

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Protecting Children in Our Mobile World



June 2015

Public Policy Notes

Inside this issue:

As the use of technology grows in our society, education professionals and parents are concerned about the on-line safety and privacy issues that are inherent in the use of many of our technology tools.

“ConnectSafely.org is a Silicon Valley, Calif.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy and security.....Whether it’s social media, mobile technology or the “Internet of Things,” connected technologies bring us enormous advantages, along with some challenges. [ConnectSafely](http://ConnectSafely.org)’s job is to help users get the most from their technology while managing the risks and help decision makers craft sensible policies that encourage both innovation and responsible use. [ConnectSafely](http://ConnectSafely.org) has been a leading voice for rational, research-informed policies – not “moral panics” – when it comes to dealing with challenges brought about by emerging technol-

ogies.”

The organization’s website includes a wealth of information for both educators and parents in how to ensure the safety of children when using mobile technologies. A series of guides for parents is available and will be useful to educators working with young children. They are available for download from the site.

The [guides](#) include:

- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Student Data Privacy* ([ConnectSafely](#), *The Future of Privacy Forum* and the National PTA)
- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Mobile Phones* in both [English and Spanish](#)
- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Instagram*
- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Snapchat*
- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Cybersecurity*
- ◆ *A Parents’ Guide to Cyberbullying*

The [Future of Privacy Fo-](#)

[rum](#) has initiated a campaign with education service providers to **ensure the security of student data systems**. 150 providers have signed a [pledge](#) to 1) Not sell student information; 2) Not behaviorally target advertising; 3) Use data for authorized education purposes only; 4) Not change privacy policies without notice and choice; 5) Enforce strict limits on data retention; 6) Support parental access to, and correction of errors in, their children’s information; 7) Provide comprehensive security standards and 8) Be transparent about collection and use of data.

The safety and privacy concerns inherent in our enhanced use of technology are a new challenge for traditional children’s advocates. You’ll see many more state efforts to balance use, safety and privacy.

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News to Note

On April 29th, Representatives Polis (D-CO) and Messer (R-IN) introduced the [Student Digital Privacy and Parental Rights Act of 2015](#). The bill would prohibit companies from targeting advertising to students or selling a student’s data to a third party. Companies would directly disclose to schools what student data they collect and how it will be used.

2015: The Alabama Legislative Session

Although the state operating budget passed by the Alabama Legislature was vetoed by Governor Bentley and a special session will be necessary to approve the state budget, the Governor did sign the [2016 Education Trust Fund Budget](#) on June 2nd. This budget provided for the following increases:

- \$13 million increase for textbooks.
- \$3 million increase for class-

- room materials.
- \$5.2 million increase for Dual Enrollment Programs.
- \$4.5 million increase for transportation operations.
- \$10 million increase in funding for the Alabama Voluntary Pre-K Program.

“Governor Bentley announced more than [200 new grants](#) that will provide over 3,600 additional Alabama four-year-olds with access to high-

quality, voluntary pre-K education. The grants will benefit 51 counties across Alabama.”

Also of note, [SB 157](#) created [The Fostering Hope Scholarship Program](#) which is designed to “offer children currently or formerly in Alabama’s Foster Care System the opportunity to receive a college education.”



2015: The Louisiana Legislative Session

The 2015 regular session adjourned on June 11, 2015. Lawmakers came into the session with the task of closing a \$1.6 billion budget deficit within a \$24 billion state budget.

Governor Bobby Jindal had made a “no tax pledge” in allegiance with the Americans for Tax Reform and lawmakers finally signed the symbolic pledge after two months of wrangling. With the passage in support of the pledge, Governor Jindal then agreed to support all funding

bills passed by the Legislature, including a cigarette tax.

Louisiana’s colleges and universities “will receive approximately \$630 million of the \$750 million in extra revenue raised through the tax increases and tax credit rollbacks. “

Local school districts will receive an extra \$39 million in the budget. This funding was not included in the minimum foundation program but is expected to continue in the

future.

Debate over the Common Core Standards was essentially shifted down the road to 2016. At that point, the fate of Common Core in Louisiana will be decided. This was a compromise among supporters and opponents with the development of a review process.

Source: <http://www.nola.com/politics/>



Chiefs for Change Add New Members

[Chiefs for Change](#), a “501(c)3 non-profit whose members are state and local education chiefs who have achieved some of the strongest academic gains for students of diverse backgrounds, and are committed to helping far more children succeed nationwide,” has recently broadened the membership of its Board of Directors.

Founded by Jeb Bush, the organiza-

tion has previously been a small group of state level education commissioners. The membership of the Board now includes administrators of major school systems, all three of whom are from SECA states.

Chris Barbic, the head of Tennessee’s Achievement School District; **Mike Miles**, the superintendent of the Dallas school system; and **Deborah Gist**, who is assuming the su-

perintendent’s job in Tulsa this summer are all new members. **John White**, Commissioner of Education in Louisiana, is also a member.

Barbic, Miles & Gist



2015: The Oklahoma Legislative Session

Although the majority of the session in 2015 was concerned with “plugging a budget hole”, there were a few education initiatives that made it through.

SB 630 Modified the Reading Sufficiency Act.

HB 1823: Directed a review of the state’s school report card.

SB 706: Modified the Oklahoma Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Evaluation System (TLE).

HB 1693: Modified The Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship Act.

At the conclusion of the session on May 22nd, **122 requests for Interim Studies** were submitted including:

15-083 Simplification of the complaint process made against Child Care Facilities.

15-084 Reviewing state standards, qualifications required for attain-

ment of the CDA.

15-115 Access to Quality Childcare

For a complete list of interim study requests and sponsors, [click here](#).

These interim studies often result in the development of legislation to be considered in the next legislative session, and they are an opportunity to make your voice heard.



2015 South Carolina Legislative Session

Without reaching consensus on the state budget, the South Carolina Legislature passed a resolution to adjourn on June 4th and reconvene on June 16th to adopt a budget. The re-adjournment was scheduled to end on June 18th.

Because there were serious concerns that a compromise budget would not be reached during the second legislative period, a

continuing resolution was passed prior to adjournment to ensure the continued operation of the state government.

Source: islandpacket.com

There were several acts passed during the regular session including:

Acts 62 & 75 that dealt with child abuse and neglect issues, including the release of children’s medical

records.

Act 83 modifies the credential requirements for administrators in charter schools.

For a complete list, text and sponsors of these bills, [click here](#).



2015 Texas Legislative Session

According to House Speaker Joe Straus (R-San Antonio), “*We improved education and addressed transportation...We cut taxes. And we made our budget more transparent and our government more accountable.*” during the 2015 session which adjourned on June 8th.

The legislature passed a \$209 billion budget that included a tax cut of \$3.8 billion.

The majority of legislative action

centered around tax relief and infrastructure needs. Source:

www.amarillo.com

The Legislature did not pass a school funding bill that would respond to the 6th in a series of lawsuits over the equity in school district funding. The lawsuit by 600 Texas districts is currently pending and a decision is expected within the next year from the Texas Supreme Court. Alt-

hough legislators do not expect a special ses-

sion to be called prior to the next regular session, Governor Abbott could call them back into a special session to deal with the funding issues if the Supreme Court rules against the state. For more information on the lawsuit, go to [Public Policy Notes, September 2014](#).



Southern Early Childhood Association

1123 S. University, Ste 255
Little Rock, AR 72204

Phone: 800-305-SECA

Fax: 501-227-5297

E-mail:

info@southernearlychildhood.org

www.southernearlychildhood.org

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"A Voice for Southern
Children"

How to Use Public Policy Notes

If you're interested in advocacy, one of the most effective tools that you can have is access to information. This newsletter is provided as a service to locate and share information that we think will be helpful to you in your work at the state level and to keep you updated on what's happening in public policy.

You'll find information that:

- **Compares your state to other SECA states**—how you're doing, what issues you have in common, what the hot topics are in your states.
- **Brings the national scene to your fingertips** and gives you a perspective on how national events might impact you... You'll also receive information about where to find additional information.

We hope you'll find it helpful. Children need you to be their "voice" in your community and state.

This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

SECA strives to provide non-partisan and non-biased information

that is of interest to early childhood educators. Sign up at

http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

From Our States

ARKANSAS

In a significant departure from traditional educational leadership, Johnny Key, the Director of the Department of Education announced that Baker Kurrus had been hired as the new Superintendent of the Little Rock School District.

Mr. Kurrus, a lawyer, who served previously on the Little Rock School Board, assumed the position upon the resignation of Superintendent Dexter Suggs. The resignation came on the heels of the state takeover



Kurrus (left) and Key (right)

Retrieved 06/19/15 from
<http://www.arktimes.com/>

of the Little Rock District (Arkansas' capital city) because of the failure to meet educational benchmarks for student achievement.

Commissioner Key also falls into that "non-traditional" category, serving without the traditional academic or experiential credentials.

A law was passed in the 2015 Arkansas session that allowed the Commissioner to serve without meeting the prior standards. The law also required that the Associate Commissioner have both the academic credentials and experience as a school administrator which was previously required of the commissioner.

SOUTH CAROLINA

One of three states last year to require a replacement for the Common Core Standards, South Carolina has developed and adopted new standards in math and language/arts that will go into effect in the 2015-2016 school year as required by Act 200 of 2015.

On March 11th, State Superintendent Spearman said, *"I am proud of the new homegrown, South Carolina college- and career-ready standards that we have adopted....high quality standards written by our own South Carolina teachers and certified as college- and career-ready by our own institutions of higher education."*

