



September 1, 2022

Dear Superintendent Chodhury:

Hello! We are the Presidents of the Maryland professional associations for Arts Education: the Maryland Art Education Association, the Maryland Dance Education Association, the Maryland Music Educators Association, and the Maryland Theatre Education Association. We are writing today with several concerns that have been brought to our attention that have the potential to diminish the wonderful arts education programs in Maryland school systems.

First is the absence of a Fine Arts office at the Maryland State Department of Education. With the announcement of Lillian Jacobson's departure this fall, that, coupled with the continued vacancy for the Coordinator of Fine Arts position that has been left unfilled for several months, has left the Fine Arts voice out of conversations regarding the *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*. This lack of representation is particularly evident in the guidance drafted for district leaders: arts education did not have a voice in the creation of sample schedules that would be conducive to fine arts teaching and learning across the entirety of Maryland students' school experiences. To ameliorate these unintended consequences, we the undersigned respectfully request that MSDE take the following actions:

1. Please expedite the hiring process to identify the next Coordinator of Fine Arts for the Maryland State Department of Education.
2. In the absence of someone in the Coordinator position, please convene the Maryland Fine Arts Education Advisory Panel to provide valuable voice in expert advice to you on arts education related matters, including those raised above.

We would be happy to discuss these matters further with you. Our organizations are ready to assist in any way to assure that Maryland students have access to a well-rounded education that includes the arts throughout the course of their school career. Thank you for your support and attention to these matters. We would appreciate hearing from you in the near future, as this is an urgent matter. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please reach out at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Whitehead". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "C".

Christopher Whitehead
President, Maryland Art Education Association

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melinda Blomquist". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "M".

Melinda Blomquist
President, Maryland Dance Education Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Schneckenburger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "B".

Brian Schneckenburger, Ph.D.
President, Maryland Music Educators Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julian Lazarus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "J".

Dr. Julian Lazarus Ed.D
President, Maryland Theatre Education Association