

# The Governor's P-20 Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools



**Executive Summary  
of the Final Report**

September 2014



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**Task Force on**  
**Arts Education in Maryland Schools**

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Approved by the P-20 Leadership Council  
September 16, 2014

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Task Force Members.....	2
Staff.....	2
Acknowledgements .....	2
Executive Summary .....	4
Introduction .....	4
The Maryland Context .....	7
Abstract of the Review of the Literature .....	9
Recommendations, Strategies, and Rationales .....	10
Conclusion .....	23

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### **Please Note:**

The full report also includes the following:

Appendix A: Public Input

Appendix B: Recommendation and Strategy Timeline

Appendix C: Review of the Literature and Bibliography

Appendix D: Proposed Language – Revision of COMAR

Appendix E: Standards for Fine Arts

The full report is available in its entirety in PDF format on the AEMS Alliance website:

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### INTRODUCTION

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Throughout the history of mankind, the greatest civilizations, such as those of the ancient Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Persian, Mayan, Aztec, Ming, and Byzantine eras, are understood, remembered, and celebrated most for their arts and letters. Those are the enduring legacies of any civilization for they broaden and enhance the human condition for centuries to follow. They are a means to experience the beauty, emotion, conflict, and power that are integral to understanding our collective and individual history, and they are at the very core of our humanity. Today the arts connect us across cultures in ever more complex times.

The arts are essential to the well-being of Marylanders, to the fabric of our communities, to the economic health of the state, and to the competitive edge of Maryland businesses. Students who have the opportunity to study the arts during their PreK-12 education are taught the skills and capacities that can lead them to becoming creative, innovative voices in the scientific and business sectors, active audience members and contributors to the cultural community, teachers of the arts, and artists. Dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts are core academic subjects that need to be part of every child's education.

The arts in public education are in danger of being marginalized. Budgets have been cut, positions have been lost, and arts education programs are receiving less time in the school day. There are pockets of excellence throughout Maryland, but there are also schools where students do not have access to the arts. Preparing students to be college and career ready is an important goal, and the arts can be invaluable in that effort. The Common Core State Standards (now referred to as the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards) are an important reform effort in Maryland; the arts have a significant role to play in those reforms. More importantly, the arts stand on their own as core to the content, skills, and capacities to be delivered to our students. The evidence is overwhelming, and as thoughtful educators and stakeholders in the future of our youth, the research cannot be ignored.

UNESCO has stated that education in the arts is a universal human right. Access to a comprehensive arts education program is one of the most fundamental equity issues facing public education today, and it is also one of the most profound social justice issues confronting our increasingly diverse population. For many reasons, arts education in public schools has been in decline nationally. In Maryland there has been success in protecting programs in most of the school systems and even advancing the quality in many. The challenge is that not all systems are consistently providing adequate arts instruction. This report,

requested by Governor Martin O'Malley' P-20 Leadership Council, provides a unique opportunity to address these challenges and place Maryland at the forefront of arts education nationally.

Recognizing that a task force on arts education would be a powerful conduit for conversation and action in the state, the Governor with his P-20 Leadership Council created the task force as an important step to maintaining the arts as a major instructional focus for creativity, imagination, and innovation in Maryland. The task force was charged with creating a plan that ensures a quality arts education for all Maryland students. Specifically, the task force was asked to:

- Examine Maryland policies and regulations on arts curriculum and instruction in the context of the new standards in arts education so as to identify gaps and alignment needs;
- Determine the current status of arts education in Maryland schools;
- Review pertinent research on the impact of fine arts instruction on student success in school; and
- Make recommendations to the Governor's P-20 Leadership Council regarding fine arts education in Maryland public schools to include (a) policy and regulations, (b) professional development, (c) curriculum and instruction, and (d) resource allocation.

The task force was co-chaired by Mary Ann Mears, Founder and Trustee, Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance and Dr. Jack Smith, Chief Academic Officer, Maryland State Department of Education. The task force divided its work into three committees: Resource Allocation, Curriculum and Instruction, and Policies and Procedures. Professional development was included as an area of study for each committee. Each committee was asked to address statements developed by the co-chairs and make recommendations for the entire task force to consider. The task force met as a whole in October and December of 2013 as well as in February, March, and May of 2014. Committees convened as necessary between meetings.

Part of the work of the task force was to seek input from a wide variety of stakeholders. In order to do that, the task force developed an electronic outreach effort through the Arts in Maryland Schools Alliance website where teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders could submit their best thinking and recommendations by completing the three designated online questionnaires. These questionnaires were available to the public from November 2013 through February 2014. Additionally two surveys were created -- one for central office staff and one for individual schools. The questionnaires and surveys were publicized through a number of venues and organizations. There were approximately 460 responses to the online questionnaires. The task force also conducted six regional forums to build support for the work of the task force and to gather further input and recommendations from teachers, administrators, and the public. Approximately 225 participants took part in these forums. Additionally, phone calls were

made to each local school system to follow up on the central office surveys. A more complete discussion of the Public Input process and results can be seen in Appendix A. The feedback gained through the electronic questionnaires and regional forums was then distilled by a small group of the task force members and shared with appropriate committees so that it could help inform their work.

After completion of the initial round of discussions, each committee shared its preliminary thinking with the entire task force. The task force as a whole provided additional input, and committees continued to refine their recommendations and proposed strategies. Another small group of the task force members discussed committee reports and made some decisions about synthesizing proposed recommendations for the final report. The entire task force reviewed two iterations of recommendations and strategies before consensus was reached and the final set of recommendations and strategies were approved. The task force respectfully submits the following ten recommendations to Governor Martin O'Malley and his P-20 Leadership Council:

**Recommendation A:** Revise the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) to provide specific direction to local school systems in the consistent implementation of comprehensive fine arts programs in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts for all children at all grade levels.

**Recommendation B:** Establish a comprehensive, statewide data system that collects elementary, middle, and high school data on fine arts instruction.

**Recommendation C:** Establish a minimum per pupil funding allocation required for and dedicated to comprehensive fine arts programs in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts for all schools and for start-up funding for new programs in those disciplines.

**Recommendation D:** Revise the Maryland State Standards for Fine Arts Education.

**Recommendation E:** Develop and/or align school system curriculum documents with the revised State Standards in Fine Arts.

**Recommendation F:** Provide central office leadership and support at the curriculum and instruction level so the fine arts have Maryland certified staff assigned supervisory responsibilities.

**Recommendation G:** Staff all fine arts classes with Maryland fine arts teachers who have the depth of knowledge and skills necessary to teach the courses to which they have been assigned.

**Recommendation H:** Ensure that instructional time in all arts disciplines is not replaced or removed to facilitate additional time in another subject area.

**Recommendation I:** Provide learning opportunities and resources for fine arts teachers to continue the development of skills needed to deliver a comprehensive fine arts program, for non-arts teachers to integrate the arts into their disciplines, and for leaders in school systems and in higher education to enhance their knowledge of effective arts education.

**Recommendation J:** Strengthen the quality of fine arts teacher preparation programs.

## THE MARYLAND CONTEXT

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Maryland’s constitution obligates the state to provide a *thorough and efficient* system of education for all young people. The fact that this requirement is a direct role of state government in providing public service clearly underlines that historically Maryland has understood the role of education as a benefit for citizens as individuals and as participants in society. Thomas Jefferson believed that public schools should enable every American “to understand his duties to his neighbors and country.” With *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court of the United States explicitly determined nationally that the obligation is to provide *equal* opportunities to all students in public schools across the land.

The State Board of Education has established a number of policy positions that directly connect the arts to the overarching goals of public education in Maryland. Since 1994 the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.04.16) has required fine arts education (dance, music, theatre and visual arts) every year for students K-8 and one credit of a fine arts discipline for graduation from high school. In 1995, the Maryland State Board of Education approved the following goal for the arts: *100% of Maryland students will participate in fine arts programs that enable them to meet the content and achievement standards established by state standards for the arts.* This language addresses equality of opportunity and quality (standards). In 1997 the state standards (Essential Learner Outcomes) were developed. The State Board of Education has accepted the fine arts curriculum. Certification exists for teachers of dance, music, visual arts, and high school theatre. Additionally, the state has published facilities guidelines for the fine arts. In many ways, Maryland is indeed a national leader in arts education, but still too many of our students are not getting the rich arts programs they deserve and need.

Governor Martin O’Malley charged a task force in 2009 with making recommendations on a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiative for the state. As a result of its recommendations, STEM approaches in education became statewide priorities and, at the same time, arts advocates and others voiced the need to include arts skills and capacities in STEM courses. This effort,



called “STEAM”, added arts to the STEM disciplines and created additional conversation and innovative action PreK-20.

The concept of STEAM has gained national focus, including a caucus on the issue in the United States Congress. Eighty-three congressmen are part of this initiative. They and increasing numbers of educators and people in the business sector are recognizing that the authentic integration of the arts and sciences is critical for our students to be globally competitive and for our country to be economically vital. The task force strongly supports the importance of the arts to our STEM education programs. Both Pre-K through 12 curriculum and the education of our future teachers and scientists in Higher Education will require these skills.

There are two aspects of the value of the arts to science. First, there is the value of exposure to the artistic process. There are aspects of the artistic process that reinforce, expand, and enrich the scientific process. Second is the value that comes from involvement in the arts. The arts afford vital skills and capacities that support student growth and learning across all disciplines. The salient point in the STEAM approach is that the arts need to be authentically integrated into the sciences for these benefits to be gained.

Research and input from the business community have reinforced the value of creative thinking, experiential artistry, problem solving, collaboration, and artistic design to the scientific process. Equally important is the value of the scientific process to artists. Both programs are enhanced when partnered with each other. While the term STEAM is gaining strong momentum, the task force was less focused on whether STEAM should replace STEM as an acronym. What the task force strongly recommends is that the State authentically implements integration of the arts into the education of all children PK-12, as well as future scientists and teachers at the college level.

The infusion of arts into other disciplines, however, cannot be viewed as a substitute for the specific arts programs in schools. The arts cannot be viewed as needing other disciplines in order to have value. Dance, theatre, music and visual arts programs must have a high profile. The task force believes that arts integration does not replace strong arts education programs in our schools. Nor does the presence of strong theatre, music, dance, and visual arts programs naturally address the concepts of arts integration. Arts education and arts integration are both important aspects of an arts-rich, school culture. The arts are often referred to as the conscience of a society and are needed now more than ever in an increasingly diverse and complex world. The future of Maryland’s citizens depends on it.

## ABSTRACT OF THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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The research studies and reports discussed in the Review of the Literature (Appendix C) serve as the foundation for the recommendations in this task force report. Although the task force hopes that all interested parties will become well-grounded in the research, the members also believe that it is important to provide a quick summary of those findings to the reader as part of this introduction. Below is a snapshot of the findings in the Review of the Literature. For a more complete discussion, please refer to Appendix C.

For the individual student, the arts teach and foster:

- Creativity and innovation
- Cognition as evidenced through emerging neuroscience
- Identity, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-confidence
- A sense of community and collaboration
- Critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Language and memory skills
- Tolerance and empathy
- Attention span and motivation

For schools and school districts, the arts contribute to:

- Improving low-achieving and high-poverty schools and districts
- Fostering innovative, systemic change in schools and school districts
- Increasing student performance in other subjects
- Promoting student engagement and a positive school climate
- Facilitating improved classroom management
- Encouraging an appreciation of diversity
- Strengthening parent and community engagement

Moving forward, it is important to understand that national and state policy studies strongly support arts education programs, and public opinion is unequivocally on the side of excellent arts education programs. Maryland State Arts Council surveys show that in Maryland residents want the arts as part of their child's public education. It is also a fact that the arts provide a \$1 billion impact on Maryland's economy. See Appendix C "Public Opinion on the Role of Arts in Education" for additional information on the survey results.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, STRATEGIES, AND RATIONALES

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**Recommendation A:** *Revise the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) to provide specific direction to local school systems in the consistent implementation of comprehensive fine arts programs in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts for all children at all grade levels.*

### Strategies:

1. Submit proposed COMAR revised language (see Appendix D) to State Board of Education according to the COMAR review process.
2. Encourage key stakeholders to submit comments to the State Board during the Public Comment portion of the COMAR review process.
3. Review local policy implications of the proposed revisions with the goal of having alignment of local policy to state policy.
4. Review local school system policy changes to ensure alignment with revised COMAR.

### Rationale:

The existing COMAR regulation (13A.04.16) was approved by the State Board of Education in 1994. As currently written it does not adequately support the policy intentions of the State Board as reflected in actions taken subsequent to 1994. Those actions more completely define the goals for arts education, establishing the arts as core disciplines and setting a specific goal for access for all students and quality as defined by standards and curriculum. In addition, MSDE has certification for arts teachers aligned with expectations of high quality instruction to enable students to meet standards. Further, MSDE provides fine arts facility guidelines to systems. These and other developments in arts education in Maryland are detailed in *The Arts and Education Reform*, a document updated annually by MSDE and available on the Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance website.

Recognizing that other disciplines were updating language in COMAR, the MSDE Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel began discussions in 2008 on aligning the fine arts with other relevant state policy such as the approved standards and curriculum. The Panel also began an analysis of the effectiveness of the current COMAR regulation in impacting equitable access to arts instruction for students. The Panel noted discrepancies in interpretation of this regulation among school systems and determined that the regulation needed to be more specific. Lastly, the process that certifies compliance has not provided data regarding the access to arts instruction for students across Maryland. The work of the MSDE Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel was the starting point for the task force review of COMAR.

The task force is recommending a number of changes in language in the current COMAR regulation. These changes are intended to clarify and strengthen current language while providing clear guidance to local school systems. There should be no ambiguity regarding the intent of the State Board of Education's position on the arts. See Appendix D for a complete comparison of current language and proposed language changes. Some of the changes are technical in nature while others are quite substantive. For example, the current language provides for arts education K-12. That should be changed to include prekindergarten throughout the regulation to align with current policy. In places, soft words such as "offer" are changed to stronger words such as "provide." The word "all" is added to ensure no misinterpretation of intended recipients of rich arts education programs.

Language is provided to meet the intent that in the early years students receive instruction in all four arts disciplines each year so that they meet standards in all four arts disciplines and, further, are able to explore the arts to ascertain their areas of strongest interest. Then in the middle years, students should be able to continue to explore the arts disciplines while being able to focus more deeply in one or more areas of particular interest. It is important to recognize that achieving mastery in a given art form may require more committed study as students transition from the early years through the middle years to high school where advanced study should be available.

In appropriate places, language related to demonstrating outcomes replaces former language that refers to developing abilities. Language is added to refer to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) requirements. Current language regarding student participation states that each student shall have the "opportunity to participate" in the fine arts (art, music, dance, theatre) instructional programs required by this chapter. The new language is stronger and reads that each student "shall participate..."

Original language stated that superintendents would certify every 5 years that they were in compliance with requirements of this regulation. The new language is stronger and requires an annual data collection and review that documents students' access to and the quality of arts programs.

This recommendation to change the Code of Maryland Regulations is supported by stakeholders as evidenced in the public input received by the task force (see Appendix A). The need for updating and clarifying state regulations was a recurring theme in the regional forums. Additionally, as stated in Appendix C, the literature is quite clear in this regard. *Reinvesting in Arts Education* (2011), a product of the President's Commission on the Arts and the Humanities, calls for utilizing federal and state policies to reinforce the place of the arts in K-12 education. Richerme, Shuler, and McCaffrey (2012) in a State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE) Arts Education White Paper talked about the need for ensuring that all students in public schools have access to sequential, standards-based arts

instruction taught by certified arts educators. The point is that state regulations need to be clear and strong and with an accountability process if Maryland is to achieve the goal of ensuring that the arts are core disciplines and that all students are provided equitable access to rich arts education programs.

**Recommendation B:** *Establish a comprehensive, statewide data system that collects elementary, middle, and high school data on fine arts instruction.*

Strategies:

1. Establish a timeline for completion and a collaboration strategy for technological interaction.
2. Communicate purpose and timeline to all entities.
3. Build, test, and institute the system.

Rationale:

It is currently difficult to collect accurate data at the school system or individual school level for the purpose of conducting policy discussions or to determine the extent to which local school systems are in compliance with regulations. Such data are badly needed so that good educational decisions can be made. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has a major role to play in collecting, analyzing, and reporting these data. Because of the uneven nature of arts instructional programs across the state in terms of quality and student access as shown in this report, it is critical that Maryland has good data for the ongoing tracking of the status of arts education in the state. For example, Appendix A shows that there is a wide disparity in the data among local school systems and that nine school systems do not have a full-time central office staff person assigned to the arts. These kinds of data are important to gather in moving forward. MSDE should design and create the appropriate data collection system for its website that contains all of the information needed by stakeholders to ensure transparency and the consistent application of the proposed language for COMAR found in Recommendation A.

Many important policy questions can be answered with good data. For example, it is important to know about the funding of arts programs. However, as stated in Appendix A, it is presently difficult to measure the percent of funds allocated to fine arts programs because the funds are dispersed among many budget line items. Therefore, determining the financial commitment of school systems in the fine arts areas is unclear. A statewide data system could capture this information just as it could capture other important information such as the level of staffing by qualified arts teachers and the number of professional development opportunities provided by school systems for fine arts teachers. A state data system could be structured to track all pertinent data regarding instruction in the arts without over burdening local school system staff. The state system could be programmed to communicate with the local data systems.

The Maryland Arts Council in a recent survey (2013) found an overwhelming number of citizens who place a high priority on the arts and want them to be considered a core subject. However, if the arts are to be a core subject, data similar to those collected for other core subjects are needed. This recommendation requires the collection and analysis of such data. It comes at a time when the state is also developing the longitudinal data system; therefore, the relationship between that data system and the data needed to fulfill the intent of this recommendation needs examination.

**Recommendation C:** *Establish a minimum per pupil funding allocation required for and dedicated to comprehensive fine arts programs in dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts for all schools and for start-up funding for new programs in those disciplines.*

Strategies:

1. Consider available funding guidelines established by arts organizations at the national, state, and local levels.
2. Identify effective funding guidelines that take into account funding changes over time and share statewide.
3. Ensure equitable funding practices across fine arts disciplines in each school.
4. Investigate fine arts funding sources, such as federal programs, state grants, and arts organizations and institutions.
5. Inform the legislative review of Thornton funding about the minimum per pupil funding for arts education.
6. Provide appropriate levels of central office funding for system-wide program support, such as transportation, equipment, and professional development.

Rationale:

If all Maryland students are to have access to high quality arts education programs, proper funding is required. There is wide disparity in arts funding across the state (see Appendix A). Some school systems report that they have no local funding and must depend on the small arts grants that they receive from MSDE. Important policy questions arise. The task force members believe that each school system should include a percentage of the system's budget dedicated to arts education. The task force also recognizes that the percentage must be determined at the local level based on local government support of education overall and believes that it should be sufficient to sustain the comprehensive, arts rich program for all students described throughout this report. Unfortunately and as stated during the public forums and on the questionnaires (see Appendix A), having percentages assigned to funding, policies, and regulations do

not ensure consistent implementation at the school level. That accountability rests with each local school system.

Maryland is not the first state to face this issue. Chicago has recently developed a new policy and plan requiring every student to receive a comprehensive and sequential arts program from PreK-12 to include visual art, music, dance, and drama with the full support of the mayor and the Board of Education (Chicago Public Schools, 2012). The Missouri Alliance for Arts Education Research (2013) studied district data and the relationship between the arts and attendance/graduation rates, disciplinary infractions, and statewide tests. They found attendance rates were higher for districts with greater student enrollment in the arts. They reasoned that a one percent increase in student enrollment yielded \$430,000 in additional dollars annually for a school district of 12,000 students due to the funding formula for their schools. The point is that where there is a will and some ingenuity, there is a way to fund important programs like arts education.

Throughout the Review of the Literature, there is overwhelming evidence of the value of a rich, comprehensive arts education program to the academic and social development of each child as well as to the improvement of school districts and individual schools. For example, Catterall (2009) found a strong correlation between arts education and academic success. Ingram and Reidel (2003), Lorimer (2009), and Martin, Mansour, Anderson, Gibson, and Liem (2011) had similar findings. A rich arts program should indeed result in a savings for districts that are spending funds for credit recovery, summer school, and dropout prevention. Preventing problems before they occur is most always preferable to trying to fix them after they have happened.

**Recommendation D:** *Revise the Maryland State Standards for Fine Arts Education.*

Strategies:

1. Create a statewide fine arts standards team to review the National Standards for Fine Arts and identify considerations for the revision of the State Standards in Fine Arts.
2. Develop a structure for ensuring statewide input into the revision process.
3. Engage statewide writing teams in the revision process.

Rationale:

In 1997, the Maryland State Board of Education approved the outcomes, expectations, and indicators that comprise *The Essential Learner Outcomes for the Fine Arts*, thus creating curricular standards for dance, music, theatre, and visual art education programs from elementary through high school. The outcomes

define a balanced curriculum that will enhance student abilities to reason, solve problems, and communicate effectively through the development of artistic literacy, creative capacity, and informed aesthetic judgment. The PreK through 8 State Curriculum for the Fine Arts was accepted by the State Board in 2008 as part of an effort to further articulate what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. The *Essential Learner Outcomes* and State Curriculum for the Fine Arts ensure consistency, quality, and equity for every student.

Since that time, there has been a movement to create standards for the arts at the national level. Draft standards were reviewed by the states, and Maryland educators played a significant role in this work. Maryland artists served on the national panel, and educators in Maryland provided valuable responses to each draft of the document. The final draft is now available to states. MSDE will need to take the lead in examining the philosophical tenets and instructional guidance of the national curriculum and the present Maryland curriculum to determine what alignments are wanted and/or appropriate. In addition to analyzing the relationship of the national standards to the Maryland standards, it is also necessary to revise the present curriculum because of technological advances and a statewide emphasis on PreK,

As mentioned in Recommendation A, Richerme, Shuler, and McCaffrey (2012) in a SEADAE Arts Education White Paper, discussed the need for sequential, standards-based arts instruction taught by certified arts educators. Standards are not new to the arts nor are they limited explicitly to arts standards. In an article by Robelen (2013) in *Education Week*, David Coleman, a lead writer of the English Language Arts Common Core Standards, suggests that some of the components of the English Language Arts Standards are already outcomes of a rich arts program. A number of Maryland arts educators are already aligning arts outcomes with Common Core standards.

As a strong local control state, Maryland needs to make certain to engage a wide range of stakeholders in discussing and writing Maryland's revised standards. In Appendix A, the public was clear that it is MSDE's role to convene professionals from across the state to define standards and provide support to local school systems.

**Recommendation E:** *Develop and/or align local school system curriculum documents with the revised State Standards in Fine Arts.*

**Strategies:**

1. Establish a schematic which shows major State Standards in Fine Arts revisions to assist in local school system alignment efforts.
2. Establish a process for collaboration across local school systems in the curriculum work.



3. Establish a timeline, structure, and system support for the ongoing review and revision of system curriculum.

**Rationale:**

Local curriculum documents guide teachers in their schools. Once the state standards for the fine arts are finalized (Recommendation D), each local school system will need to conduct a gap analysis to determine what alignments are needed to the local curriculum. MSDE, however, will need to provide support by providing a document that shows the major revisions to the state standards so that each school system does not have to do that analysis individually. The state can also support local education agencies by providing opportunities for collaboration among school systems.

In *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (2009), Seidel, Tishman, Winner, Hetland, and Palmer discuss the complex set of conditions, influences, and dispositions that are characteristics of sustaining high-quality arts programs. Several of those characteristics have to do directly with local curriculum. School systems must decide what should be taught, how it should be taught, at what grade level(s) it will be taught, and how it should be assessed. These are the underpinnings of any good curriculum document, and they are a perfect starting place for school systems as they begin their revision process. School systems would also be wise to consider the “Best Practices” documents already developed by MSDE (2007) as they revise their curriculum in the fine arts. There is a separate document for each of the disciplines – dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Finally, school systems should review the public input from the task force report. Appendix A contains what the respondents felt were the critical capacities developed by the arts. Local curriculum should capture these capacities. Ideas related to curriculum also surfaced in the regional forums (see Appendix A), so school systems should consider these ideas during their curriculum revision/development process.

**Recommendation F:** *Provide central office leadership and support at the curriculum and instruction level so the fine arts have Maryland certified staff assigned supervisory responsibilities.*

**Strategies:**

1. Identify certified representatives in each of the fine arts disciplines to support the work of the central office supervisor in providing guidance on program and practice.
2. Construct annual budgets that include fine arts educators for central office positions proportionate to the size of the school system.
3. Identify models for structuring and supporting central office staff in fine arts.

### Rationale:

Teachers need support, and schools need to be held accountable for providing a rich arts education curriculum for their students. These activities cannot be done without staffing at the central office level. Ideally, a certified supervisor would be available for each of the arts disciplines. Recognizing, however, the difficulty of providing such staffing in a small school district, the task force believes it is critical that each of the fine arts disciplines in a system have an expert from the schools to support the assigned supervisor in providing guidance on program and practice. Such support would also include program evaluation to ensure that all students are receiving a rich arts experience. The expert, by definition, would have deep knowledge in the content, thereby being able to provide the necessary support to the supervisor in a small district.

Likewise, superintendents need to ensure that the annual budget includes appropriate funds to support a rich arts program, including appropriate staffing. Once again, the task force realizes that school systems come in different sizes and that they are funded at different levels by local government. The intent of this recommendation is not to hamstring local superintendents; rather, it is to make certain that all children across the state participate in a rich arts program each and every year of their public schooling. MSDE should provide all school systems with sample staffing models that have worked in other jurisdictions of various sizes and levels of funding. The bottom line is that funding will be required to staff central offices appropriately in order to provide the necessary support and accountability across school systems.

The public (Appendix A) was very direct in suggesting the capacities (i.e., ideation, imagination, sensory perception, perseverance, communication, inquiry, critical judgment, motor and technical skills, cultural literacy, creativity and innovation, creating meaning and understanding meaning, collaboration/teamwork, and understanding other subject areas through the arts) that students need to have and which are delivered through the arts. These capacities and how they are delivered through the arts are reinforced in the Review of the Literature (see Appendix C). Central office staff must be available and capable of making certain that the local arts education program delivers those capacities. The issue of providing appropriate resources was also expressed clearly in the regional forums conducted across the state (see Appendix A). In *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, Longley, (Ed 1999) points out the importance of strong district arts coordination. This recommendation is critical to delivering a rich arts program to all students.

**Recommendation G:** *Staff all fine arts classes with Maryland fine arts teachers who have the depth of knowledge and skills necessary to teach the courses to which they have been assigned.*

### Strategies:

1. Staff schools according to COMAR regarding certification (13A.12.01 and 02.)
2. Include central office fine arts personnel in the hiring/staffing process.
3. Develop best practices for recruiting and retaining fine arts teachers.

### Rationale:

The old axiom still holds true -- you cannot teach what you do not know. Teachers of the arts, just like teachers in all disciplines, must be experts in their field if students are to receive a rich arts education program. Certification requirements do not guarantee excellence. They do, however, provide a threshold requirement that must be met before a teacher of the arts is put in front of students. Assigning arts classes to teachers who do not have in-depth knowledge of the particular art form being assigned results in a less than adequate learning environment. Experts in their disciplines need to be the ones teaching students.

All school systems should adopt a policy of including arts specialists in the hiring process for arts teachers. Certainly, the principal of the school should have the final say in who will be on his/her staff. However, there should be a screening process whereby all arts candidates must first pass the filter of the school system's arts supervisor and/or expert. This practice would help ensure that only those who have deep content knowledge and understand how to motivate young people are hired. It has often been said that a good principal is a teacher magnet. All teachers want to work for an outstanding leader. Likewise, all arts teachers want to work for a principal who appreciates and supports the arts. Thus, the relationship between the arts supervisor and/or expert and the principal is critical to ensuring that only the most effective teachers are instructing students. Further, there is compelling evidence about the relationship between strong arts programs and school improvement, for example Catterall, Dumais, and Hambden-Thompson (2012) and Stevenson and Deasy (2005).

Participants in the regional forums made it clear that having certified teachers in the classroom and finding ways to retain those teachers is so very important (see Appendix A). Studies in transfer of knowledge such as Deasy (Critical Links, 2002), Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000), and Catterall and Chapleau (1999) show the relationship between the arts and learning in other disciplines. Several studies in cognitive and/or neuroscience such as Bonbright, Bradley, and Dooling (2013), Costa-Giomi (1999), Dunbar (2008), Kraus (2010), and Rhinne, Gregory, Yarmolinsaya, and Hardiman (2011) also show the relationship between the arts and brain functioning (see Appendix C). There is compelling evidence in this regard about the cognitive differences between students involved in the arts and those who are not. The task force believes this remarkable relationship among the arts, other disciplines, and the functioning

of the brain underscores the need for knowledgeable, skilled arts education teachers with that understanding.

**Recommendation H:** *Ensure that instructional time in all arts disciplines is not replaced or removed to facilitate additional time in another subject area.*

Strategies:

1. Provide opportunities for school counselors and schedulers to have professional development opportunities that increase their knowledge and understanding regarding fine arts education.
2. Develop and disseminate models of effective scheduling of fine arts instruction during the school day at all instructional levels.
3. Create an ongoing process for sharing research with educators, parents, and the public showing the impact of the arts on the academic achievement of students.

Rationale:

Time on task is critical to learning any discipline, including arts education. A common practice in schools is to remove students periodically from their arts classes to give them remediation in another subject or general school information. In addition, oftentimes the building of a master schedule at the school level is done with primarily the tested area subjects in mind. Because of the research on the benefits of arts education, the unintentional harm being done by both of these practices is now becoming quite clear.

MSDE has a role to play in implementing this recommendation. It should collect and disseminate widely creative models of effective scheduling at all instructional levels. Likewise, MSDE and local school systems need to share the research found in the Review of the Literature with the school community to make certain that all interested parties understand the implications of decisions they make. Counselors, administrators, and schedulers should receive professional development on this research. Once parents, community members, and school personnel understand the impact of the arts on student achievement, there will be a clamoring for alternative approaches to providing extra help for students rather than sacrificing time in arts courses. There will also be clearer expectations about the design of the master schedule.

Comments from the regional forums clearly show that respondents want the arts to be considered core subjects, not something secondary that can be manipulated for other purposes (see Appendix A). They were also concerned about the practice of economically disadvantaged students being pulled from arts

classes for math or reading remediation. This practice is in opposition to research showing the benefits of arts education to high-poverty and underperforming schools. Catteral, Dumais, and Hambden-Thompson (2012) found that students who had high-arts participation and were low socio-economic status showed better academic outcomes than their low-arts participation, low socio-economic status counterparts. Rabkin and Hedberg (2011) and Stevenson and Deasy (2005) had similar findings. The evidence is clear. The arts cannot be considered as an afterthought in scheduling or as a class from which students can be pulled for other reasons.

**Recommendation I:** *Provide learning opportunities and resources for fine arts teachers to continue the development of skills needed to deliver a comprehensive fine arts program, for non-arts teachers to integrate the arts into their disciplines, and for leaders in school systems and in higher education to enhance their knowledge of effective arts education.*

Strategies:

1. Convene working groups to analyze research, including brain-based research, and examine other available resources in order to create program guidelines and researched-based professional development experiences.
2. Develop a resource describing the characteristics of quality fine arts programs, including exemplars of learning environments, staffing, scheduling, and materials for instruction.
3. Develop models of best practices for delivering fine arts instruction.
4. Provide models for effective fine arts integration for non-arts teachers.
5. Develop models for utilizing community resources that provide instructional enrichment opportunities for students.
6. Establish a statewide Governor's Arts Institute for college and university deans and PreK-12 principals.
7. Offer enhanced tuition support for arts teachers who are pursuing learning opportunities through continuing education courses, post-baccalaureate certificates, and master's degrees.

Rationale:

Ongoing, sustained professional development is critical to continuous improvement in any profession. The arts are no different. Such professional development should be research-based and provided in formats easily accessible to participants. Collaborative planning would be the hallmark of developing the content for such experiences in the arts. A workgroup should be established by MSDE to review the literature and examine available resources. That workgroup should be charged with developing a

resource that describes the characteristics of quality arts programs and best practices (see Appendix D) for delivering arts instruction, integrating the arts across other disciplines, and models for utilizing community resources for enrichment.

Partnering with higher education should be part of the overall plan for improvement. Developing a statewide Governor’s Arts Institute for college and university deans and PreK-12 principals would be a wonderful opportunity to bring key decision makers to the table and an excellent first step in building statewide understanding of the impact of the arts on academic achievement and student engagement in school. Leveraging the power and authority in that group could produce quick and dramatic results. Additionally, providing enhanced tuition assistance for arts educators pursuing continuing education courses, post-baccalaureate certificates, and master’s degrees would be a huge step forward in sustaining and improving rich arts education programs over time.

The public input (see Appendix A) suggests that MSDE has a major role to play in professional development. According to the comments, MSDE should support funding and provision of professional development. It should provide professional development in both fine arts content and in arts-integration and take the lead in assisting local school systems in identifying gaps in professional development.

Garett (2010) emphasized the benefits of professional development on arts integration and the transfer to instructional practice. Burnaford, April, and Weiss (2002) also explored how to create, implement, and assess curriculum units that integrate the arts, as well as how to forge and nourish arts partnerships. Longley (1999) focused on key factors in school districts that were successful in sustaining strong arts education programs, and opportunities for higher levels of achievement and continuous improvement were among those factors. Continuing opportunities for learning are vital for arts educators, and a powerful response to this need would be collaborations among the state, local school systems, and institutions of higher education.

**Recommendation J:** *Strengthen the quality of fine arts teacher preparation programs.*

Strategies:

1. Engage in an ongoing evaluation of the quality of fine arts teacher preparation programs.
2. Establish inter-campus and cross-campus conversations about best practices in fine arts teacher preparation programs.
3. Convene P-20 teams to share, analyze, and report on current approaches to discipline-specific arts training for students pursuing certification in the arts, arts-rich professional development, and arts integration.

4. Develop a process for collaboration between the school systems and institutions of higher education in determining teacher preparedness for the workforce.

**Rationale:**

At the heart of ongoing excellence in arts education is the preparation of fine arts teacher candidates. Maryland must be willing to evaluate its teacher preparation programs to determine the extent to which they are delivering high-quality arts educators and the degree to which they support arts integration in other disciplines. It is also important for inter-campus and cross-campus discussions to be held about best practices in teacher preparation programs as they affect the arts and thus all other disciplines. Higher education has much to offer PreK-12 education, whether it is specific arts training for students pursuing certification in the arts, arts-rich professional development, or arts integration. Collaboration in these efforts would be extremely helpful.

Input from the public (see Appendix A) suggests that higher education has a role in policy and regulation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, and in sharing valuable resources, including facilities and staff. Noppe-Brandon, Deasy, and Gitter (2011) wrote a paper for the Lincoln Center Institute that described the findings from their *Imagination Conversations*. This paper resulted from a call from a wide variety of stakeholders for renewed focus on imagination, creativity, and innovation (ICI). These conversations took place in a variety of venues around the country including in Maryland. Several of the recommendations coming from these conversations were the need to train teachers to be creative, build the capacity of teachers to integrate skills and content across disciplines, and engage business, higher education, and PreK-12 in these initiatives.

The realization that the arts have a tremendous impact on a state's economy has helped spur these conversations. According to a report from the Maryland State Arts Council, *Economic Impact of the Arts in Maryland* (2012) the arts are an economic engine for the state. They create over 11,000 full-time jobs, \$399 million in salaries, and \$37.8 million in tax revenue for the state. It is, therefore, in the best interest of higher education, PreK-12, and the entire state to find ways to improve and expand the arts, including the preparation of the next generation of arts and non-arts educators.

## CONCLUSION

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As seen in the Review of the Literature and Bibliography, this report describes the existing research on the effects of arts education programs on children in Maryland schools. This Review of the Literature directly informed and affected the work of all three committees and served as the foundation for their recommendations. The task force has discussed at length the cognitive and affective capacities of children who are nourished by the arts. Task force members looked at how the arts affect student performance in other disciplines and reviewed the emerging research in neuroscience and brain functions related to the arts. The task force recognizes the connection of school and school district improvement to arts education research, particularly for high-minority/low-achieving populations. Policy studies at the state and national level, as evidenced in the research, support these recommendations.

Public input gathered through online questionnaires and public forums also informed the task force. Teachers, educational leaders, and other public stakeholders described what they were experiencing in their districts and school communities. Their real-world experiences provided the task force with a context for the research, as well as insights into the status of arts education across the state. Public opinion is most certainly supportive of rich, comprehensive arts education programs.

The economic impact of arts education in Maryland is clear that the arts strengthen the economy of a state. It is also clear that although there are costs involved in delivering arts education, just as there are in all disciplines, there is a positive impact on learning that outweighs the costs. This task force believes that ignoring the positive impact of the arts on student achievement, student attendance in school, school culture, and parent involvement in schools would result in a negative economic environment for the state.

Because of the widespread and positive feedback received during the task force outreach efforts, the research on the positive effects of arts education, and the economic realities associated with arts education, the task force is respectfully submitting a set of recommendations that provide a roadmap to action on behalf of all Maryland students and their education in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. The task force members have great faith that Maryland citizens will coalesce around the recommendations in this report because they serve the needs of our students and the larger purposes of the common good. The opportunity to enhance the capacity of current as well as future generations of students to lead meaningful and productive lives will yield great benefits for our economy, our society, and our way of life. Once again, Maryland has the opportunity to lead the nation. Maryland has done it in many educational areas and can certainly do it in regard to all students and the arts.