

**Eliminating Achievement Gaps for All Students**

(Adopted 1998; amended 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010)

WHEREAS, boards of education in the State of Maryland are uncompromisingly committed to the academic success of all students; and

WHEREAS, significant numbers of students, and groups of students, demonstrate wide achievement gaps on state assessments relative to the performance of other groups of students; and

WHEREAS, in 2001 the State Board of Education adopted the goal of eliminating the achievement disparity between minority and majority students within five years; and

WHEREAS, the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 mandates five-year comprehensive master plans which must include specific strategies that will be used to accelerate the achievement of all students, including students failing to meet state and local academic content and achievement standards, and including strategies that focus on eliminating achievement gaps among legally defined groups of the student population; and

WHEREAS, the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 imposes strict performance accountability measures for schools, school systems, and the state based on the achievement of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward the goal of 100% of all students demonstrating proficiency in reading and mathematics by the 2013-2014 school year; and

WHEREAS, the No Child Left Behind Act has resulted in significant changes to Maryland's student assessment program, including the administration of Maryland School Assessments (MSAs) in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8, and grade 10; and

WHEREAS, the No Child Left Behind Act requires disaggregated data collection and public reporting of MSA results for all students and groups of students based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, English proficiency, and status as economically disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, Maryland also has adopted four High School Assessments (HSAs) in English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and Government; adopted proficiency levels and cut scores for each HSA; and required the successful completion of the four HSAs in order to obtain a Maryland diploma beginning with the graduating class of 2009; and

WHEREAS, disaggregated student assessment results on the MSAs and HSAs for African American, Hispanic, limited English proficient (LEP), and special education students reveal significant achievement gaps in reading and mathematics and high percentages of these students not achieving the adopted passing scores on the HSAs; and

WHEREAS, African American students comprise nearly 40 percent of the public school student population, and as such significantly impact school, school system, and state overall performance under the No Child Left Behind Act accountability program; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic students constitute a growing percentage of the public school student population (from less than 3% in the early 1990's to more than 9% today); LEP students constitute a growing percentage of the public school student population; and students receiving special education services have consistently constituted more than 10% of the public school student population; and

WHEREAS, Maryland enacted the Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 to enhance state funding for public education by adopting higher per pupil funding amounts for all students, and significantly higher per pupil amounts for limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, and special education students;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that a top priority for local boards of education continues to be eliminating the achievement gaps among all legally defined groups of students, with continuing emphasis on the gap between African American students and white students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE) commends all groups and individuals who have demonstrated leadership in addressing the underachievement of all students and groups of students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that MABE pledges to work with the State Board of Education, superintendents, and local boards of education to identify causes and to implement solutions to the achievement gaps indicated by HSA, MSA, or other assessment results.