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MARYLAND ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY STANDARDS GAIN INTERNATIONAL ACCLAIM

*Honors from World Future Council,
Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BALTIMORE (October 20, 2015) – Maryland’s environmental literacy standards today received a Silver 2015 Future Policy Award from the World Future Council, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNICEF.

Maryland was recognized for becoming the first in the nation to require that students be environmentally literate prior to graduation. The award jury found that [Maryland’s standards](#) led to positive school-wide impacts in knowledge, behavior and local action, as well as broad improvement in student learning across a range of subjects. Other states, such as Kentucky and Utah, have used Maryland’s standards as a template for their education plans.

The award was presented in Geneva, Switzerland at the 133rd IPU Assembly.

“We are grateful for the recognition of Maryland’s innovative work,” said Guffrie Smith, president of the Maryland State Board of Education, who noted that the State has been a leader in environmental education for 25 years. “To this day we work hard to ensure teachers and students have the resources and support they need. We pledge to continue our efforts to support global environmental standards and help all students become capable stewards of our planet.”

The State Board was asked to accept the award in person, but no member was available to attend.

[President Smith sent a video to the IPU](#), expressing appreciation for the honor.

The Maryland State Board of Education established an Environmental Education By-Law in 1990, which initiated environmental education standards for the State’s public school students. The State Board in 2011 approved a regulation requiring that all Maryland students complete a comprehensive multi-disciplinary program in environmental literacy prior to graduation. The first group of students covered in that regulation graduated last Spring.

The Gold Future Policy Award was presented to Zanzibar’s Children’s Act, a response to child abuse and violence in that nation. The law is designed to promote and protect child rights, and has led to a marked societal change in attitudes toward children in Zanzibar. A second Silver Policy Award was bestowed on Finland’s Basic Education Act, which guarantees children’s equal access to high-quality education and training irrespective of ethnic origin, age, wealth, language or location.

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“This prize celebrates policies that help us to do the right thing by creating the right rules,” said Jakob von Uexkull, founder and chair of the World Future Council. “Children are among the most vulnerable group facing a host of the world’s emerging challenges.”

The Future Policy Awards honors policies rather than people on an international level. The World Future Council plans to work globally to raise awareness of the winning model policies and assist policymakers to develop and implement similar initiatives.

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