



National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

PUBLIC POLICY LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR AWARD



Senator Barbara Mikulski has long been a champion for access to quality education in all areas including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for every student, including females, minorities, and those with disabilities. Long before it was popular to talk about STEM, Senator Mikulski recognized that the contributions made by diverse individuals strengthens our workforce, generates innovation, and fuels our economy.

Senator Mikulski's time as a social worker familiarized her with the real issues facing the state's citizens and fortified her concern for children and families. In 1970, Senator Mikulski decided that she could be more effective working from the "inside," giving constituents access to the office that was designed to serve them. Having served as a Baltimore City councilwoman and state representative, Senator Mikulski's expanded role helped her transform Maryland into a state that invested time, energy, and funding into its most important resource—its children. And it has paid off. Maryland's public education system received two "number one in the nation" rankings in 2012—from *Education Week* and from the *College Board* for AP performance in the last four years.

Today, Senator Mikulski is Chairwoman of the Children and Families Subcommittee, and her efforts emphasize her philosophy on education—"no exceptions, no complacency." She orchestrated the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* in 2011 to encourage strong partnerships between schools, families, communities, teachers, and students. Through her *SUCCESS* legislation, Senator Mikulski connects students to community resources to meet their academic, developmental, and social needs in an effort to lower dropout rates and suspensions, increase graduation rates, and improve academic achievement. Late last year, Senator Mikulski cosigned and introduced the *Community College Innovation Act*, a bill designed to modernize community colleges, spur job creation, and provide people with access to quality education that will assist them in acquiring the skills necessary to find gainful employment. Evidencing the importance of higher education, Senator Mikulski states, "Community colleges train a new pipeline of workers for high-demand, high-growth fields...This [act] is a win-win opportunity to help enrich lives, transform lives and transform communities."

Senator Mikulski has made it her mission to develop all students into productive citizens and future leaders. While Maryland is her home and her focus, her dedication to access, equity, and diversity on behalf of all learners, educators, and institutions remains unparalleled. We are honored to recognize her leadership and legacy.