



Board of Trustees

Jane Coffey (Co-Chair)
Anita Lambert (Co-Chair)
Kristin Cox (Treasurer)
Nigel-Ray Garcia (Secretary)
Carole R. Alexander
Kristin Cox
Christen Cromwell
Sheila Gibbs
Laura Malkus
Ashley Monroe

Interim Executive Director

Peter Dayton

Development Manager

Jessika Williams

Communications & Community Mobilization Assistant

Alissa Gittens

Organizational Development Fellow

Patrick O'Reilly

Board Emeritus

Chris Dietze
Karen Footner
Mary Ann Mears
Brian Sullam

HB 1469: School Arts Fund - Established

Position: **FAVORABLE**

Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) is committed to ensuring that all students in the state of Maryland have access to high quality arts education. We envision a public education system in Maryland that supports, cultivates, nurtures, and uplifts ALL students' creativity through a robust arts education experience so that they can thrive in a healthy society. AEMS **strongly** supports HB 1469, given the persistent gaps in access to the arts in Baltimore City Public Schools. The bill provides \$250,000, annually, to support the purchase of greatly-needed arts equipment, instruments, supplies and arts experiences for Baltimore City Public Schools.

[The arts are a required core subject area under the state's education regulations in COMAR Sec. 13a.04.16.03.](#) Lack of dedicated funding contributes to inequitable access to the arts statewide, but especially in districts serving communities with high concentrations of poverty.

Nationally, Black and Latinx students are 50% less likely to have access to arts education. The same is true here in Maryland. When compared to other Maryland districts, access to the arts in Baltimore City remains critically low. In Baltimore City, 90% of students have access to visual art and 65% have access to general music. Less than 10% of city students have access to instrumental music, theater, and dance. Anne Arundel County, a district of comparable enrollment size, offers art, general music, and instrumental music to every student in every school as well as robust high school theater and dance programs.

The Baltimore City Public School district continues to make excellent strides towards improving arts access. After a community-supported writing process led by Arts Every Day in 2017, the district adopted a Fine Arts Strategic Plan in 2018. AEMS participates in an advisory capacity in Arts Every Day's Baltimore Arts Education Initiative. Since then, the total number of Fine Arts teachers has increased by 40% and a number of structural changes have been made to implementation of the COMAR Fine Arts regulation. However, funding for equipment, supplies, and arts experiences remains a challenge to schools districtwide. HB1469 would dramatically improve access to high quality visual art instruction and instrumental music. In other wealthier districts, families are often responsible for purchasing their own instruments. That is just not possible in a City where 43% of people live below the poverty line and over 60% of students are identified as low income.

It is for these reasons that we ask the committee to give HB 1469 a favorable report.

Peter Dayton, Interim Executive Director

190 W. Ostend Street, Suite 210 Baltimore, Maryland 21230

410.837.5500 / www.aems-edu.org

@artsedmaryland