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**Julia DiBussolo, Executive Director, Arts Every Day  
Testimony for the House Appropriations Committee  
March 17, 2022**

Position: Favorable

Arts Every Day is on a mission to ensure that every student, in every Baltimore City Public School, has access to the arts everyday. **We strongly support 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 arts equipment, instruments, supplies and arts experiences for Baltimore City Public Schools. As the fund administrator identified in HB1469, Arts Every Day would collaborate with BCPSS leadership to identify schools in need of support. As a 501c3 and trusted partner to the district, Arts Every Day already fundraises and administers over \$150k on behalf of schools to purchase supplies, equipment, and arts experiences (field trips, artist residencies, performances).

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<sup>1</sup>. 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. 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,

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<sup>1</sup> The Baltimore Arts Education Initiative, Arts Every Day, Data for 2020-2021.  
<https://www.artseveryday.org/our-work/arts-advocacy/baei/>

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<sup>2</sup> and over 60% of students are identified as low income<sup>3</sup>.

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

### **About Arts Every Day**

Founded in 2005 as part of Ford Foundation's Arts Integration Initiative, Arts Every Day (AED)'s mission is to ensure that every student, in every grade, in every Baltimore City Public School, has access to an arts-rich education. AED believes that the arts are a human and civil right.

Arts Every Day dedicates its entire mission and work to advancing equity and access to the arts in BCPSS. We are on a mission to make arts-rich education a reality for every student in Baltimore City. Our programs support: 1) ARTS EDUCATION: data collection, reporting, and advocacy efforts to improve access to sequential arts instruction in music, visual art, dance, theater, media arts; 2) ARTS INTEGRATION: school partnerships that support teaching and learning that integrating visual and performing arts into math, English language arts, science, and social studies; 3) ARTS PARTNERSHIPS: funding for experiences that connect classroom learning to Baltimore's unique arts community of teaching artists and cultural organizations; 4) CELEBRATION OF BALTIMORE'S YOUNG ARTISTS: opportunities for students to participate in exhibits, performances, festivals, and showcases that celebrate and elevate youth voice.

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland Poverty Profiles chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgicfindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Fmda.maryland.gov%2Fabout\_mda%2FDocuments%2FSNAB%2FMaryland-Poverty-Profiles\_2018\_1-15-2018\_T.pdf&clen=897338&chunk=true

<sup>3</sup> Baltimore City Public Schools <https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/district-overview>