



**Marv Pat Fannon, Executive Director**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Dr. Karen M. Couch Named 2021 Maryland Superintendent of the Year**



The Public School Superintendents' Association of Maryland (PSSAM) named Kent County Public Schools' Superintendent, Dr. Karen Couch, the 2021 Maryland Superintendent of the Year. A committee of her peers selected Dr. Couch, and she will now go on to represent Maryland in the 2021 National Superintendent of the Year program.

"I am honored to represent all Maryland Superintendents. As the smallest county in the state, we do not always receive the recognition we deserve, and it's an honor to be able to shine a spotlight on the good things that are happening in this county. It is gratifying for me to bring this level of recognition to our school system. We may be small but we are mighty!" said Couch. She added, "Many of my achievements in Kent County are attributed to the fine administrators and staff employed in the school system. I also have an amazing school board who always keeps our students at the forefront of every decision."

Dr. Kelly Griffith, President of PSSAM stated, "Dr. Couch brought a wealth of experience and expertise when she was hired in 2013 and immediately became a voice for rural counties. She volunteered to be PSSAM's Legislative Chair and as a member of our Executive Board, led the organization as President in 2020. She was a member of the Kirwan Commission and remains actively

involved in our organization. Dr. Couch has been a role model for many superintendents and will represent Maryland exceptionally well at the national level.”

Local Board of Education President Joe Goetz said, “Being a Superintendent is not easy; each day you are faced with opportunities that will affect the students and staff of Kent County Public Schools. It takes courage and leadership to make hard choices, following what you believe to uphold the values and mission of the schools. Being named Superintendent of the Year for the State of Maryland is an award that recognizes all of the contributions Dr. Couch has made to our County and to the State of Maryland. We are proud she has been recognized and grateful for her leadership.”

The Kent County Board Members praised Dr. Couch for establishing a full day universal Pre-Kindergarten program. In their support letter, the school board stated, “Our district has experienced declining enrollment accompanied by decreasing revenues. Dr. Couch has demonstrated great creativity in saving money and finding new revenue streams.” They added, “Dr. Couch has been a leading voice for small, rural districts in Maryland.”

Seven years ago, Dr. Couch was appointed as the superintendent for Kent County Public Schools. She is originally from New Mexico where she served as a superintendent for the Moriarty-Edgewood School District for 13 years. While serving as the principal for Yucca Elementary in the Alamogordo School District, her elementary school was honored as a Blue Ribbon School. She held many administrative roles during her 37-year career in public education and has received numerous awards, and actively involved in many professional and community organizations. She was also Past President of the New Mexico Superintendent’s Association, member of the Governing Board of the American Association of School Administrators, 2010 New Mexico Superintendent of the Year, and 2000 New Mexico Personnel Administrator of the Year.

In 2015, the Mid-Shore Community Foundation of Maryland, presented her with a Special Recognition Award for her outstanding contributions to the Kent County Public Schools. Her PSSAM roles include service as President, Legislative Chair, and Past President. Her community affiliations include membership in the Chestertown Rotary Club and past president of the Eastern Shore Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC). She currently resides in Chestertown, Maryland.