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Mass. Business Leaders Wage Campaign to Raise Student Achievement & Strengthen the Foundation of the State's Innovation Economy

MBAE has retained a team of global education experts

Boston, MA November 7, 2013 – The Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) announced today that it has engaged Brightlines, a team of international education experts led by world renowned strategist Sir Michael Barber, to assess the performance of Massachusetts schools and recommend actions for improvement. This effort takes aim at Massachusetts' persistent education achievement gaps and growing workforce skills gaps, two dangerous trends believed by business leaders to threaten the long-term economic well-being of the Commonwealth, as well as change that is needed in all schools and districts for Massachusetts students to remain competitive.

MBAE is calling its three-year campaign the ***New Opportunity to Lead***, a title reflective of the extraordinary opportunity Massachusetts has to build on its strong foundation by adopting proven innovations and initiatives that will prepare all students to be globally competitive.

"MBAE is deeply concerned that the state's leadership positions in education and the innovation economy are at risk," said Henry Dinger, chairman of the Board of MBAE and a partner at Goodwin Procter LLP. "Other states and nations are experiencing faster rates of improvement in student achievement, are innovating more and generating positive results. Unless we do something now, Massachusetts will fall behind."

MBAE and Brightlines will work with business, education and policy leaders across the state to finalize a new education agenda designed to overcome lingering challenges unaddressed by the Education Reform Act of 1993 and subsequent changes to the education system. Early in 2014, MBAE will issue a report based on the Brightlines research that will identify actions and new innovations that can guide the transformative change that is needed. MBAE will thereafter mobilize support for the adoption of innovative state and district actions in 2015 and beyond.

"Massachusetts is known around the globe for its ability to innovate and for its higher education system, and around the United States for our leading position in K-12 education. Surely we can bring our finest people and talents together to catalyze breakout success for all of our students. We are excited to work with MBAE and Brightlines and many Massachusetts education leaders to identify the most important strategic opportunities for the future," said MBAE Project Advisory Group member and Chairman of the National Center on Time & Learning, Chris Gabrieli.

"MBAE was instrumental in driving education reform 20 years ago, with impressive results," said Jim Peyser, Managing Director at New Schools Venture Fund and MBAE Project Advisory Group member. "We are now at a critical juncture, much like 1993, where we have an opportunity to build on this solid foundation to ensure Massachusetts truly becomes a world leader in educational quality and innovation, not just in a few districts, but across the Commonwealth and for all of our children. Our economic future depends on it."

About MBAE

The Massachusetts business community is dependent on high quality public schools to prepare students for the workforce and informed citizenship. For 25 years, the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) has been the voice of the business community promoting state education policies that have led to improvement in the Commonwealth's public schools. MBAE has successfully advocated for setting a high bar for student achievement, standards that will ensure students graduate college and career ready, systems that hold schools and districts accountable for performance and policies that allow the leaders of underperforming schools to make needed changes. The organization also supports adoption of new systems that will recognize and develop stronger teachers and school leaders, and expanded school options for parents and students.

MBAE has been a leader in promoting effective education policy since developing a comprehensive blueprint for school reform that led to the Education Reform Act of 1993, a national model for standards-based reform that has produced significant results.

About Brightlines

Brightlines, led by Sir Michael Barber acting in a personal capacity, brings together unrivalled global education experts who have advised, researched and written extensively on the subject. Moreover, they have also led highly successful large-scale transformations in education systems across the world. Brightlines partners have worked with States and Cities across the US to deliver education improvements including in Ohio, Louisiana, California, Delaware, Kentucky, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Los Angeles and New York. In addition collectively they have developed, delivered and advised on education strategy and reforms across 6 continents and many different countries including in the UK in England and Wales, in Ontario province in Canada, across a number of States in Australia, in Hong Kong, Singapore, Brazil, Chile, India and Pakistan.

Sir Michael Barber is a globally renowned education reformer who has worked on education reform in over 40 countries and is leading this work for MBAE in a personal capacity. Formerly Head of the British Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, Michael was also an author of McKinsey's influential reports on global education systems 'How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better' and 'How the World's Best Performing Education Systems Come Out on Top'. He is also leader of Pearson's worldwide program of research into education policy and efficacy.

In his most recent publications 'Oceans of Innovation' and 'An Avalanche is Coming' Michael and colleagues set out radical proposals for what students should learn given the transformation of the global economy and how school and higher education systems could make that possible for every student by combining proven approaches to reform with system wide innovation. This is the perspective they will bring to their work with MBAE in looking to the new opportunities for Massachusetts to lead, not just in the US, but across the world.

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