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Brightman Elected President at MABE Annual Conference

ANNAPOLIS, MD – On Wednesday, October 5, 2016, school board members from across the state gathered for the Maryland Association of Boards of Education Annual Conference. The event provided the opportunity for attendees to participate in workshops covering topics such as education law, legislative advocacy, and effective governance. Participants also had the opportunity to learn best practices from fellow board members and school system staff regarding community engagement, social media, and curriculum.

John Draper, consultant with the National School Public Relations Association, provided the audience with a dynamic keynote address on the topic of how to replace negative perceptions of public education with countervailing facts. Keynoting on the second day of conference, Tuajuanda C. Jordan, President of St. Mary's College of Maryland, engaged everyone in a timely discussion of the essential elements for today's students to be college and career ready. Karen B. Salmon, Maryland State Superintendent of Schools, conducted a dialogue with board members and superintendents about the state and local impact of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the future of education in Maryland.

At the Presidents Dinner, 2014-2015 president Verjeana M. Jacobs and 2015-2016 president Warner Sumpter were presented plaques in honor of their dedicated service to MABE. 2015 Distinguished School Board Service Award recipient Shirley Brandman was recognized for her exemplary work while serving on the Montgomery County Board of Education.

During the Presidents Dinner, Donna L. Brightman, member of the Washington County Board of Education, was sworn in as president of the association for 2016-2017. Other officers inducted with her were Joy Schaefer, Frederick County, as president-elect; Charles McDaniels, Jr., Baltimore County, as treasurer; and Nancy Reynolds, Harford County, as secretary.

Local board members sworn in as members of the MABE board of directors were Beverly Anderson, Prince George's County; Thomas A. Carr, Garrett County; Michael Garman, Talbot County; Virginia Harrison, Carroll County; Martha James-Hassan, Baltimore City; Philip Kauffman, Montgomery County; Stacy Korbela, Anne Arundel County; Virginia McGraw, Charles County; Christine O'Connor, Howard County; William J. Phalen, Sr., Calvert County; C. Tolbert Rowe, Caroline County; and Mary Washington, St. Mary's County.

At the business meeting, members adopted revisions to MABE's Continuing Resolutions, which provide the foundation for the association's legislative and policy positions in the coming year. Among those revisions were:

- The resolution on *Local Board of Education Governance Authority* was amended to emphasize that "MABE opposes any executive or legislative initiatives that have the effect of reducing or circumscribing local board authority ... encourages local boards to work in conjunction with the State Board of Education ... and advocates for and supports legislation to clarify that local board governance authority is not subject to executive orders by the Governor."
- The resolution on *Eliminating Achievement Gaps for All Students* reaffirms that it "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 white students and students of African American and Hispanic heritage.”

- MABE’s *Student Health and Fitness* resolution states that “local boards of education are committed to providing school facilities, school meals, and programs of instruction designed to promote the physical and mental health and fitness of students and to prepare them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as adults.”
- MABE reaffirmed resolutions to oppose maintaining the BOOST nonpublic school voucher program, and to encourage board members to take advantage of MABE’s professional development programs.

In her first message to members, newly elected president Donna Brightman stated, “Board members come from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. We must use that collective wisdom to serve the goal of a strong public education system, rather than allow politics and personalities to divide us, and our mission.” Urging all members to become involved in the important work of their association, and to avail themselves of the services provided, Brightman emphasized “local board members work tirelessly to put all students first, and MABE works diligently to put all members first so they can perform their jobs at the highest level.”

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Founded in 1957, the Maryland Association of Boards of Education is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to serving and supporting boards of education in Maryland. MABE is a leading advocate for public education in the state. All 24 Maryland boards of education are members of MABE.

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