

# The Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance

2011 Annual Report



imagination,  
creativity,  
innovation:

extending the  
continuum



**The Arts Are Essential to Education:** The arts challenge students to think about and respond to themselves and the world around them. The arts also involve creative discovery and self-expression. Dance, music, theatre, and visual arts breathe life into a curriculum and contribute a positive dimension to school life, creating enthusiasm for learning in children of all ages.



“with a subject matter as broad as life itself, the arts easily relate to aspects of almost everything else that is taught.”

Charles Fowler

○ **Children learn differently—through different “intelligences.”**

By nature, students are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners. Students profit from instruction that is active and involves multiple modes of perception and communication. The arts, engaging all the senses, make learning come alive and have the power to entice students into the learning process.

■ **The arts help students think creatively about questions and problems.**

The creative thinking that goes into the arts involves exercising intuition, gathering information, exploring options, taking risks, making choices, refining possible solutions, crafting a product, rehearsing and practicing, and sharing the end product with others. Further, many arts experiences are collaborative and help develop skills for working with others in creative problem solving.

○ **The arts cultivate skills and discipline.**

The arts utilize active, interesting, and challenging processes that cultivate good work habits and enhance concentration. Involvement in the arts requires sustained attention and practice, hard work, self-discipline, craftsmanship, and patience. Students’ confidence and recognition achieved through the arts are reflected in other subject areas.

■ **The arts strengthen academic performance.**

The arts stress observation and creative thinking, and students find that different art forms help them master academic concepts, information, and skills. Closely associated with events in history and contemporary life, the arts provide a comprehensive informational background and insights to draw upon. Students in strong arts programs perform better academically and score well above their peers on SAT exams.

○ **The arts help children understand their own cultures as well as others.**

Through the arts, children discover that all people have the same basic needs. They discover the rich and diverse ways people have responded to these shared human needs. We all have a story to tell, memories to keep, and adventures and journeys to share. The questions and concerns, symbols and myths, and values and beliefs of a culture can be understood best by studying the arts of its people.

# Growing Trends in Education

The Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS) believes that building the capacity of Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation (ICI) is a critical element of a 21st century education. Further, ICI, as developed by arts education, builds skills that help cultivate creativity as demanded in today's workforce, strengthens our civic health, and enhances our quality of life.

There is new and growing concern and dialogue in America that the historic promise of a high-quality public education is being stifled and that students are not receiving the necessary tools to achieve their best. A number of studies released in the past two years indicate that current educational approaches that focus on the "basics" have curtailed students and educators alike. The narrow focus constrains teaching and learning styles, limits occupational skill sets, and ignores the demands for ICI in today's workforce.

Competency for building capacities of ICI rests primarily with an education in and through the arts, but it is when ICI is incorporated across the curriculum that the strongest results are achieved. Both national reports and public sentiment indicate that America is falling behind other nations in developing ICI skills.

Why is it important to build capacities of ICI? A knowledge-based economy requires a workforce with creative skills, and developing ICI will provide students the necessary skills they will need to succeed. In an age of continual technological progress and discovery, a static educational foundation of facts and fundamental skills no longer suffices. Our economy rewards ingenuity, and today's complex world demands thinking and reasoning skills if we are to realize success in our personal and professional lives.

ICI development and use is not confined to a single discipline, nor can the content, skills, and modes of thought of a single discipline satisfy the demand to develop the additional skills valued in our workforce: collaboration and teamwork, critical thinking and problem solving, flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to communicate in multiple forms. Integrated, interdisciplinary learning is essential to developing these skills.

AEMS rejects the belief that "the basics" and technology alone will prepare students for success in today's world. We also push back against the notion of leaving ICI outside of the arts educator's classroom. AEMS understands that an education in the arts can make major contributions to fostering group participation, setting goals and projecting outcomes, respecting multiple values and perspectives, and developing lifelong learners.

The purpose for teaching in and through the arts is to enable students to develop the capacities to create, perform, and respond with understanding, critical judgment, and appreciation to works of art, mind, heart, and body. When all aspects of students' beings are challenged and stimulated, they become fully engaged.

**Arts Education Funding in Maryland:** Fine Arts grants have been made available to local school systems for more than a decade. In fiscal year 2007 and fiscal year 2008, statewide funds for Fine Arts grants remained constant at more than \$2.3 million. However, during fiscal year 2009, funding for arts education in the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) headquarters budget was cut twice, including a 10% cut in formula-based *Fine Arts Initiatives* grants to local school systems and a \$300,000 cut in MSDE Fine Arts Professional Development programs. During the fiscal year 2010 budget cycle, grants to local systems were reduced by 37%, and two of the highly regarded professional development experiences for teachers were eliminated altogether, while a third was reduced by more than 50%.

The Governor's fiscal year 2011 budget included \$1.63 million in funding for Fine Arts to local school systems as well as support for MSDE Fine Arts programs. The General Assembly reduced those funds to \$731,530. The Governor's fiscal year 2012 budget included \$731,530 in funding for Fine Arts to local school systems as well as support for MSDE fine arts programs. State budget analysts recommended eliminating those funds entirely. AEMS successfully rallied advocacy efforts that resulted in the Senate Budget and Tax Committee and House Appropriations Committee holding funding levels at \$731,530.

**Since fiscal year 2008, funding levels for statewide Fine Arts funding have been reduced 68%.**

Maryland has been on the cutting edge of including education in the fine arts and arts integration as part of education reform, and it has become one of the nation's acknowledged leaders in the field. Additional cuts will only undermine program improvement efforts or possibly halt them completely, resulting in fewer high-quality opportunities for learning in and through the arts for Maryland schoolchildren.

**NEARLY TWO DECADES AFTER ITS CREATION, AEMS CONTINUES ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE IN MARYLAND ARTS EDUCATION**

**AEMS – The Key to Success for Maryland Public Schools**

**Teachers and Students:** In June of 1992, The Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC), in partnership with the MSDE, initiated the Arts Education in Maryland School Alliance (AEMS) to respond to parents’ concern about the diminishing quality and quantity of arts education programs in Maryland’s public schools—most noticeably within Baltimore City. These arts education advocates were inspired by two motivating factors: the importance of cultural literacy in society as a whole and the intrinsic value of the arts to the individual child and the many significant ways the arts support learning and create positive school environments. In order to expand the scope of its activities, AEMS was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) Maryland non-profit organization in November of 1997.

AEMS Alliance’s Mission: to create equitable access to high-quality, systemic arts education so that all Maryland public school students can learn in and achieve through dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

AEMS Alliance’s Vision: Maryland becomes the national leader in arts education by 2015.



*“AEMS has contributed in significant ways to expanding and improving fine arts instructional programs in every jurisdiction in Maryland.”*

Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools.

**AEMS Alliance’s Four Primary Strategic Objectives**

**1. STRENGTHENING OUR SCHOOLS**

Measurably improve the instructional process and evaluative tools which support academic excellence in and through art, music, theatre, and dance.

**2. LEADING OUR PARTNERS**

Utilize the collective strength of the AEMS Alliance to measurably impact State and local policy for equitable and high-quality arts education.

**3. COMMUNICATING OUR PURPOSE**

Initiate and sustain widespread education of our vision through engagement across all communities.

**4. SUSTAINING OUR ORGANIZATION**

Establish and utilize the most effective organizational, operational, and fiscal structures to ensure statewide impact and growth.



# 2011 – Another Year of Achievement

Throughout the 2011 fiscal year, AEMS conducted innovative projects and initiatives that supported MSDE and State Board of Education arts education goals. AEMS continued its support of high-quality arts education programs, initiatives, partnerships, and task forces. It expanded its organizational capacity and implemented an array of interrelated arts education initiatives.

## Professional Development

AEMS understands that the cornerstone of efforts to improve student learning should be developing effective classroom teachers. The quality of instruction determines students' success of learning in and through the arts. Effective teacher training programs combined with career-long, high-quality professional development generate good teaching. AEMS is committed to facilitating enhanced opportunities for all who deliver arts instruction whether they are arts teachers, teaching artists and other community-based arts education providers, and/or classroom teachers who use arts integration strategies to enrich and deepen their instruction across all subject areas.

- During the summer of 2011, nearly 100 Anne Arundel County and Baltimore City K – 8 teachers attended **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Institute**, a week-long institute where dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and creative writing were examined as distinct disciplines. The arts were used as a means to address 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and to access other academic content areas through arts integration. Participants collaborated on projects and initiatives and created lesson plans as well as arts integrated units. Teams worked with Master Teaching Artists in each of the disciplines and were provided with strategies for integrating the arts. Program content inspired educators to create an arts-rich learning environment that would foster individual innovation, stimulate the imagination, and promote collaboration.
- Working in partnership with the MSDE and the Maryland State Arts Council, AEMS Alliance administers the **Maryland Artist/Teacher Institute (MATI)**. MATI is an intensive professional development program for elementary and middle school teachers and administrators. Master teachers, artists, and artist-educators conduct the program in a residential university setting in the summer, with follow-up through the academic year. Through lectures, seminars, and workshops, teachers are provided with opportunities to enhance their knowledge of the relationships among content areas and of ways that the arts can be used to integrate curriculum, content, processes, and skills. Roughly 100 teachers attended this program in the summer of 2011.
- AEMS has delivered workshops on the arts integrated approach to instruction for both teachers and administrators throughout Maryland. The state's school systems have requested workshops patterned after the MATI program to provide arts integration professional development to educators who have not had the opportunity to participate in MATI due to funding cuts. AEMS has administered those programs, provided guidance and consultation, workshop facilitators, administrative support, and curriculum resources to school systems and organizations. During fiscal year 2011, institutes and/or workshops were presented in Baltimore City, Prince George's, Harford, Howard, Baltimore, Montgomery, and Washington counties.

### Noteworthy Programs:

**The Prince George's County Artist/Teacher Institute (PGATI)**, hosted by AEMS Alliance, took place as a five-day professional development program for 40 K-8 teachers and administrators. In addition to working with artist/teachers of dance, music, visual arts, and playwriting, teachers learned about curriculum mapping, technology that supports arts integration, assessment tools, and their role in arts integration. The session concluded with a sharing of lesson ideas.

**Prince George's Fine Arts Summer Institute (FASI)**, running concurrently with PGATI, the workshop was hosted by AEMS as part of arts integration outreach efforts. 60 elementary and middle school teachers worked with master teaching artists in dance, music, puppetry, drama, and; museum studies to gain a basic understanding of these distinct disciplines. They explored ways that these art forms can be used through arts

integration to access other content areas so that teachers might better support diverse learners. Participants created lessons as well as arts-integrated unit plans that connected to all areas of study in the MSDE State Curriculum.

**Harford County Artist/Teacher Institute**, which AEMS hosted in partnership with Young Audiences/Arts for Learning, provided 40 elementary and middle school teachers the opportunity to work in school teams with artist/teachers of dance, music, visual arts, and theatre. During this three-day institute at Harford Technical High School, teachers and related arts specialists examined the arts as distinct disciplines and learned how they could use the arts to engage all students in the academic curriculum. Working in smaller instructional level teams, teachers began to develop lesson seeds that will be extended as unit plans and implemented during the school year.

- Initiated in fiscal year 2007, the **Teaching Artist Institute** (TAI) is conducted in partnership with Young Audiences/Arts for Learning of Maryland, the Maryland State Arts Council, and AEMS Alliance. The TAI program trains teaching artists in the use and understanding of the Fine Arts State Curriculum as well as arts integration strategies that will enable them to more effectively engage teachers and students during their school residencies and other programs. The Kennedy Center Education Department National Partnerships Program has awarded a grant that requires matching funds to sustain this program. Twenty artists partnered with 20 classroom teachers to deliver this program.
- AEMS hosted the 12<sup>th</sup> annual **Cultural Arts for Education** (CAFE XII) conference in the spring of 2012 at Towson University's Center for the Arts. CAFE XII included presentations and information sessions on state and national issues affecting the arts education field. The conference also featured forums on arts education research, best practices and the cultivation of partnerships between and among arts organizations, artists, higher education, and school systems seeking to improve student engagement in learning and achievement in and through the fine arts. CAFE XII was devoted to exploring **Imagination, Creativity, and Innovation** (ICI) as it relates to education and workforce development. Facilitated panel discussions focused on ICI relation to the interests of leaders from the fields of business, the arts, and education. Other panels explored the arts impact on teaching science, technology engineering, and math (STEM).
- **The International Artist Teacher Exchange** (IATE) program focused on the arts and culture of Italy and provided an opportunity for Maryland educators to obtain George Mason University graduate credit through professional development training in arts integration. Participants joined a cohort of teachers, administrators, and educators from Collegio San Carlo in Milan for this cross-cultural and cross-curricular experience. Fifty participants attended this year's program.
- **AEMS Alliance's Higher Education in the Arts Task** (HEAT) created the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Arts Integration, which is a unique in-service credential. Towson University hosts the program in partnership with the University of Maryland, College Park; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; and Johns Hopkins University. Since the program's inception in March 2007, 32 graduates have been awarded the certificate. Five graduates received their certification in June of 2011, and three new cohorts from Anne Arundel, Baltimore City and Montgomery County School Systems have been added to the program. The 2011-12 program enrolled a total 50 students.

## Policy & Advocacy

AEMS believes that sustained advocacy is necessary to mobilize individuals to spark changes in arts education policies at the local, state, and national levels. AEMS also believes that effective advocacy on the state and local level is critical to ensure a high-quality arts education for all Maryland schoolchildren at every level of education. Advocacy works when advocates are properly informed and active in the process. AEMS dedicates substantial time and resources to disseminate information and convene arts education supporters. Along with partner organizations and institutions, AEMS advocates for policies and practices that sustain and strengthen Maryland's high-quality arts education opportunities and programs.

- AEMS supported **Maryland Legislators Go Back to School with the Arts** events in all 24 school systems. The purpose of this effort was to bring legislators into schools to experience learning in and through the arts firsthand. During these events, educators shared information about the value of arts education with legislators while engaging them in conversation about their commitment to arts education. Visits took place during October—Arts and Humanities month.
- AEMS, in partnership with MSDE, has facilitated communication to the education field regarding Portfolio Plus: a comprehensive set of strategies designed to ensure accountability for the quality of arts instruction in Maryland schools. Strategies include traditional and longer-term assessments aligned with the State Curriculum. These assessment tools are intended to help teachers evaluate student learning and hone their instruction. They are also intended to help school systems and the state

“We continue to support AEMS because we believe in their mission and their work as advocates for high-quality arts education for all children. They are innovative, strategic, and have a substantial statewide impact. We are confident that our support of AEMS is a worthwhile investment in the teachers and students of Maryland.”

Pete Powell, Executive Director, Clayton Baker Trust and Lockhart Vaughan Foundation

measure the effectiveness of arts education programs. AEMS has convened an E-Portfolio Innovation Consortium to bring together representatives from school systems, institutions of higher education, and MSDE to share in the development of exciting new models for utilizing technology to measure student growth in the context of Race to the Top.

- AEMS leadership was represented on the **Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network Leadership Committee**. Eight representatives from across the country are selected to serve on this committee to plan Network strategies, initiatives, and activities.
- AEMS facilitated local arts education program development for **Arts Every Day**, a non-profit Baltimore City based arts resource organization that works with city schools.
- The AEMS Alliance continued to promote informed advocacy through its distribution of printed materials and publications such as the *AEMS Alliance Advocacy Guide*, *Parents Tool Kit*, *Evaluation Tool Kit*, the brochure entitled *Arts Education Research*, newsletters; the MSDE four-volume collection entitled *Better Practice in Arts Education for Music, Visual Art, Dance and Theatre*; and *the Legislators Go Back to School with the Arts Advocacy Brochure*. In addition, AEMS distributed a new advocacy film entitled **Teaching Through the Arts: Creating the Future**, produced through the generosity of the late Alvin Myerberg, an AEMS Trustee.
- AEMS Alliance participated in state and national presentations advocating for quality arts education opportunities and detailing research concerning the benefit of arts inclusion in the school curriculum. Fiscal year 2011 arts education presentations for organizations on the national and international level included the Americans for the Arts Conference, the Maryland State Department of Education’s Administrative Briefings for Fine Arts Supervisors, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference.

“The core of AEMS’ work is their dedication to bringing arts education to all students; it is as great a matter of social justice to them as it is to us. Also, we value an organization that can show results. We are happy to support AEMS because we know that they use their resources effectively.”

Mark Fetting, Chairman of the Board, President, and Chief Executive Officer, Legg Mason



“AEMS offers some of the best teacher training programs I’ve ever attended. They are always ahead of the curve and on the pulse of issues effecting education.”

Marlo Castillo, Teacher, Montgomery County

- **The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH)** announced the release of its landmark report *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools* in the Spring of 2011. This report represents the culmination of 18 months of research, meetings with stakeholders, and site visits all over the country. It provides an in-depth review of the current condition of American arts education, including an update of the current arts education outcomes research base and an analysis of the challenges and opportunities in the field that have emerged over the past decade. The report cites the **AEMS Alliance** as an exemplary model of an organization that has successfully connected artists and arts programs to schools.
- The AEMS Alliance led Maryland’s participation in and contributions to Lincoln Center Institute’s Imagination Conversations (LCI). Two years ago, the Learning, Arts, and the Brain (LAB) Summit, sponsored by the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) Neuro-Education Initiative, initiated conversations in Maryland about imagination/creativity/innovation and were continued at the JHU Brain Science Institute Science of the Arts Speaker Series. In response to the invitation from LCI, AEMS has extended and expanded on those earlier conversations in a number of ways:
  - AEMS has conducted an online extension of the conversations held with teaching artists, arts teachers and artist/teachers and partnered with JHU in extending the conversations through an online discussion conducted on a platform created by the JHU Brain Science Institute.
  - AEMS hosted conversations, which engaged Maryland innovative leaders from across sectors including business, public policy, the sciences, technology, education, and the arts. Interviews are ongoing with additional key leaders.
  - AEMS devoted its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Cultural Arts for Education Conference to the Imagination Conversations with plenary and smaller group discussions around the imagination/creativity/innovation continuum.



- State budget analysts had recommended completely zeroing out the \$731,530 included in the Governor's fiscal year 2012 budget for Fine Arts to local systems as well as support for MSDE Fine Arts initiatives within MSDE's Budget. The AEMS Alliance successfully rallied advocacy efforts that resulted in the Senate Budget and Tax Committee and House Appropriations Committee rejecting those cuts.

## Arts Education Outreach

Outreach programs and initiatives are some of the most important tools we use to realize our mission and achieve our goals.

AEMS regularly designs and implements programs to address educators' needs while carefully ensuring that program content is in support of MSDE Arts Education Policy. AEMS organizes and offers professional development and training, outreach efforts, conferences and convocations, and recognition programs. AEMS is proud of the many statewide programmatic areas we offer that support the arts and education.

*“The training I've gained through AEMS has definitely made me more marketable and has given me the tools to succeed in the classroom. These days, principals demand that only the highest-qualified people work in their schools.”*

Kwame Opare, Teaching Artist, Baltimore City

- AEMS expanded a state-wide **Arts Integration Outreach Program** to provide on-site workshops throughout Maryland's different regions. Through this initiative, workshops on the arts-integrated approach to instruction and creating an arts integration school were presented to teachers, arts specialists, and school leaders from numerous school systems. The goal was to introduce schools to arts integration as an instructional model and to develop formal networks of arts integration schools supported by online resources and mentoring. During fiscal year 2011, Arts Integration Outreach and Network Development events were presented for educators of Baltimore City, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Howard, Prince George's, Washington, and Wicomico County school systems; the participants of the Teaching Artist Institute; and the Maryland Fine Arts Coordinators. A combined total of 600 participants attended these workshops.



- Statewide convocations of the **Maryland Arts Integration Network (MAIN)** were developed to provide a venue where educators from across the state met to discuss the many challenges and benefits associated with administering arts integration schools. Information on curriculum mapping, scheduling, lesson planning, building community partnerships, and creating an arts integrated school were provided. Since its inception in fiscal year 2008, more than 600 participants have attended and benefited from shared professional development resources and strategies for the planning and implementation of an arts integrated school. Fiscal year 2011 MAIN events took place in Prince George's and Cecil Counties.
- In conjunction with the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAEN), AEMS managed a state and national recognition program. The AEMS Alliance/Kennedy Center state level School of Excellence Award for Outstanding Achievement in Arts Education was awarded to two Maryland schools for the 2009-10 school year. On the national level, of five schools selected each year from schools throughout the United States to receive the prestigious and highly competitive John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts National School of Distinction Award, two Maryland schools—Roland Park Elementary/Middle School (Baltimore City) and Sudbrook Magnet/Middle School (Baltimore County)—received awards for Outstanding Achievement in Arts Education. Each school received \$2,000 for school arts programs.
- AEMS produced an e-newsletter quarterly, supplemented by the AEMS e-alerts on a more frequent basis, to keep the field apprised of time-sensitive issues. AEMS enjoyed heightened visibility as our work was featured in press releases, interviews, press advisories, and a variety of publications and media outlets.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

STATEMENT OF UNRESTRICTED ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS PAID FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011.

| <b>REVENUE</b>                       | <b>Amount</b>     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Contributions                        | \$ 106,505        |
| Grants                               | 294,344           |
| Interest Income                      | 856               |
| Conferences and Workshops            | 339,412           |
| In-Kind Contributions                | -                 |
| Net Assets released from restriction | <u>37,750</u>     |
| Total Revenue                        | <u>\$ 778,867</u> |

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| <b>EXPENSES</b>                 | <b>Amount</b>     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Program Services                | \$ 645,073        |
| Management and General          | 78,927            |
| Fundraising                     | <u>15,881</u>     |
| Total Expenses                  | <u>739,881</u>    |
| Change in Net Assets            | <u>38,986</u>     |
| Net Assets at beginning of year | 152,069           |
| NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR       | <u>\$ 191,055</u> |

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The AEMS Alliance is a member of the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network. The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAEN) is a coalition of statewide nonprofit Alliances for Arts Education working in partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to support policies, practices, programs, and partnerships that ensure the arts are an essential part of American K-12 education.

The AEMS Alliance is funded by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive.

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