

# Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

## Health Care Reform: Major Changes

At the beginning of the month, the U.S. Treasury Department announced a decision to delay the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requirement for employers to provide health insurance for their workers or face penalties. The **employer mandate** was scheduled to begin on January 1, 2014 but has now been delayed to 2015. *"The Administration is announcing that it will provide an additional year before the ACA mandatory employer and insurer reporting requirements begin. This is designed to meet two goals. First, it will allow us to consider ways to simplify the new reporting requirements consistent with the law. Second, it will provide time to adapt health coverage and reporting systems while employers are moving toward making health coverage affordable and accessible for their employees."*

Source: U.S. Treasury Department, <http://www.treasury.gov/connect/blog/Pages/Continuing-to-Implement-the-ACA-in-a>

*Careful-Thoughtful-Manner.aspx*, retrieved 7/19/2013

The administrative delay of the employer mandate prompted discussions in Washington concerning the ability of a federal agency to delay implementation of a law (the 2014 mandate requirement) and whether this should have been a Congressional action (amending the law) rather than an executive decision.

Congress is also looking at a delay of the **individual mandate** (requiring all persons to buy health insurance or face a penalty). The U.S. House of Representatives voted on July 17th to delay the individual mandate as well. At this point, that mandate is still scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2014 unless the Senate also passes the delay.

Additionally, the law states that any employees (or full time equivalents) who work 30 hours or more are eligible for the insurance benefit. To

financially cope with these requirements, **many industries have moved to either reduce hours below the 30 hour threshold or have halted hiring.** For many employees this has meant a cut in hours and pay.



**Senator Susan Collins** of Maine and **Senator Joe Donnelly** of Indiana have introduced **"Forty Hours is Full Time Act of 2013"** to address this problem.

Because the affordability of the act for the federal government was dependent upon these mandates and projected revenues, it bears watching to see what effect these delays will have on implementation.



July 2013

Volume 6, Issue 7

### Inside this issue:

**Ready Nation** 2

**State Run School Districts** 2

**The Accelerator Initiative** 3

**School Snacks** 3

**PTA Welcomes New Leader** 4

**40 Hours = Full Time**

If you're interested what Senators **Collins** and **Donnelly** wrote to President Obama concerning the issue of implementation of the employer mandate and the move to change the definition of "full time employee", go to <http://www.donnelly.senate.gov/download/collins-donnelly-fte-letter-to-potus>

# America's Promise Alliance: Take the **ReadyNation** Pledge

On May 29, 2013, **America's Promise Alliance** and its early childhood project, **ReadyNation**, announced that more than 300 business leaders and organizations from 44 states had signed an open letter to President Obama and members of Congress "declaring support for early childhood programs."

The letter cited benefits of early childhood education, including the "nation's economy, workforce preparedness and the nation's standing in the global marketplace."

The letter outlined some criteria for the development of public policy in the early childhood area.

- 1) "Prioritize programs with proven benefits for children and society, such as quality early education for children ages birth to five, home visiting and health care.
- 2) Address children in the entire pre-natal to age five spectrum and their

parents.

- 3) *Focus first on children from low-to-moderate income families and other children at risk for school failure.*
- 4) *Give parents high quality options, using a variety of partners and settings, including the private sector.*
- 5) *Encourage federal and state programs to meet higher quality standards, while also allowing state flexibility to deliver services in a variety of ways.*
- 6) *Closely track progress on children's health, development and other outcomes with rigorous evaluations that encourage continuous improvement."*

The website offers a variety of tools that you as advocates can utilize. Most of the materials have been developed from the business perspective and would diversify and strengthen the current advocacy strategies that you implement.

If you'd like to see a list of the persons and organizations that signed the initial letter, go to

<http://www.readynation.org/signatories-business-letter>

Go to

<http://www.readynation.org/pledge>

to sign the pledge to promote early childhood education.

Information for this article retrieved from [www.readynation.org](http://www.readynation.org) on 7/19/2013.



## Virginia Creates A State-Run School District

Virginia is one of the newest states to adopt a state-run school district as a model for taking over and turning around the state's lowest performing schools. This model generally invests the state's Department of Education with the responsibility of managing and turning around chronically low-performing schools. Virginia joins the SECA states of Louisiana and Tennessee in utilizing this model to improve failing schools.

A first in the country, Louisiana

created the **Recovery School District** 10 years ago and currently is managing 80 schools throughout the state. [www.rsdla.net](http://www.rsdla.net)

The **Achievement School District** in Tennessee is dedicated to taking the lowest 5% of schools in the state and moving them to the top 25%. In its first year of operation, the district has worked with five Memphis schools and one school in Nashville.

[www.achievementschooldistrict.org](http://www.achievementschooldistrict.org)

The legislation establishing the

**Opportunity Educational Institution (OEI) in Virginia** was signed by



**Governor Bob**

**McDonnell** on July

1st. The OEI will be governed by a Board of nine (9) members

and any school denied accreditation will automatically be transferred to the OEI. Initial transfer of eligible schools is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2014.

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/news/viewRelease.cfm?id=1875>

# Early Childhood Innovation Accelerator Initiative

Initially announced at the 2012 Clinton Global Initiative American conference, The Pritzker Group and Goldman Sachs have announced an innovative way to finance early childhood education.

Investor J.B. Pritzker announced commitments of \$20 million at the CGI America conference on June 13, 2013 to fund the first phase of an **Early Childhood Innovation Accelerator** “to increase the availability and quality of early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children.”

The model utilizes “**social impact bonds, sometimes referred to as results-based financing, that leverages private capital to achieve positive social outcomes while simultaneously generating cost savings for local governments**

**and financial returns for investors.”**

Goldman Sachs, the United Way of Salt Lake and the Early Childhood Innovation Accelerator have formed “*a partnership to create the first-ever social impact bond designed to finance early childhood education.*”

Goldman Sachs and the Accelerator are together making a loan commitment of up to \$7 million to fund the expansion of the Granite and Park City School Districts high-quality pre-school program for at-risk children in Utah, allowing an additional 450 children to participate in these high-quality programs.

Two other investments will be made initially:

⇒ **Acelero Learning**, a “nationally recognized operator of outperforming Head Start and Early Head Start programs will

scale its data-driven methodology for driving improved outcomes for low-income children.”

⇒ The City of Chicago’s comprehensive early childhood web portal will receive a direct grant. [www.chicagoearlylearning.org](http://www.chicagoearlylearning.org)

**Dr. Joan Lombardi**, an expert familiar to many SECA members, will chair an advisory panel and lead a



team of professionals who will “evaluate the extent to which prospective investments will favorably impact the early learning field.” To learn

more about the initiative and to view a video about how it works go to

<http://www.goldmansachs.com/media-relations/in-the-news/current/op-ed-social-impact-bond-slc-6-13-13.html>

## School Snack Foods: Healthier Choices

The USDA has finalized rules that regulate the fat, salt, sugar and calories in snacks and vending machine foods sold in schools for the first update in these rules since the 1970’s.

Released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on June 27, 2013, the rules will take effect during the 2014-2015 school year. (Districts may choose to implement this school year.)

Some specifics:

- All snack and vending machine foods must be fruits, vegetables, dairy products,
- protein foods, or whole grain rich foods or combination foods that include at least a quarter cup of fruits or vegetables.
- Any snack or side dish is limited to 200 calories. Individual entrees are limited to 300 calories.
- Snacks are limited to 230 milligrams of sodium, with a drop to 200 milligrams for the 2016-17 school year.
- Items can get no more than 35% of their calories from fat. Trans fats are banned.

- Total sugar is capped at 35% by weight, except for dried fruits or vegetables.
- All schools can sell various drinks including water, low-fat milk and juices made of fruits and vegetables; however, high schools can sell soft drinks (not to exceed 60 calories.)

These new rules are one more step in the fight against childhood obesity and comply with the *Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010*. For a copy of the regulations go to [www.fns.usda.gov/cga/020113-snacks.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cga/020113-snacks.pdf)

## 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](mailto:info@southernearlychildhood.org)

[www.southernearlychildhood.org](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org)

Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern  
Children"

## How to Use This Newsletter

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](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/policy_newsletter_sign.php)*

*to receive notice of its availability each month.*



## The National PTA Welcomes A New Leader

Otha Thornton of Savannah, Georgia is the first African-American male to lead the National PTA organization.

Mr. Thornton is a senior operations analyst with General Dynamics in Fort Stewart and a retired United States Army Lieutenant Colonel.

Previously serving on the National PTA's Board of Directors, Legislative Committee, Member-

ship Committee and Executive Search Committee, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the organization.

**"The PTA is critical in bringing the voices of parents to the forefront on issues, working together to strengthen school safety, provide kids with healthy, nutritious lunches and implement consistent learning goals across the country. Parents are an essential voice in the education reform debate, and we need to be much more than an audience. We need to be partners in the education of our children.....As President, I am committed to expanding PTA's membership, leadership development and advocacy efforts**

**to strengthen the association and fully empower families teachers and communities to advocate for all children."**

Source: *First Africa-American Male Takes PTA Helm, National PTA, [www.pta.org/](http://www.pta.org/) retrieved 7/19/2013*

The National Parent Teacher Association is "dedicated to making every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children."

We're delighted to have such dedicated and exemplary leaders in the SECA region.

For an updated look at the PTA in 2013, go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).