

BARBARA INGRAM SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

MYTH VERSUS REALITY

MYTH - BISFA is a private school and charges students to attend

REALITY – BISFA is a **public school** – **free** to county students who apply and are selected. Out of county and out of state students can apply but like any public school, students outside the county need to pay a state mandated tuition.

MYTH - BISFA is an arts school and focuses only on arts (*All we do is sing and dance*)

REALITY – Our school day is an hour longer than any other school in the county because we *need* the extra time for both our arts and academic classes. BISFA is a full comprehensive school. All classes are honor level courses, with a complete cadre of AP class offerings. All students have to follow the University of Maryland Completer Program to graduate

MYTH – BISFA only selects the smartest students and that is why we are ranked so high in the state

REALITY – BISFA does not consider a student's prior academic, behavior or attendance record to be selected for the school. Students are selected only by audition or portfolio review in their selected art form for admittance. The school is more diverse than the county it serves and currently has a 27% free and reduced meals population.

MYTH – Downtown Hagerstown is a dangerous place and security is a problem. Students walk between buildings completely unmonitored.

REALITY – Hagerstown is a partnership of businesses and organizations that work together to create a pleasant community. The police and auxiliary police patrol the streets and aid in street crossings. Students travel in groups, are always accompanied by adults.

MYTH – The school does not have a cafeteria and no outside social activities.

REALITY – The school does use a different building for their cafeteria, but the same school meals are served in the same manor as other public schools. It is true that BISFA has no athletic teams, but they have many clubs and organizations as well as dances such as the homecoming dance and the prom.

MYTH – You can only attend BISFA if you can provide transportation

REALITY – Washington County uses a shuttle bus system to bus students from their area school to BISFA, the same as Washington County Technical High School.

MYTH – Only students who plan on being professional artists should go to the school

REALITY - The mission and vision of the school is to prepare students for college to be successful in any career. About 50% of BISFA students graduate and pursue careers outside the arts. They use the arts as a life-learning tool for success. BISFA sends about 96% of its students each year to colleges all around the country in many different fields of study.

MYTH -BISFA reduces the value of arts programs in other schools by taking the best students away from their home schools.

REALITY – BISFA is a choice. It is a way of learning and isn't for everyone. Only a handful of students from each cluster attend BISFA each year.

MYTH – BISFA struggles to fill its seats.

REALITY – BISFA typically auditions around 300 students a year to fill 75 open spots each year.

MYTH - Barbara Ingram is unnecessary

REALITY - BISFA students live every day knowing that their school supports their passion. They are better students because they get to express their art in a safe environment. They are finding themselves and doing what they love with others who love it as well. Students are college or career ready when they graduate from Barbara Ingram.