

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Children at the Border: A Humanitarian Crisis



During the last federal fiscal year the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency (CPB) apprehended more than 52,000 children at the border. These children are often unaccompanied and approximately three-fourths of them are from El Salvador, Guatemala or Honduras. Crossing the border in the Southwestern United States, these children are posing a particular challenge for **Texas**, one of the SECA states.

“They’re arriving exhausted and scared, in need of food and water”, according to CBP Commissioner R. Gil Kerlikowske. *“Our agency and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have*

mobilized to address this situation in a way consistent with our laws and our American values.”

Governor Rick Perry of Texas testified on July 3rd before the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security as they made a visit to McAllen, Texas, the site of a detention facility that is housing many of these children. Governor Perry urged the federal government to expedite the return of these children to their home countries and families. *“Those who have come must be sent back to demonstrate in no uncertain terms, that risking their lives to*

cross Mexico and enter our country simply isn’t worth it. Even those who have survived the treacherous journey are still at risk.” [Click here](#) to view a video of the Governor’s testimony.

DHS has deployed an additional 150 Border Patrol agents to the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, where the largest number of unaccompanied minors are arriving.

The CPB has developed a multimedia [Danger Awareness Campaign](#) that includes print, radio and TV ads that will be placed in Central America and Mexico through early September, in the hope of discouraging this continued migration.



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President Obama Asks Congress for Funds to Address the Crisis

On July 8, 2014, President Obama sent a letter to Congress requesting an [emergency supplemental appropriation](#) to address the immigration/migration crisis. The request was for \$3.7 billion to *“comprehensively address this urgent humanitarian situation.”* The appropriation would provide expedited hearings for the minors.



The Florida Legislature has completed its regular session for 2014 and, according to a Fact Sheet released by the Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening, several laws will impact early childhood programs.

HB463/SB674 authorizes the sharing of driver license images among agencies to verify photographs in the Care Provider Screening Clearinghouse, requires certain persons to submit fingerprints electronically, adds disqualifying offenses to background screening requirements and

revises requirements for applying for an exemption from disqualification. The bill was signed into law on June 13, 2014 and went into effect on July 1, 2014.

HB225/SB518 revises child restraint requirements to require that children ages 4 through 5 use a crash-tested, federally approved separate carrier, integrated child seat or a child booster seat. Child care providers may need to purchase new seats to meet these minimum requirements or have additional seats available for these older children.

The bill was signed into law on 6/24/2014 and goes into effect January 1, 2015.

SB 1666 mandates that certain children attend a licensed early education or child care program for 5 days a week. This provision applies to children who are receiving services from the Department's Family Safety Program Office or who are in protective services. This requirement would be a component of the child's safety action plan. The bill was signed into law on June 23, 2014 and went into effect on July 1, 2014.

New Accountability Requirements for Special Education

The U. S. Department of Education has changed the accountability framework under which state special education programs function. This shift in how a state's effectiveness is measured has significantly changed compliance categories for state education agencies.

Formerly the focus was to determine whether states were meeting "procedural requirements such as timelines for evaluations, due process hearings and transitioning children into preschool services. Under the new framework known as **Results-Driven Accountability (RDA)**, the Department will also include educational results and outcomes for students with disabilities in making each state's annual determination under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)."

With this new accountability sys-

tem, states which formerly were performing adequately have found themselves placed in new categories that include:

- Meet Requirements
- Need Assistance
- Need Intervention
- Need Substantial Intervention

Last year, 41 states and territories met requirements. This year, only 18 states and territories meet that standard.

Of the SECA states, only **Florida, Georgia** and **Virginia** remained at the "meets requirements" level.

The majority of the SECA states fell into the "needs assistance" category: **Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee,** and **West Virginia.**

Texas was the only SECA state that was categorized as "needs intervention".

If a state needs assistance for two years in a row, the state may be required to obtain technical assistance or could be identified as a high-risk grant recipient. If a state needs intervention for three years in a row, the state may be required to develop a corrective action plan, enter into a compliance agreement or the Department may withhold a portion of the state's funding.

To support states in their efforts to meet compliance standards, OSERS will fund a new \$50 million technical assistance center, The Center for Systemic Improvement. [Click here](#) for information on this federal grant opportunity.

Oklahoma Repeals the Common Core Standards

On June 5th, Governor Mary Fallin signed HB 3399, a measure that “replaces the Common Core Standards (CCSS) in English and math with academic standards to be designed by the state of Oklahoma.”

HB 3399:

- ◆ Repeals the 2010 adoption of CCSS.
- ◆ Directs the State Board of Education to create new, more rigorous standards by August 2016.
- ◆ Requires the State Regents for Higher Education, the State Board of Career and Technology Education, and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce to evaluate for the first time in history those stand-

ards to determine if they are “college and career” ready.

- ◆ Reverts the state standards for English and math back to the Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) standards that were used from 2003 to 2010 while the new standards are being written.



Governor Fallin was an original supporter of the standards but, according to her statement on signing the bill, felt that federal

“overreach has tainted Common Core. President Obama and Washington bureaucrats have usurped Common Core in an attempt to influence state education standards. The results are

predictable. What should have been a bipartisan policy is now widely regarded as the president’s plan to establish federal control of curricula, testing and teaching strategies....I am committed, now more than ever, to ensuring the new standards are rigorous....The process of developing new, higher standards will not take place overnight, nor will it be easy. It will require hard work and collaboration between parents, educators, employers and lawmakers. Developing these standards is worth the effort; because our children’s education is that important to our state.”

The standards were slated to be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, so school districts are back to the drawing board to prepare curriculum for the next school year.

Source: Press Release, June 5, 2014, <http://www.ok.gov>

New Teacher Initiative Announced

On July 7, 2014, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, announced the launch of the Excellent Educators for All Initiative. *“All children are entitled to a high-quality education regardless of their race, zip code or family income. It is critically important that we provide teachers and principals the support they need to help student reach their full potential. Despite the excellent work and deep commitment of our nation’s teachers and principals, systemic inequities exist that shortchange students in high-poverty, high-minority schools across our country. We can do better.”*

The three-part initiative includes:

- 1) **Comprehensive Educator Equity Plans:** The Department is asking states to “analyze their data and consult with teachers, principals, districts, parents and community organizations to create new, comprehensive educator equity plans that put in place locally-developed solutions to ensure every student has effective educators.”
- 2) **Educator Equity Support Network:** The Department is “investing \$4.2 million to launch a new technical assistance network to support states and districts in developing and implementing their

plans to make sure all students have access to great educators.”

- 3) **Educator**

Equity Profiles:

“To empower communities and help states enhance their equity plans, the Department will publish Educator Equity profiles this fall. The profiles will help states identify gaps in access to quality teaching for low-income and minority students.”

For more information go to www.ed.gov



Arne Duncan

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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.

In the News

AmeriCorps Grants in the South

The Corporation for Community and National Service has announced the results of the 2014 AmeriCorps grant competition and is awarding 288 grants to national and local non-profits. According to the press release, these grants will "engage 43,104 new AmeriCorps members in improving lives and strengthening communities from coast to coast." CNCS is awarding \$205 million in competitive grants and \$115 million in formula funding to state service commissions.

If you'd like to see a list of the

individual grantees in your state, [click here](#).

AmeriCorps funding has been utilized to fund early childhood initiatives in the past.



New Secretary of Housing & Urban Development

Julián Castro, the Mayor of San Antonio, Texas, was confirmed on July 9th as Secretary of the U.S. Housing &

Urban Development Agency. President Obama lauded the confirmation and stated, "*Julián is a proven leader, a champion for safe, affordable housing and strong, sustainable neighborhoods.... Julián has lived the American Dream in his own life, and I'm confident*

he will help Americans across our country seize their own piece of that dream for themselves and their children." Source: Press Release, July 9, 2014, www.whitehouse.gov

Arkansas Institutes New Insurance Requirements

Three school districts are challenging a new state regulation that requires districts to buy liability insurance for child care programs. The regulation impacts all school districts that operate child care, pre-K and after-school programs. The districts want to protect their immunity from lawsuits and are concerned about the additional cost. About 44,000 children are served in 464 sites on public school campuses.