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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *Lillian M. Lowery*
DATE: February 24, 2015
SUBJECT: P-20 Arts Report

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide information about The Governor's P-20 Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools

BACKGROUND:

Quoting from the Executive Summary of the final report of The Governor's P-20 Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools:

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. 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.

SUMMARY:

The Governor's P-20 Leadership Council Task Force on Arts Education in Maryland Schools agreed on ten recommendations regarding fine arts education in the areas of policy and regulation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, and resource allocation. The full report was distributed to members of the state Board of Education in fall 2014. The full report is available at <http://www.aems-edu.org/keyIssues/GovernorsTaskForce/FinalReport.html>

ACTION:

For information only. No action required.