within broad areas (see list in right-hand column).

The area with the largest percentage of systems’ goals and objectives embraces strategies to promote academic rigor (see Chart 1). This reflects the focus of the original impetus for Maryland’s FASP initiative – promoting curriculum alignment with the *Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts*.

**CHART 1 – Percentage of Goals and Objectives in Each Major Area**

The majority of goals and objectives included in systems’ FASPs are in the process of being implemented. In some cases, they are ongoing because of local circumstances and limited resources. In other instances, goals and objectives have purposely been written as ongoing. Some goals and objectives have been completed in all five major goal categories (see Chart 2). The area of promoting academic rigor with its strategies to align and assess curriculum has the highest percentage of completed goals and objectives.

Fine Arts Strategic Plans address the following areas:

- **Promote academic rigor**
- Insure student success
- Curriculum alignment and review
- Instructional guides
- Assessment
- Arts integration

**Improve infrastructure**
- Staffing (teachers)
- Staffing (supervisory and support)
- Needs survey
- Materials review and/or selection
- Materials (maintain, improve, provide)
- Equipment and instruments (maintain, improve, provide)
- Instrument and equipment repair
- Facilities (maintain, improve, provide)
- Technology for students and/or staff
- Evaluate Fine Arts Strategic Plan

**Increase opportunities for students**
- Promote equity
- Enhance and develop programs
- Define success models
- Implement strings program
- Scheduling
- Increase exhibition and performance opportunities

**Offer professional development for teachers**
- Staff development
- Staff development for first-year teachers
- Training for administrators
- Identification of exemplary instructional strategies
- Sharing model lesson plans

**Create supportive school-community partnerships**
- Strengthen partnerships
- Advisory committee development
- Advocacy and presentations
- Joint community/school performances and/or exhibitions
Chart 2 - Percentage of Goals and Objectives Completed in Each Major Area

Carrying out curriculum alignment and assessment goals and objectives has formed the foundation of systemic transformation in fine arts education in Maryland. It is seen by systems as the area that drives all arts education reform efforts.

Many systems relate that what they have accomplished in curriculum alignment and assessment would not have been possible without state grant support for FASP implementation. However, the completion of these goals has not been exclusively the result of state grants. Some systems such as Montgomery County report that curriculum alignment has been accomplished because the system initially funded the work. In many systems, the fine arts initiative grants have helped move faster and further along systems’ already existing vision of continuous improvement.

More than two-thirds of the systems report hundred percent alignment of curricula in music and visual arts at all levels (elementary, middle and high) and theatre at the high school level. More than forty-five percent (45.8%) of the systems have indicated that they have achieved hundred percent curriculum alignment in dance at the high school level (see Chart 3).
In all disciplines, the adoption of instruments for assessing aligned curricula is only beginning to be accomplished, although some systems have been extremely successful in accomplishing their goals in this area. Music and visual arts are the two disciplines which have received the majority of systems' assessment efforts (see Chart 4).
Charts 5 through 8 present a picture of curriculum alignment and assessment across the state of Maryland as of January 2004. They indicate that most work has been done in curriculum alignment and assessment in music and the visual arts. In dance and theatre, efforts have focused on middle and high school levels.

Chart 5 - Status of Curriculum Alignment and Assessment in Dance

Chart 6 - Status of Curriculum Alignment and Assessment in Music
Chart 7 – Status of Curriculum Alignment and Assessment in Theatre

Chart 8 – Status of Curriculum Alignment and Assessment in Visual Art
**Assessment**

Although many systems have not addressed their assessment goals because they are waiting for the development of state assessment instruments and/or the implementation of the Voluntary State Curriculum in the Fine Arts, several systems have had major successes with assessment work and view this work as the primary element of major systemic curricular change. In fact, many systems have embedded assessments in their curriculum documents during the course of their work on curriculum alignment. Assessment efforts have encouraged teachers to look at the impact of what they teach and, in the process, has formed the basis and framework of all curricular change. Assessment work is seen to have raised teachers’ expectations of themselves as well as their students.

**Curricular Consistency**

Assessment development has also been instrumental in achieving consistency in fine arts curricula across a system. Such consistency throughout all levels has been a major outcome of both curriculum alignment and assessment work, particularly in systems that worked in these areas with vertical teams (teachers from elementary, middle and high schools).

**Performance Standards**

The process of implementing FASPs that include external review of student work has raised performance standards. Although much is yet to be accomplished in terms of assessment processes, many systems have elevated standards for performance adjudication and portfolio reviews by using community arts professionals and other recognized authorities for critical evaluations. Such review is seen to advance the quality of student work because it imposes high standards and, when those are achieved, student self-esteem is improved.

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*Wicomico County* “The assessment experience has proven to be the root of transformation. The broad curriculum goals are overwhelming. The assessment experience brought focus to the curriculum and acceptance of the challenge to be accountable for the implementation of the curriculum. It stretched both teachers and their students.”  
(Gary Beauchamp, Supervisor of Fine Arts)

*Kent County* The creation of assessments in music and the visual arts, their correlation with other performance indicators and the tracking of student achievement measured in the evaluation instruments has given the system a comprehensive framework upon which to revisit and constantly improve the curriculum.

*Frederick County* Their assessment work is the source for driving the understanding of their fine arts needs.

*Allegany County* Emphasizing the importance of making assessment an integral part of curriculum planning, fine arts personnel see assessment as being instrumental in driving change and showing them what they are accomplishing.

*Montgomery County* Assessment has been part of their curriculum work from the beginning.

*Talbot County* Fine Arts Supervisor Kathy Dill emphasizes that her system’s assessments, when complete, will enable all schools to implement a curriculum that leads to common outcomes where all students reach a specific level of proficiency at the end of the year.

*Wicomico County* “The assessment experience has proven to be the root of transformation. The broad curriculum goals are overwhelming. The assessment experience brought focus to the curriculum and acceptance of the challenge to be accountable for the implementation of the curriculum. It stretched both teachers and their students.”  
(Gary Beauchamp, Supervisor of Fine Arts)
Fine Arts personnel believe that implementing FASPs has increased student accountability, engagement in learning, critical reflection and overall success. When asked during the site visit to role play the part of a student in their schools answering the question - "What would a student who has been through your system's K-12 fine arts program say has been the most significant change, if any, in their Fine Arts education since your system developed and implemented its Fine Arts Strategic Plan?" - they respond by describing many improvements (see right-hand column).

When asked to assume the role of parents and answer a similar question regarding the differences a system's FASP has made in their children's lives, fine arts personnel remark that their "children" have:

- excelled in the arts because of increased standards,
- improved in other academic areas because of their arts experiences,
- become more engaged in the entire learning process because of their involvement in the arts,
- been inspired to stay in school, and
- developed a lifelong interest in the arts.

Fine Arts personnel hope that parents:

- see a greater connection with "real world" artistic standards and a greater connection with high academic standards,
- appreciate seeing art exhibitions and performances in which students have written sophisticated explanations concerning their work,
- applaud more opportunities for their special needs children to excel in the fine arts, and
- recognize that teaching has improved significantly.

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**Impact on Students**

Fine Arts personnel say "I have"... 

- become more accountable for what I learned,
- been given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the arts on my life and asked to write about it,
- had to self-assess my performance and talk about it in terms of aesthetic judgment,
- realized that a series of courses in theatre and dance were sequenced and because of that they are just as important as any other course,
- encountered teachers who are better prepared, more enthusiastic and more willing to experiment,
- witnessed a decreasing void between every day rehearsal routines and end-of-year assessments,
- learned that I do not have to be an artist to be successful in art class,
- see that art class has become more structured, more conceptual, more than simple arts and crafts activities,
- encountered more consistency from grade-to-grade in terms of the curriculum and more consistency in terms of curricula and quality from school to school,
- utilized technological media to help me make and understand my arts making, and
- used skills from other academic classes in arts classes and skills from arts classes in other academic classes.

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**Role Playing**

In the role of student, fine arts personnel say "I have"... 

- become more accountable for what I learned,
- been given the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the arts on my life and asked to write about it,
- had to self-assess my performance and talk about it in terms of aesthetic judgment,
- realized that a series of courses in theatre and dance were sequenced and because of that they are just as important as any other course,
- encountered teachers who are better prepared, more enthusiastic and more willing to experiment,
- witnessed a decreasing void between every day rehearsal routines and end-of-year assessments,
- learned that I do not have to be an artist to be successful in art class,
- see that art class has become more structured, more conceptual, more than simple arts and crafts activities,
- encountered more consistency from grade-to-grade in terms of the curriculum and more consistency in terms of curricula and quality from school to school,
- utilized technological media to help me make and understand my arts making, and
- used skills from other academic classes in arts classes and skills from arts classes in other academic classes.
FASPs and their implementation have significantly increased the depth and breadth of fine arts educational opportunities for students throughout Maryland. From the development of dance and theatre programs to the creation of summer arts academies, from the establishment of community performance and exhibition spaces to the adjudication of students by community arts professionals, the implementation of systems’ plans has increased the number of choices and opportunities in fine arts education for Maryland students.

The implementation of FASPs has assisted the rebuilding of fine arts education. In Washington County, working through their plan has led to the reinstatement of instrumental music programs in elementary schools and paved the way for systemic fine arts recovery and possible expansion. The existence of a FASP in Baltimore City leveraged the system’s decision to use remedy funds to fund 40 positions in the fine arts for 2001, 2002 and 2003, the majority in elementary and middle school music and visual art and two positions each in dance and theatre. These positions are being maintained with system central funds in 2004.

The establishment and/or the development of programs in dance and theatre would have been impossible without FASP implementation. These programs are being offered in a number of formats including separate academic classes, arts integration curricula in arts and/or non-arts areas, and after-school cocurricular opportunities that extend the instructional day. In some cases, tying dance and theatre together has proven to be a powerful motivator for student involvement. No matter how dance and theatre programs are offered, systems report that having these disciplines as part of their curricular offerings gives them value and importance both inside and outside the school community.

There are numerous examples of systems whose implementation has supported efforts to reconceptualize, restructure and enhance existing programs. In Calvert County, middle school general music classes have been revised to include opportunities to learn guitar, continue skill development on recorder and large Orff instruments and participate in percussion ensembles. Supervisor of Instruction for Cultural Arts, Linda Patton, feels that

Cecil County The CREATE initiative to implement theatre and dance instruction at the elementary and middle school levels has improved the quality of instruction and illustrated the significance of integrated fine arts instruction.

Montgomery County The system has started on a path to one hundred percent (100%) participation in dance and theatre by using grant funds to seed arts integration programs in three elementary schools. In these schools, students will receive experiences in all four arts disciplines. Grant funds are supporting two hours per week of common planning time.
realizing this part of their fine arts plan “energized our middle school program and has had an additional benefit of giving a needed boost to our high school music programs as well.”

**Performance and Exhibition Opportunities**

Some systems cite a significant growth in performing ensembles (and male students in dance classes) because of developments in programs that plans have allowed them to make. More performance and exhibition opportunities as well as more possibilities of specialized groups and classes have increased the challenges and the rewards of participating in the fine arts. Professional venues for showcasing student work and performances have increased recognition for student productions and given students the opportunity to talk about their arts work with people in the community. In addition, the featuring of student performances and art work at city, county, region and state events has further increased program visibility and highlighted student successes.

**Other Opportunities**

Other opportunities created for students as a result of systems’ implementation of their FASPs include: after-school and summer fine arts programs, elementary solo and ensemble festivals, youth art month events, art fairs, middle and high school choruses, vocal music programs, strings programs, musical theatre programs, gifted and talented programs, transportation of students to professional performances, support for students to audition for regional performing ensembles, professional actors and artists in the classroom, classes using instruments from around the world, and state-of-the art technology in the classrooms. (See Create Supportive School-Community Partnerships on page 18 for additional examples of opportunities created for students through partnership arrangements.)

**Wicomico County**

Implementation of the Fine Arts Strategic Plan supported the adoption of two successful pedagogical music programs at the elementary school level – Musicgarten and Gordon Rhythm Language – and the teacher training necessary to deliver instruction. In addition to their documented effectiveness in “regular” classrooms, they have had significant impact in Pinehurst Elementary School, a school for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.
In order to be an effective reform agent, curriculum alignment must be coupled with successful staff development. Systems see them as inseparable. Through their implementation of staff development goals, systems view themselves as having significantly promoted work force excellence and dramatically enhanced how teachers approach instruction. Systems consider their activities in the area of professional development as essential to the continual update of instructional methods and techniques.

State standards as addressed through the implementation of goals in many FASPs have driven a significant portion of all professional development activities. These activities have varied from bringing nationally known experts into system-wide fine arts staff development days to embedding fine arts staff development in individual classrooms by utilizing community and higher education arts experts. Other programs have included teachers sharing the benefits of off-campus staff development, teacher-driven staff development and teacher attendance at state and national arts education conferences. In some systems, some professional development efforts have focused on mentoring programs for first-year teachers.

In addition to supporting teachers’ professional development, implementing FASPs has been important in providing substantive professional recognition for teachers. Teachers report that the implementation of FASPs has given them public recognition for their work and, in so doing, provided them validity and identity as arts professionals.

Systems recognize that in order to meet their FASP goals and objectives, they need to address infrastructure improvement. Some systems have included such need in their FASP. They have tied state grant support for FASP implementation to providing infrastructure that supports curriculum alignment and meeting state fine arts standards.

Used as seed funding, grant support for plan implementation has made it possible for some systems to initially take on additional staff. These systems are supporting such positions entirely through funds generated by local budgets as soon as possible.

State support has also improved both the quality and quantity of fine arts equipment and materials. In some systems, grant monies have helped to address...
inadequate or obsolete equipment and facilities by helping to move schools to minimal levels (as described by the Maryland State Department of Education in its 2001 Facilities Guidelines for Fine Arts Programs). The funds have facilitated the purchase of instruments and art materials, up-to-date textbooks, resource books and videos, kilns, dance floors, and repair of equipment -- all of which have been invaluable in helping teachers meet state fine arts standards.

**Evaluations of Needs**

FASP implementation has supported in-depth evaluations of facilities, equipment and resources. Some systems have developed plans to address needs and support budgetary requests. FASP reviews and reports have provided stakeholders with the context by which to comprehend short- and long-term planning for renovations.

**Equity**

Many systems see state grant support for their plans as having assisted them achieve equity in terms of being able to distribute resources, materials and equipment across county schools. In Charles County, the system plan has helped eliminate gaps in participation in instrumental music because of disparities in race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic level and physical ability by purchasing instruments on a needs-basis as identified by principals.

**Technology**

In terms of technology, grant funds for FASP implementation have made it possible for systems to provide state-of-the-art software and hardware in classrooms that help teachers meet curriculum goals, give teachers comprehensive training in the use of technology and support technology-aided assessment applications.

**Status of Materials, Equipment and Facilities**

More than seventy percent (70%) of Maryland’s school systems are in the process of upgrading materials and equipment in music and visual arts at all three levels, and more than forty-five percent (45%) are prioritizing needs in those two disciplines. Materials and equipment needs are also being addressed in theatre and dance, especially at the middle and high school levels in theatre and at the high school level in dance.

In terms of facilities, more than forty-five percent (45%) of the systems report that they are upgrading facilities at the high school level in music and surveying their schools to prioritize facility needs in

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**Materials**

**Carroll County** Funding has supported standardizing curriculum textbooks in the elementary general music program, standardizing software use, giving staff and students access to multimedia and authentic instruction, facilitating greater equity of instruction equipment between new and old schools, and creating a “Learning Community” of staff to share effective instructional strategies.

**Equity**

Montgomery County “Grant monies have been the saving grace by providing schools with instruments for children who could not afford them.” (Rick Penix, Coordinator of Instrumental Music)

**Technology**

Caroline County Funds supporting their technology objectives have helped this system realize its vision of technology as a powerful component of curriculum development as well as student and teacher motivation.

**Allegany County** The integration of technology in the fine arts curriculum has been accomplished by tech infusion specialists who meet with teachers and help them develop and implement innovative curricula. Internet technology has provided the vehicle for teachers and others to share everything from system curricula to lesson plans, links to information and professional development opportunities.
Successful partnerships have strengthened the authority of the fine arts leadership and have led to changing the culture with respect to the support for the arts in the community.

Many school systems have developed innovative partnerships that have helped them with all aspects of their FASP implementation: curriculum alignment, assessment, professional development and infrastructure. They consider partnership support a matter of survival for their fine arts programs. Partners have helped provide program direction and feedback, given assistance in reaching program goals, advocated for fine arts plans and programs and raised money that has supported increasing student opportunities and purchasing materials.

Systems cite their partnerships as having given substantial help in the establishment of new dance, theatre and arts integration programs as well as providing support for these new programs. Partners are also credited with assisting alignment efforts and developing and carrying out multiple types of assessments including performance adjudication and portfolio reviews.

Partnerships have supported an innumerable number of opportunities for students. They have helped bring arts experiences into classrooms at the same time that they have helped systems take students out into the professional arts world (see list in right-hand column on page 25). Community partnership programs have provided increased visibility for students, their artwork and performances.

In terms of infrastructure support, systems report that partnerships have helped them by providing instruments, technology, equipment and equipment repair. Partners have also provided quality facilities for system performances and exhibitions.

Teachers have also been the direct beneficiaries of partnership support. Through partner relationships, systems have been able to provide in-service programs by higher education faculty, teacher training at many levels, mentoring opportunities for new teachers, workshops for teachers, technology training, and the support to establish a schools’ employee chorus. Donald Forrester, Director of theatre and visual arts at the high school level. Facilities are also being upgraded at all three levels in music and visual arts, and start-up facilities for new programs are being provided in music at the middle school level and at the high school level in dance, music and visual arts.

Calvert County “Partnerships have had a profound effect on the quality and quantity of opportunities for students, and they have helped raise the bar of excellence.”
(Linda Patton, Supervisor of Instruction and Cultural Arts)

St. Mary’s County Successful partnerships have strengthened the authority of the fine arts leadership and have led to changing the culture with respect to the support for the arts in the community.
Elementary Education in Garrett County, believes that the involvement of local fine arts experts in the partnership arrangements in his county has been "integral to the maintenance of high-quality fine arts programs."

**Communication and Advocacy**

FASPs are credited with increasing communication between community arts organizations, universities and colleges and helping to build a network of support with other Maryland school systems. Having a FASP in place has, in many cases, provided an outpouring of advocacy and partnership support for the fine arts in many systems because the community has been made aware of what the fine arts are doing and what system's fine arts needs are. Needs are no longer seen as arbitrary, rather they are related to a clearly articulated plan. In this way, the plan themselves have leveraged partnership commitment.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opportunities for Students</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In-school opportunities supported by partnerships include:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Artists-in-the-schools programs and residencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In-school performances by professional ensembles</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Workshops for students by professional clinicians</td>
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<td>• Dance and theatre teachers</td>
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<td>• Training in musical composition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Technology training</td>
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<td>• Master classes</td>
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<td>• Summer arts academies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• After-school dance and theatre programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Career training for students</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-school opportunities supported by partnerships include:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Attending professional performances and museums</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community performance and exhibition venues (acclaimed performance and exhibition facilities) for student artists and performing ensembles</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expanded avenues for student performers and artists to interact with community arts organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conductors and clinicians for all-county music festivals</td>
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<td>• Honors music ensembles</td>
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<td>• Elementary solo and ensemble festivals</td>
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<td>• Youth art month exhibitions</td>
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<td>• Special arts festivals for middle school students</td>
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<td>• Student participation in professional performing ensembles</td>
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<td>• Student participation in county festivals and special music festivals</td>
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<td>• Special arts classes in community arts centers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to experience musical performances from various cultures</td>
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<td>• Reduction in theatre ticket pricing</td>
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<td>• Poster contests</td>
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**Other opportunities for students supported by partnerships include:**

• Mini-grants and special projects to support student fine arts activities
• Scholarships
• Awards for student performances and exhibitions
New Practices, Procedures and Processes

FASPs have motivated systems to adopt new practices, procedures and processes that provide practical support for the achievement of fine arts goals and objectives. Implementation has created awareness of fine arts programs, provided legitimacy for the arts, supported systemic planning, enhanced the place of the arts in schools, promoted the development of strategic thinking for systems’ fine arts programs, established an identity for the arts, and encouraged advanced course work in the arts.

Awareness

Many systems report that having a FASP has increased the importance of the fine arts within their system. Having a plan has made Boards of Education more aware of the direction of their counties’ fine arts programs and placed the recognition of the arts on par with other academic areas. For example, in Baltimore County, the process of implementation has kept the superintendent, department supervisors and members of the Board of Education aware of fine arts goals. This awareness has, in turn, created a positive prognosis for achieving these goals.

Awareness has also generated the need for more information as fine arts personnel are invited to present program information at Board meetings. In Prince George’s County, the Fine Arts Team’s presentations have emphasized their FASP, implementation details and the need for program improvements.

Legitimacy

In many systems, awareness of the FASP process and of the plan itself has provided legitimacy for the arts in schools. Russell Beaton, Curriculum Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts—Secondary in Frederick County, reports that because of his system’s plan, county personnel understand that the fine arts disciplines have a substantial academic nature and component. Having a fine arts plan has brought the fine arts to the table with other academic departments — it has made the fine arts personnel part of the “team.” In addition, the existence of the plan has made it possible to find system financial support for fine arts goals. In Baltimore City, the adoption of the FASP was significant in that it put something concrete on the table that could be used by decision makers.

In Frederick County, the FASP has been used as a basis for yearly administrative reviews and evaluation
by providing concrete benchmarks against which fine arts supervisors' work can be measured. Their FASP has also been effectively used as leverage for new programs and equipment. Beaton relates that the "plan has made all the difference in the world. It is part of the strategic planning process at the ground level." He credits what Frederick County has been able to accomplish in arts education with having a plan in place.

Similar to the way plans have worked within systems to create legitimacy, they have also been instrumental in promoting legitimacy for the fine arts in the community and, consequently, they have been invaluable in the development of school-community partnerships. Partnerships have helped develop plans, and then the existence of plans has in turn helped to create more partnerships. Many systems report that their partnership efforts have been greatly enhanced through the implementation of their FASPs.

Systemic Planning

As a result of a recent Maryland State Department of Education directive requiring systems to adopt a master plan, systems have folded their fine arts plans into their master plans. Having a FASP already in existence has helped to incorporate fine arts goals into the larger system plan. It is interesting to note that some systems have kept the FASP as a separate document (in addition to having fine arts goals in the Master Plan) in order to maintain high visibility for fine arts goals and objectives.

School Culture

FASP implementation has also advanced the position of the arts in individual schools. Nelson Fritts, Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts in Cecil County, reports that his system’s work on its fine arts plan has changed the culture in some county schools with the role of the arts becoming much more accepted. In addition, some schools have become much more open to incorporating and scheduling enrichment programs in the fine arts.

Reflection

Systems have used their plans to document where they are, assess what they need and outline a strategy for getting there. Having a long-range strategic plan has helped systems generate annual goals and objectives for arts education that are sequential, building on goals that have been completed.
Identity   Working on the development and implementation of FASPs has, in many systems, produced a “team spirit” between arts teachers, arts resources teachers and arts supervisors. It has identified fine arts personnel as a cadre of administrators and teachers committed to creating and facilitating a unified vision for arts education within a system.

Advanced Courses   In several systems, plan implementation has led to existing graduation requirements in the fine arts becoming expanded, emphasized, visibly articulated and linked to Maryland state standards. In some systems, implementation of fine arts plans has helped them develop Advanced Placement courses that enable students to earn college credits in the fine arts while still in high school. It has also supported the alignment of advanced fine arts courses with higher education standards.

Other Practices   Other new practices developed as a result of FASP implementation include: the requirement to have state standards listed in lesson plans and the practice of principals and supervisors looking for them during observations; the establishment of standards for textbook selection based on the newly aligned curricula; the integration of dance standards into music, theatre, and physical education; and the establishment of a system using teacher recommendations to place students in advanced arts courses.

Queen Anne's County   This system has initiated a fine arts diploma that signifies the completion of a cluster of fine arts courses. Completion of this fine arts cluster is recognized at graduation.

Cecil County   Nelson Fritts, Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts, explains that High School Career Cluster initiatives involve a sequential series of courses beginning with an introductory fine arts course and moving into advanced level pathway courses. By sequencing fine arts courses, students follow a specific career pathway.
Ingredients in Effective Implementation

FASP implementation has had a significant impact on systems’ curriculum alignment, program offerings, professional development activities, infrastructure improvements and partnership development. Effective efforts in these areas have one or more of the following ingredients: support from system personnel, teachers and community; system leadership; empowered teachers; FASP-motivated collaboration; team and partnership development; steering committee involvement, a process of continual revision and reflection; motivational strategies; use of grant funds as seed money; and thinking outside-the-box.

Support

When asked what factors have facilitated their system’s attainment of goals and objectives, fine arts personnel report a number of different factors. Most frequently cited are systemic support — supplies, materials and equipment; staffing; strong fine arts central office support; strong support from Board of Education; curriculum development; professional development; facility renovations and new facilities; additional courses; resource specialists; inclusion of arts leaders in decision-making processes; innovative venues for performance and exhibition; time; money; and the expansion of fine arts programs.

Another major factor of support frequently mentioned is teachers’ work – teachers’ efforts on behalf of curriculum guides, planning and the entire process; teachers’ excitement; their recruitment of students; their success in meeting tasks and targets; the high quality of their leadership and their instruction. Other important facilitating factors cited by fine arts personnel include: fine arts initiatives grant funding, the availability and awareness of the Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes in the Fine Arts as well as national standards, and the development of a strategic plan to focus staff development and direct progress in the delivery of instruction.

Community support from arts organizations, partnerships, local businesses, parents and other constituents are mentioned as playing important roles in helping systems achieve goal and objective success. In some systems, this support is circular: support helps lead to successful fine arts projects whose visibility in turn leads to more support and more success.
System Leadership

System administrators emphasize the importance of fine arts strategic planning in strengthening curricular arts experiences in their systems. They credit FASPs and the state financial support of FASPs with helping them create a vision and a process for realizing their commitment to quality, standards-based fine arts education for all students. Without exception, when superintendents support the development and implementation of a FASP, school systems enjoy significant progress in advancing fine arts education. As system leaders, their active voices are heard throughout the community and, in turn, influence Boards of Education and local citizenry alike.

Empowered Teachers

Systems place much of the credit for gains made in the course of implementing their FASPs squarely on teachers. Through the process of working on system plans, teachers have been given and taken ownership for the development of fine arts education throughout Maryland. Their intimate involvement in developing and carrying out various aspects of implementation has generated enthusiastic support for their system’s fine arts programs. They have been encouraged by their supervisors to take the initiative to make things happen. The trust that many systems have placed in their teachers for implementing system plans has empowered teachers to transform fine arts education.

Curriculum Alignment

In many systems, the entire process of curriculum development has been teacher driven, with a number of teachers assuming leadership positions. In other systems, an individual teacher has taken the lead and directed the efforts of other teachers who are dedicated to curriculum and assessment work. Some systems have inspired teachers’ efforts by bringing in professional artists and practitioners to help provide rigorous artistic standards to frame the process of curriculum alignment.

Assessment

Teachers have carried on FASP-driven assessment work in much the same manner as they worked on curriculum alignment. Assessment and alignment methodology has varied from system to system and also from discipline to discipline within a system. (Some systems have worked on alignment and assessment at the same time, some have not.)

Professional Development

Empowered with guiding curriculum development and assessment efforts, teachers have taken the lead in driving staff development activities. Teacher-led professional development has resulted in teachers

Alignment and Assessment

Garrett County  Teachers were given ownership of the curriculum alignment process in all disciplines. They were seen as the experts, and through the process of addressing curriculum challenges, teacher leaders emerged to help guide the process.

Howard County  Dance has been successful (their assessments shared with other systems) because one dance teacher took the lead in its development thus motivating all dance teachers’ dedication to alignment and assessment. Visual arts has a “leadership cadre” that guides the process of assessment development during the summer.

Professional Development

Allegany County  Allowing teachers to take ownership of professional development rather than be the passive recipients of information presented by outside experts has inspired professional development programs that are meaningful and effectively transferred to the classroom.

Caroline County  Middle school art teachers are training elementary school art teachers in the system’s new technology.
having a thorough knowledge of state fine arts standards. Many systems have listened closely to teachers to determine the direction and content of their staff development efforts, and many have established processes that support continual communication between teachers and fine arts staff. Further, the practice of teachers mentoring teachers has helped teachers share innovative instructional strategies and skills.

**Needs Assessments** Some systems have involved teachers in conducting formal needs assessments to help them determine FASP goals related to acquiring essential resources for the effective delivery of instruction. In addition, any systems have determined new programs and projects by listening to the needs of their teachers.

**FASP-Motivated Collaboration** Much of what systems have been able to accomplish in addressing their fine arts goals has been a result of collaborative efforts between systems and communities. The sum of their combined efforts has been greater than what either entity could accomplish alone. Collaboration has played a major role in helping systems meet state fine arts standards. It is this intimate sharing of vision and resources that has enabled so many of Maryland school systems to extend invaluable fine arts opportunities to countless students.

**Organizations** Formal and informal collaborative relationships have been nurtured with many different entities: arts councils, arts festivals, colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, city governments, theatres, museums, professional performing ensembles, dance and theatre companies, businesses, community arts advocacy groups, exhibition and performance spaces, County Park and Planning Commissions, foundations, education departments of performing organizations and private philanthropy organizations.

**Artists** In the course of writing curriculum and developing assessments, collaboration with arts professionals has promoted rigorous standards. It has raised the expectations of parents and administrators at the same time it has enhanced and enriched systems’ sense of standards in the fine arts.

**Teachers** System-wide teams working collaboratively have been a significant factor in curriculum alignment.
Intercounty collaboration has been important in the curriculum alignment work of several systems. It has facilitated curriculum alignment and assessment development and is seen as having great potential in all areas of program development and support. For example, Calvert and St. Mary’s counties have addressed some of their individual goals through continuing their long-standing collaborative efforts. These efforts, coupled with the close working relationship between the two fine arts supervisors, have maximized resources, facilitated the sharing of successful project documents, and set the framework for continuing shared curriculum and assessment activities.

Higher Education

In many systems, collaborative partnerships with higher education have helped enhance current programs, develop new programs, create a number of new opportunities for Maryland students in all four fine arts disciplines, and evaluate new initiatives. An important benefit of involving higher education faculty is that their work with teachers helps them see where they can fit into system initiatives. It also brings the rigor of college standards into high schools.

Partnerships

Collaborative efforts with communities have been instrumental in helping systems develop and provide numerous opportunities for students. In addition,
infrastructure goals have also been met through partnerships, either internal partnerships (linking fine arts needs to system programs) or community partnerships. Sometimes a fine arts goal can be linked with a system initiative. For example, in Charles County, Timothy Bodemer, Specialist for Fine and Performing Arts, has been able to provide state-of-the art music and visual art technology through a grant from his system’s office of instructional technology. In many systems, local businesses have been tapped for creative support of instrument and equipment needs.

In many systems, the entire process of developing and implementing FASPs has been one of team building - within systems and between systems and communities. In Baltimore County, having a plan and working on it has crystallized the identity of a fine arts “team” among coordinators and resource teachers which in turn has provided direction for each member of the team.

Systems have used their FASPs to give a framework for developing the direction of their partnerships. Those systems that cite community partnerships as extremely beneficial to the success of their fine arts initiatives point to a number of strategies that have helped them generate meaningful and supportive community relations. Many stress the importance of fine arts personnel or teacher representatives being personally involved and active on the boards of community arts organizations. Keeping ears open within systems and within the community often leads to unique opportunities. In the most successful collaborations, partnerships beget partnerships that beget partnerships.

Communication about FASPs is vital in promoting the success of partnerships and programs. Kathy Dill, Fine Arts Supervisor in Talbot County, emphasizes the importance of speaking with school board members, community groups and organizations. She believes that some of the success of her system’s theatre program has been the result of establishing partnerships with her county’s community organizations.

Cultivating effective communication is imperative in building parent and community support. Gwen Drescher, Curriculum Specialist for Visual and...
Performing Arts -- Elementary, explains that Frederick County has increased their support base by constantly communicating with parents, PTA and other constituent groups. As a result, parents are well informed about FASP goals and have become strong advocates of the program. Frederick County has experienced a massive outpouring of advocacy and support in the last five years, and both Drescher and Beaton (Curriculum Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts -- Secondary) directly attribute this growth to having a FASP. The plan helps them realize what they have to do -- the more they know where the holes are, the more they can talk intelligently about what they need; how those needs fit into the plan; how the plan itself is important and how the needs are an important part of the plan.

Other Strategies
Other successful strategies to build effective partnerships include: meeting regularly, providing partners with reports, establishing discipline specific parent and/or community support groups -- chaired by a community member -- that provide input into direction and development, and employing community arts experts as advisors for special projects.

Steering Committee Involvement
The role of the steering committee “team” is seen by many systems as critical to the success of their fine arts implementation efforts in terms of development, advocacy and support. Systems use different procedures in convening steering committees – from meeting with the entire committee on a regular basis to calling in subgroups of the committee to help address specific agendas. A sense of steering committee ownership is achieved by:

- Engaging the committee in the process of developing strategies to promote excellence followed by continued communication with committee members,
- Involving community members from the beginning of the plan development process,
- Creating focus teams for work on specific issues and determining the composition of the group based on the issue being discussed (Focus teams may include just teachers, or administrators and teachers, or a combination of teachers, Board of Education members, community partners, parents, and students. As explained by Linda Patton, Supervisor of Instruction for Cultural Arts in Calvert County, the term Focus Team keeps members “focused” on a
particular issue, rather than dealing with the entire spectrum of issues),

• Convening in small groups as needed to help with fine arts initiatives such as curriculum development,

• Meeting with invited community stakeholders, and

• Utilizing individual talents.

Other systems also have discipline-specific advisory or parent support groups who provide input into fine arts strategic planning:

• Discipline-specific advisory committees (chaired by a community member who sets the agenda along with leadership from the central office) serve to share information back and forth between the system and the community. (Howard County)

• Citizen/parent advisory committees receive updates from the system about FASP and are given the opportunity to contribute suggestions. (Harford County)

In some systems, the steering committee was already in place as a consortium of arts organizations before work was initiated on the FASPs. In Cecil County, using the preexisting committee in the planning stages and listening to its members has resulted in the committee taking ownership. This partnership, known as “ArtsReach,” has established annual goals to help the expansion of arts education in Cecil County by authoring grants, providing enrichment and giving advice on the development of new projects.

The responsibilities given to steering committees have varied from system to system depending on the needs of the school system:

• A council of fine arts teachers along with administrators, community leaders and arts council representatives has been given the responsibility for allocating FASP grant funds and crafting requests for future grants. The committee also looks at how the previous year’s allocation was successful—a process of continual reflection that guides the implementation of fine arts plans. (Caroline County)

• Fine arts personnel are looking at putting together a fine arts oversight committee that will then pave the way for developing effective partnerships. It is hoped that this committee will mobilize community resources and give outside organizations the
Continual Revision and Reflection

Curriculum Alignment and Assessment

opportunity to comment, make recommendations and take actions on FASP initiatives. (Washington County)

Many systems view their steering committees (or advisory committees) as essential in terms of their support and lobbying efforts:

• The movers and shakers on this system’s advisory committee give its fine arts plan stature and endow the committee with the ability to shake influence in the community. (Baltimore City)

• This system values its steering committee (teachers from all levels as well as representatives from community arts organizations) as an “idea generating” component – a critical ingredient in the success of its fine arts initiatives. (Garrett County)

Several systems are in the process of reconstituting their steering committees. Community and school turnover has negatively impacted the membership sustainability of some systems’ original steering committees. Systems are looking at ways to reconvene committees with community stakeholders.

Systems see meeting and revising their FASP goals in curriculum, assessment, professional development, infrastructure and community partnerships as an organic process, one in which strategies are subject to continual examination and revision.

Many systems view the constant evaluation of curricula and assessment as imperative. They emphasize the importance of establishing a cyclical process for the creation of curricula that effectively meets state standards in the arts -- researching standard prototypes – writing – reviewing – evaluating – rewriting. Such a process produces, “living, breathing documents” that undergird the entire improvement of instruction (Craig Schutz, Supervisor of Fine Arts, Allegany County).

Systemic comparison of the percentage of students meeting standards year-by-year provides essential input into curriculum development and FASP revision. In Carroll County, this process is an essential element in helping them meet one of their fine arts goals: “To develop county Fine Arts assessments to measure student achievement of the program benchmarks with an effective method of collecting data for instructional decision making.” Systems that are still in the discussion stage of assessment development look

Curriculum Alignment and Assessment

Wicomico County  Supervisor of Fine Arts, Gary Beauchamp, stresses the importance of studying curriculum design and assessment development before doing it. Furthermore, in his county, the assessment of what teachers are teaching has helped provide credibility and legitimacy for fine arts requests to the Board of Education, the Superintendent and the community.

Kent County  The constant tracking of data gathered from student assessments has led to the continual reevaluation and improvement of curriculum.
to research as well as other systems for models. For example, in Dorchester County, portfolio and performance assessment will be strengthened based upon best-practice research.

**Infrastructure**

Systems have been helped in meeting their materials, equipment and facilities goals through carrying out inventories in all fine arts disciplines, conducting needs assessments and developing short- and long-range equipment purchase plans. In St. Mary’s County, their equipment purchase plan has been a valuable instructional tool that helped implement the curricula in all disciplines (except dance) at all levels: “the additional equipment and supplies have touched every student and fine arts teacher” (Lynne Morgan Smoot, Supervisor of Instruction for Fine Arts, St. Mary’s County).

**Partnerships**

Systems have also supported their partnership efforts by conducting teacher surveys. In Cecil County, such a survey led to the identification of two key areas of teacher concern – advocacy and connecting with the community. Based on feedback, a concerted effort was launched to build on existing partnerships and develop mutually beneficial working relationships with a wide variety of community organizations and arts institutions.

**Motivational Strategies**

Student success and motivation has been leveraged through the practice of bringing in outside experts to judge student artwork and performances as well as facilitating the opportunity for students to have their work critiqued in public venues. Both practices have raised the standard of student production and have helped to increase student self-esteem. Students have been motivated to participate in new and existing programs thus increasing the demand for arts programs. Students’ participation and expectations have increased as a result of FASP goals that improve teaching and make curricula more rigorous.

Sometimes concentrating efforts in one level has led to increased demand in another. In Calvert County, grant money has helped pay for after-school dance teachers in the middle school whose successful programs are helping to create the enthusiasm for high school programs. In the same county, having older students perform for younger students provides strong motivation. The fact that the system values dance enough to offer it in the school nurtures the
perception that dance is an integral part of the educational program.

As programs have become more successful, pressure has increased from within the school system and from the outside community to maintain and enhance curricular offerings. In addition, summer arts programs in several counties have generated enthusiasm for participation in fine arts classes.

**Teachers**  Teacher success has been encouraged by providing teachers with public and private recognition for what they do as well as placing them in positions of leadership. Through the sharing of lesson plans, practices, and strategies learned in outside-of-system staff development activities, teachers have assumed formal and informal mentor positions that have contributed to the success of their colleagues. Increased communication between teachers, teachers and supervisors, and school personnel and community constituents, has also facilitated teacher commitment and provided a foundation for success.

Students and teachers are motivated to succeed when time is taken to recognize their accomplishments. Many systems take time in public meetings and in special events to celebrate the work of everyone involved in fine arts initiatives. While systems lament the difficulty of finding time for such celebrations, they stress the importance of recognizing students' and teachers' outstanding efforts.

**Steering Committees**  Steering committee members are motivated to be involved when they are kept informed of system goals and partners' contributions to meeting objectives. For example, members of Cecil County's steering committee want to make sure that they are active contributors in assuring the achievement of the committee's projects. Hearing about other members' contributions encourages all stakeholders to become involved. Their knowledge of what is taking place stimulates all members to think about what they can do to help the system realize its goals.

**Seed Money**  Several jurisdictions have effectively used state grant monies to leverage local funds. Many examples exist for the use of grant monies as seed money for positions and programs that have subsequently been picked up by a system's budget and/or partnership support. This has been a
particularly useful strategy in establishing new dance and theatre programs:

• Garrett County has used part of their grant award as seed money to accomplish dance and theatre goals through partnerships with local organizations. They bring dance specialists into the classroom for embedded staff development and conduct after-school theatre classes. With its history of integrating theatre education into the Reading/Language Arts curricula in grades K-8, this system is working to produce an addendum to the Reading, English, and Language Arts Voluntary State Curricula to ensure that the four Essential Learner Outcomes for theatre are covered in the newly crafted elementary and middle school documents.

• Queen Anne’s County’s dance initiatives have been realized with the help of seed money and a partnership with Washington College.

• Washington County has also used the grant as seed money for dance programs that, once begun, have been continued with system funds.

• Talbot County has used a portion of their grant as seed money to hire a theatre specialist at the middle school level. Along with the help of partnerships, a strong high school program in theatre has been established.

The process of using grant funds to seed programs has also been helpful in establishing arts integration programs, technology initiatives and other new programs:

• Montgomery County has started on the path to one hundred percent student participation in dance and theatre by using grant funds to seed arts integration programs in three elementary schools with a portion of their grant funds going to support common planning time for teachers.

• Washington County is addressing its goal of increasing arts experiences and learning in the arts for all students by developing arts integration ideas and processes.

• Charles County has used a portion of their grant to seed a partnership with a community business that provides professional development in technology for teachers.

Grant support has also been used to sustain existing programs. In Frederick County, grant monies have helped sustain a program that supports the
training of classroom and music and art teachers (by two art and music specialists with special education expertise) in using music and art strategies and materials to meet the needs of special populations in non-special education classrooms.

The Fine Arts Initiatives grants have made it possible for systems to continue programs seeded by other grants and to pick up the funding for activities that were initially funded through other sources.

• In Cecil County, the curriculum development carried out with support of a Goal 2000 grant encompassed the collaborative creation of lesson plans with dance and theatre specialists along with classroom teachers – the CREATE initiative. The resulting collaborative curriculum (for grades two, four and six) was piloted in eight schools. Subsequently, the collaborative units have been used to in-service more specialists and classroom teachers, and the program has grown to involve twenty-eight schools. The grant has made this expansion possible while further expansion will have to be supported by system funds.

• In Frederick County, their plan has made it possible to develop and implement a previously granted program focused on introducing keyboards in kindergarten classes as part of a program supporting school system efforts to nurture left-brain thinking and math skills in early childhood educational experiences.

Grant monies have seeded programs and partnerships that have helped systems meet their staff development goals. Prince George’s County’s partnership with the University of Maryland has facilitated in-service training to teachers with no cost to the system for instructors or facilities. The county has, in turn, made their staff development available to other counties – an example of how the support of one program can flower into the benefit of many.

The grants have made it possible for systems to assist in the placing of personnel that, in turn, has leveraged the success of programs:

• Baltimore County’s Suzanne Henneman, Resource Teacher for Dance, explains: “Perhaps the most effective strategy for achieving the goal [working towards 100% participation in dance] is the hiring of a dance content specialist in the Curriculum and Instruction office who oversees and facilitates the
FASP and other dance initiatives in the county. Having someone at the administrative/curriculum and instruction level has moved the dance program forward for the past five years."

- Contractual dance and theatre specialists have helped Cecil County address their goals in these disciplines.

Many systems indicate that simply having a FASP has leveraged resources:

- In Baltimore City, the plan made it possible to leverage the system use of $650,000 in remedy funds to provide start-up materials, equipment and supplies for fine arts programs.

- By supporting goals in augmenting infrastructure (specifically technology innovations), Caroline County has seen both teachers and students become more motivated.

**Thinking Outside-the-Box**

Systems have made important inroads in achieving their fine arts goals by thinking outside-the-box:

- Faced with the challenge of implementing new programs in dance and theatre, some systems are including standards in those disciplines in other academic areas. In addition, some systems have established, or are in the process of exploring, arts integration programs in order to offer curricular opportunities in all four fine arts disciplines.

- Faced with the challenge of limited professional development time, some systems have used system-funded professional days as opportunities to provide discipline-specific staff development. In these sessions, fine arts teachers have been allowed to participate in their own discipline-specific professional development activities as opposed to having to attend general professional development activities in their home schools.

- Faced with scheduling restraints, some systems have extended the instructional day with after-school fine arts programs and have labeled these classes cocurricular.
Challenges and Needs

Fine arts personnel categorize challenges to accomplishing Fine Arts Strategic Plan goals and objectives in three areas: time, people and funding. Many systems feel that state and federal assessment priorities are diverting time, staff and money to priorities and subjects other than the fine arts. This challenge makes it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to enhance and maintain existing programs as well as add new programs in dance, theatre, strings and arts integration.

Other challenges cited by fine arts personnel include:

- Plan problems (absence of clarity, impractical goals),
- Tension of quality versus quality;
- Site based management models (result in decisions that make it difficult for teachers to provide quality systemic arts education),
- Lack of involvement of higher education in support and development of K-12 programs,
- Lack of agreement between agendas of Arts Council and Board of Education,
- Lack of public support for place of arts education in system and community, and
- Uncertainty over state required assessment in the fine arts.

Assistance

Systems voice the need for assistance and information in the following areas:

- Comprehensive arts programs –
  - Suggestions outlining how to implement dance and theatre curricula
- Scheduling –
  - Ideas about how to add a curriculum or program when time during the school day is already committed
- Communication –
  - Conduits for communication and collaboration with others across the state to find out which strategies are working and which ones are not
- Partnerships –
  - Avenues for all systems (especially for those outside the Baltimore metropolitan area) to have networking and partnership opportunities with

Challenges to Implementation Cited by Fine Arts Personnel

**Time**

- Scheduling fine arts classes
- Assessment priorities
- Graduation requirements
- Need for tutoring
- Scheduling staff development
- Scheduling time to meet, reflect, plan, train, implement, celebrate
- Slow wheels of bureaucracy

**People**

- Staffing
- Central office reorganization
- Central office staffing
- Disbanded Steering Committee (lack of involvement by members)
- Recruitment and retention of teachers
- Teacher attendance at in-service activities
- Lack of teacher interest in curriculum development
- Lack of teacher understanding of importance of state standards and/ or curriculum guides
- Non-accessibility of graduate programs for state certification of theatre teachers

**Funding**

- Facilities
- Renovations
- Program improvements
- Equipment
- Materials
- Technology
- Substitute pay for teachers (attending staff development)
- Declining student enrollment
- Funding for small systems to offer programs in all four disciplines
state and local arts organizations based in Baltimore

- Intercounty collaborations –
  - Creative ideas for shared staffing and shared staff development

- Teacher recruitment –
  - Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers (especially in theatre and dance)

**Financial**

To date, the State of Maryland has contributed more than $8 million for the implementation of FASPs. These funds have provided on average 43.5% of the funding for implementing goals and objectives, statewide. Collectively, systems indicate that they would require approximately $50 million in additional funds to successfully implement all of their FASP goals.

The need for additional funding is attributed to increasing fiscal demands associated with mandated programs that are severely limiting implementation of FASPs. In fact, many strategies, particularly in those systems with severely limited resources, could not have been carried out without state grant support for FASP goals and objectives from the Maryland State Department of Education. Nevertheless, several systems voice a cautionary note concerning reliance on grant funding for programs, projects and staff. If the state were to rescind or reduce funding, they would not have the financial means to continue some aspects of implementation.

Systems report that in addition to helping them realize their FASP goals, resources are needed to assist them in:

- Fully accomplishing curriculum alignment and assessment,
- Fully meeting the state guideline of 100% participation in fine arts programs that enable students to meet the content and achievement standards established by state standards for the arts,
- Providing adequate personnel, facilities, equipment and materials for quality programs in all disciplines at all levels,
- Developing arts integration elementary school programs, and
- Revisiting curriculum and assessments after the adoption of the Voluntary State Curriculum and state assessments.

Some systems make specific requests:
• Initiate targeted no-fault grant awards for specific program developments (systems would agree to take over if program proves to be successful, if not, the system is not faulted),

• Promote flexibility in grant funding so that systems could allocate less money for staff development and more money for major program pieces (supplies, materials and equipment), and

• Make sure that current square footage per pupil calculations address Maryland State Department of Education fine arts facilities guidelines.

Publicity

Just as systems have gained success by publicly recognizing teacher and student accomplishments, systems suggest that it would be beneficial for their efforts to have their successful efforts publicized. They indicate that such publicity would further sensitive county leadership concerning the accomplishments that a system has made toward implementing state standards. Systems recommend:

• Establishing a statewide avenue for recognizing system achievements by community arts agencies and the Maryland State Department of Education,

• Creating a web site that would highlight excellent programs and the outstanding work of teachers, and

• Initiating an awards program to recognize successful programs and teachers.

Advocacy

Systems applaud the advocacy efforts of AEMS: Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance and recommend that AEMS Alliance continue its work on behalf of arts education for all Maryland students. Specifically, systems recommend that AEMS Alliance:

• Continue to advocate for requirements that all students be enrolled in arts classes throughout all their school years,

• Advocate for the inclusion of fine arts as a core subject taught by fully certified teachers during the school day,

• Advocate for policy statements from the Maryland State Department of Education that provide direction and advocacy tools for local arts education organizations (similar to the facilities guidelines), and

• Facilitate AEMS Alliance members becoming a part of local school fine arts advisory councils.
Conclusion and Next Steps

Strong evidence suggests that arts education in Maryland's school systems has benefited from the implementation of Fine Arts Strategic Plans. Overall, music and visual arts curricula are well on the way to being 100% aligned in elementary and middle schools. Many high school level music performance and visual arts advanced placement courses reflect state and national standards in their respective disciplines. Where dance and theatre programs exist, good progress is being made in addressing the *Maryland Essential Learner Outcomes in the Fine Arts*, especially at the high school level. Several systems have made substantial progress in devising assessment models.

State fine arts grants have provided some assistance in helping systems deal with their own budget difficulties. In many cases, the successes of FASP implementation would have been impossible without these funds, particularly as systems attempt to meet unfunded federal requirements.

FASPs have been responsible for a systemic approach to arts education, even in systems that do not employ arts-specific supervisory personnel. Curriculum alignment and assessment have become the primary agenda for faculty development, leading to a more complete understanding of both state, national and professional arts standards and their application in designing instruction.

The encouragement of partnerships has served to clarify the role of local arts entities in assisting systems' expansion of opportunities for students. Both in the classroom and beyond, arts councils, agencies, organizations, professional companies, colleges and universities are becoming more involved in the development of curricula and related activities. FASP implementation has led to the formalization of such partnerships.

There is no question that the state's requirement for systemic fine arts strategic planning that involves communities has increased both the quantity and quality of opportunities for education in the arts in Maryland schools. Such success supports the continuation of efforts to fund further strategic planning for improving arts education - system by system.
Because of the positive systemic change that FASP implementation has motivated, project coordinators support the continuation of the FASP process. Fine arts education programs are strengthened through the development and implementation of long-range, strategic plans because they:

• assist systems in setting program priorities and strategies to carry out goals and objectives,

• require systems to evaluate fine arts programs annually,

• provide a vehicle for informing communities about fine arts education, its goals and its successes,

• encourage the creation of community partnerships,

• offer systems the opportunity to develop the means to measure the effectiveness of their fine arts programs,

• help systems establish funding priorities, and

• motivate teacher commitment to taking an active role in directing program development and improvement.

Ultimately, the best reason for continuing the FASP process is that it offers systems the support and the means to enhance fine arts education for their students, creates more opportunities for more students and validates the arts education experiences as an academic endeavor.

In writing and implementing their FASPs, systems have focused on and been effective in a number of different areas of systemic improvement. Accordingly, the project coordinators recommend that a forum(s) (e.g. publications, web sites, awards programs) be established for publicizing what works as well as sharing the strategies that have supported them. Further, because teachers have played such an important role in the design and implementation of curriculum, assessment and professional development, it would benefit all systems to have a way in which to exchange the processes that have proven to be the most effective in achieving results. In addition, both teachers and administrators would benefit from sharing strategies related to new program and infrastructure development. Finally, teachers, administrators, community representatives and higher education faculty would find ideas and inspiration through the exchange of practices related to partnership creation.
To meet the challenges described above, the project coordinators encourage greater flexibility and creativity in developing strategies related to funding. Continuing the improvement of arts education in Maryland's schools and meeting the rigors of state standards is dependent on the creativity of funders and recipient school systems alike. For example:

- Because individual systems know best where to allocate funds based on their priorities, funding needs to be flexible enough to assure its most effective use.

- Because some aspects of curriculum alignment, assessment, infrastructure, and professional development are the same no matter what the size of the system, additional funding needs to be allocated to smaller systems to help them reach adequate levels of program development.

- To maximize the available state financial support, consortia of adjacent systems need to be established to structure the exchange and sharing of curriculum, assessment, and professional development efforts. Many small systems lack the staff to adequately address the demands of implementing a complex strategic plan. Such an arrangement could also be used to support the sharing of supervisory personnel.

- While there is no implication for merging of school systems, today's financial realities demand finding ways to better utilize funds to accomplish an ever-increasing set of educational imperatives.

The development of FASPs and their effective implementation can be directly linked to the empowerment of teachers. The project coordinators believe that empowering teachers creates an essential sense of ownership and is key to future fine arts strategic planning in the areas of curriculum alignment and system-wide assessment as well as establishing priorities for infrastructure and staff development.

FASPs have now been folded in system Master Plans. While the collecting of strategic plans related to all aspects of a system's operations provides a comprehensive view of needs and strategies, it must be cautioned that such a collection endangers the identity and visibility of planning in the fine arts area. Accordingly, the project coordinators recommend that systems develop the fine arts components of Master Plans by applying strategies associated with effective
FASP implementation: active steering committee involvement, input from community organizations and higher education, and most importantly, empowered teachers.

Finally, the most meaningful review of FASP implementation lies in reporting measurable learning outcomes related to student achievement in meeting state standards in the fine arts. The critical question is -- what influence has a system's FASP had on what a child knows and is able to do in the arts? While anecdotal evidence can be collected through interviews and surveys, the answer to this important question will require a longitudinal study covering grades K-12 across the state. Such a study must be based on a set of standardized, multiple-measurement assessment tools applied across all systems. This proposed study would serve to document that FASP implementation is helping systems meet the goal of one hundred percent student participation in programs that enable them to meet Maryland's Essential Learner Outcomes in the Fine Arts.
Appendix: System Coordinators of Fine Arts Strategic Plan Implementation

Allegany County
Craig Schutz, Supervisor of Fine Arts

Anne Arundel County
Sue Owens, Coordinator of Art Education, Health and Dance
Colleen Rigot, Coordinator of Music
Anelle Tumminello, Coordinator of English and HAS (Theatre Arts)
Richard Wiles, Coordinator of Physical Education

Baltimore City
Jill Warzer, Fine Arts Specialist

Baltimore County
Kathleen McMahon, Executive Director of Elementary Programs

Calvert County
Linda Patton, Supervisor of Instruction for Cultural Arts

Caroline County
Sandra Whelan, Supervisor of Instruction
John Perry, Supervisor of Instruction
Ralph White, Supervisor of Instruction

Carroll County
Jeffrey Rogers, Supervisor of Fine Arts

Cecil County
C. Nelson Fritts, Jr., Instructional Coordinator of Fine Arts

Charles County
Timothy Bodamer, Specialist for Fine and Performing Arts

Dorchester County
Dorothy Rinehart, Curriculum Facilitator – Fine Arts

Frederick County
Gwen Drescher, Curriculum Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts – Elementary
Russell Beaton, Curriculum Specialist for Visual and Performing Arts – Secondary

Garrett County
Brenda McCartney, Assistant Superintendent
Lynn Bell, Director of Secondary Education
Donald Forrester, Director of Elementary Education
Harford County
  James Boord, Supervisor of Music
  Sue Garrett, Supervisor of Career Programs and Art
  Lynn Owen, Supervisor of English

Howard County
  C. Thomas Payne, Coordinator, Office of Advanced Programs and Fine Arts

Kent County
  Joan Buffone, Assistant Superintendent
  Keith Wharton, Lead Teacher

Montgomery County
  Dale Fulton, Associate Superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs
  Karen Harvey, Director, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
  Helen Smith, Coordinator, Secondary Arts
  Joan Stoer, Coordinator, Elementary Arts
  Lillian Pailen, Coordinator, General/Choral Music
  Rick Penix, Coordinator, Instrumental Music

Prince George’s County
  Marilyn Moreno, Coordinating Supervisor of Special Area Programs
  Brenda Makle, Visual Arts Instructional Specialist
  Rojulene Norris, Drama Supervisor
  Joseph Richter, Vocal/General Music Supervisor
  Kathy Rodeffer, Instrumental Music Instructional Specialist
  Juanita Ross, Physical Education/Dance Specialist

Queen Anne’s County
  William Young, Supervisor of Instruction

Somerset County
  Clarence Johnson, Assistant Superintendent

St. Mary’s County
  Lynne Morgan Smoot, Supervisor of Instruction for Fine Arts

Talbot County
  Kathy Dill, Fine Arts Supervisor K-12

Washington County
  Rob Hovermale, Coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts

Wicomico County
  Gary Beauchamp, Supervisor of Art and Music

Worcester County
  Rick Lambertson, Coordinator of Instruction