

ARTS EMPOWERED MINDS



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National Endowment for the Arts Invests in Northern Anne Arundel Public Schools with \$50,000 Award to the Arts Empowered Mind Initiative (AEMI)

AEMI Seeks Community Input at Upcoming Focus Group Discussions

Baltimore, Md. (April 21, 2016) — The Arts Empowered Minds Initiative (AEMI) invites Northern Anne Arundel County parents, students, community organizations, business representatives, and faith organizations to participate in focus group discussions about increasing access to high quality artistic and educational opportunities for Northern Anne Arundel County students.

While Anne Arundel Public Schools is an award-winning system and leader in integrating art with Maryland's state curriculum, particularly STEM subjects, some low-income schools in Northern Anne Arundel are left behind, with below-average teacher retention rates, unequal access to the arts, and insufficient program funding.

The Arts Empowered Minds Initiative (AEMI) is taking action to make sure students in Linthicum Heights, Brooklyn Park, and Glen Bernie schools receive a well-rounded education. With the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) \$50,000 planning grant, AEMI is eager to create partnerships, cultivate more funding, and launch an initiative to ensure that over 6,000 Northern Anne Arundel County students have access to artistic and educational opportunities of the highest quality.

"We have seen positive student achievement results firsthand in our county when the arts and arts integration strategies are brought to life in our classrooms," said Dr. Maureen McMahon, Director, Advanced Studies and Programs, Anne Arundel County Public Schools. "This NEA grant will allow us to support the growth of Arts Integration as a meaningful vehicle for teaching and learning in our Northern Anne Arundel County schools."

In May, AEMI will host four focus group meetings to discuss the unique cultural and artistic needs of Northern Anne Arundel students and the community. The focus group discussions will guide future action plans and help build the framework for making a positive, sustainable impact on Northern Anne Arundel Public Schools and its students.

All focus groups are open to the public.

WHERE:

Chesapeake Arts Center
194 Hammonds Ln, Brooklyn Park, MD 21225

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WHEN:

Faith Organizations
May 9th 6:00-8:00pm

Community Organizations
May 19th 6:00-8:00pm

Businesses and Philanthropists
May 16th 12:00-2:00pm

Students and Parents
May 23rd 6:00-8:00pm

TALKING POINTS:

1. **As we are planning our work, we want to hear from you; what should the impact of Arts Empowered Minds ultimately be for students, for schools, and for the community?**
2. **What factors do you perceive as major obstacles to achieving these outcomes?**
3. **What opportunities exist in this community that make success possible?**

About the \$50,000 NEA Planning Grant and the Arts Empowered Minds Initiative (AEMI)

Since its inception in 1965, National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has invested nearly \$5 billion in grants to preserve our nation's cultural, educational and economic vitality. Nearly 16,000 communities have been impacted through the arts with its help. The local, state, and federal commitment to arts education in public schools and integrating all arts disciplines (dance, media arts, musical, theatre, and visual arts) is integral to enriching a community's ecosystem and, most importantly, a child's development.

The Arts Empowered Minds Initiative (AEMI) is the culmination of the work of many groups and individuals seeking to build a movement for increased equity through the arts in their community. Participating partners include Young Audiences/Arts for Learning of Maryland (YA), Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), Chesapeake Arts Center (CAC), Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), and University of Maryland – Baltimore County (UMBC).

Over the course of the next year, AEMI intends to develop a plan for ensuring that five targeted schools (potentially increasing to twelve schools in subsequent years) have equitable access to the following key elements:

- **Sustainable partnerships with teaching artists and arts organizations** that inspire children and use the creative process to make meaningful, real-world connections to the curriculum
- **Increased access to out-of-school-time arts programs**, shared with families through schools and parent/teacher associations
- **Professional development for teachers in arts integration** to boost student engagement and reach different kinds of learners throughout the school day

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“This planning grant gives the partners an incredible opportunity to bring together many of the people and organizations in Northern Anne Arundel County that care deeply about the education of our children,” said Stacie Evans, Executive Director, Young Audiences. “Together, we can identify how the arts can address the greatest needs of our school communities, and begin to coordinate the amazing arts and cultural resources that are already available in the community to benefit every student. By integrating the arts into instruction in meaningful ways, we can provide the best circumstances for learning for all children.”

YA, in partnership with AEMI, will increase youth access to the arts, beyond the geographic scope of the initiative, by conducting research and gathering evidence to demonstrate the positive impact the fine arts and arts integration have on the children, teachers, and parents of a school community.