

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

pre[k]now
a campaign of the
Pew Center on the States

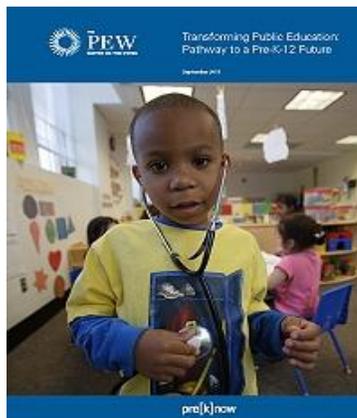
Pre-K Now Closing Down

After a decade of promoting and advocating for pre-K programs, *Pre-K Now* is closing its doors at the end of this year. Established by the Pew Center on the States in 2002, *Pre-K Now* became a widely recognized and successful advocacy effort on the behalf of pre-kindergarten programs throughout the country.

Pre-K Now has issued a final report, *Transforming Public Education: Pathway to a Pre-K-12 Future*, that includes recommendations for the future.

Facts From the Report

- In fiscal 2012, state funding for pre-k programs increased to \$5.1 billion dollars.
- Access to pre-k increased from 700,000 children in 2001 to over 1,000,000 today.
- During the last ten years, six states—**Florida**, Illinois, Iowa, **Louisiana**, Vermont and **West Virginia** opened their programs to all 4-year-olds, making nine states



that have done so.

- The number of states meeting at least eight of the 10 quality benchmarks rose from five in 2002 to twenty-three and the District of Columbia in 2010.

Because of this success and growth, the Pew Trust has chosen to close out its advocacy campaign on behalf of pre-K and to move into other areas, most notably that of supporting *high-quality, voluntary home-visiting programs for families with infants and toddlers*.

Source:
<http://www.preknow.org/>

Creating a Pre-K-12 System

The report, *Transforming Public Education: Pathway to a Pre-K-12 Future*, is notable in its recommendation that pre-k become an integral part of the education system in the U.S.

“To ensure that all children fulfill their potential as individuals and citizens, we must re-imagine public

education as a system that begins not with kindergarten, but with quality pre-K, and builds on that foundation to raise performance in later grades.”

The report looks to the future of educational reform, one that embraces and recognizes the factors that influence children’s educational success.

Research has shown that there are foundational skills that are necessary to “master academic content, navigate peer interactions and help children learn to approach problems and complex tasks.” *For a complete copy of the report and the recommendations, go to www.preknow.org.*

October 2011

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Quote of the Day

From *Transforming Education*

“The national conversation about how to improve education at the elementary, middle and high school levels must shift to concentrate on the ways that integrating pre-k will allow us to raise early achievement and improve teaching practices to support learning in all grades. It must be about how to advance a Pre-K-12 system that can develop critical skills early and then build upon them in subsequent grades rather than remediating children later or not maximizing early gains.”

2011 National Business Leaders Summit on Early Childhood Investment

In July 2011, the Partnership for America's Success convened the [2011 National Business Leaders Summit on Early Childhood Investment](#) in Boston, MA.

The event brought business leaders from across the country together to discuss:

1. How early childhood policy benefits economic recovery plans.
2. What business advocacy can do to effect "smart investment in proven early childhood programs".
3. New research "on the economic

benefits of early childhood programs.

Topics covered during the Summit

- Developing an internationally competitive workforce through early childhood investments.
- New evidence on the economic impacts of early childhood investment.
- New frames for early childhood: STEM education and economic development.
- Best practices in state government models

- Points of entry—getting started in early childhood policy.

Videos of the presentations and additional information are available on the website of the **Partnership for America's Economic Success**.

<http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org>



SECA Radio: A Question for Arne Duncan

The BAM Radio Network recently invited the Executive Directors of several national organizations to participate in an interview with Arne Duncan, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. (The BAM Radio Network is the sponsor of SECA Radio.) SECA was one of the organizations invited to participate.

Each organization was asked to develop one or two questions for Secretary Duncan. The Radio Network taped the

question and answer period and has posted those responses on the network sites.

SECA's Question for Secretary Duncan

Since the Department is focusing significant attention on assessment and accountability, what safeguards have been put in place to ensure that appropriate assessment practices for young children and accountability measures are utilized?

You can find SECA's question and answer session posted now at SECA Radio. The session with Secretary Duncan follows our regular interview with Greg Johnson, Chef and Father, who will join us in San Antonio in 2012.

To listen to the interview, go to the SECA homepage at www.southernearlychildhood.org. You'll find a button for SECA Radio. Happy listening!

The Picard Center Issues Health Report

The Cecil J. Pickard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning at the University of Louisiana/Lafayette has just issued a report entitled, [Act 256 Report: Health Related Physical Fitness Assessment in Schools](#).

Act 256 of the 2009 Louisiana legislative session encouraged school districts to conduct health-related physical fitness assessments of students in public schools.

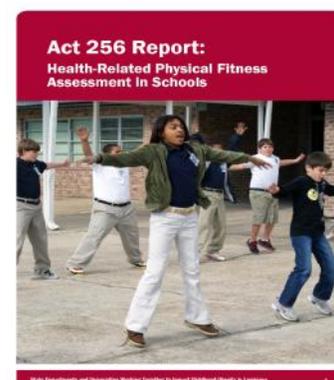
During the 2010-2011 school year, 18 school districts (300 schools and more than 100,000 students) in Louisiana participated in a health-related physical fitness assessment. That assessment uses the Cooper Institutes' Healthy Fitness Zones, criterion referenced standards that represent minimal fitness.

For that school year, about 36% of students performed within the healthy

fitness zone. The results are similar to those of the 2009-2010 school year, which were completed

on 25,000 students. Source:

<http://www.picardcenter.org/Publications/Lists/Publications2/Attachments/51/Act256ReportSeptember2011Final.pdf>



Latino Children Now the Largest Group of Poor Children in U.S.

For the first time in history, the single largest group of children living in poverty isn't white. **Latino children living in poverty have now surpassed their white counterparts.**

The **Pew Hispanic Center** (a project of the Pew Research Center) issued a report in September, *The Toll of the Great Recession—Childhood Poverty Among Hispanics Sets Record, Leads Nation*, based upon data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau.

In 2010

- 37% of poor children were Latino.
- 30.5% were white.
- 26.6% were black.

Latinos represent 16% of the U.S. population and account for 23% of all children in the country.

According to the report, "This negative milestone for Hispanics is a product of their growing numbers, high birth rates and declining economic fortunes...."

Today the unemployment rate among Latinos at 11.1% is higher than the national unemployment rate of 9.1%."

Source: <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?Report ID=147>.

"When we talk about Hispanic children, they represent nearly a quarter of the nation's children today," said Mark Lopez, who authored the Pew report. "How these children mature and how

they do in the nation's schools and labor market will have implications for the nation's future in this century."

Source: *Wall Street Journal, For the First Time, Largest Group of Poor Children in U.S. Are Latino, Report Finds, September 29, 2011.*

Founded in 2001, the Pew Hispanic Center is a "non-partisan research organization that seeks to improve the understanding of the U.S. Hispanic populations and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation. The Center does not take positions on policy issues." For more information about the Center and its work, go to <http://pewhispanic.org/>.

Families Matter: New Research on Digital Media and Children

This summer, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop released a new report, *Families Matter: Designing media for a digital age*. The Joan Ganz Cooney Center is "an independent research and innovation lab that catalyzes and supports research, development and investment in digital media technologies to advance children's learning."

The report, authored by Lori M. Takeuchi, Ph.D. is focused on "two complementary studies that document how families with young children are integrating digital media into the rhythm of daily life." The studies encompassed more than 800 parents of children ages 3-10 and reveal how parents feel about raising children in an age of digital media.

Additional surveys were conducted to "probe how parent attitudes toward technology, along with family values, routines and structures are shaping young children's experiences using digital media."

Key Findings from the Report

- Forces outside of the home shape children's experiences with digital media.
- Parents prefer participating in activities with their kids that involve older media (watching TV, reading books, playing board games).
- Not all digital media are created equal in parents' eyes. (Computer based activities were rated as the most valuable.)
- Parents worry about digital media interfering with the healthy development of young children
- ...Yet most parents don't believe their own kids are at risk.
- Nearly two-thirds of parents restrict their kids' media use on a case-by-case basis.

The report includes a set of recommendations for additional research and for the media industry.

Industry Recommendations

- Design with the full ecology of the child in mind.
- Create video games that appeal to kids and parents alike.
- Foster family teamwork.
- Think outside of the (X) Box.
- Anytime, anywhere learning.
- Design the guilt out of digital-age parenting. Source: <http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/Reports-29.html>

In recognition of the importance of this issue and the need to clearly identify evidence-based information about using digital media with young children, SECA has asked **Dr. Michael Levine**, Executive Director of the Center, to keynote at SECA 2012 in San Antonio. Dr. Levine will speak on *D is for Digital: Meeting the Needs of Young Children in the Tech Age* on Friday, February 3, 2012.



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Southern Early Childhood Association



"A Voice for Southern Children"

We're on the Web!
www.southernearlychildhood.org

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.

News from the SECA States

Arkansas

Governor Mike Beebe recognized the Arkansas Early Childhood Association on the celebration of their 50th anniversary. He reminisced about where Arkansas started in the late 1980's and where it is today. From a beginning state appropriation of \$400,000 for child care in the late 1980's, the state now has approximately \$150 million in state and federal funding in pre-k and child care.



- Bullying can cause devastating harm to young people's health and well being and interferes with the education process by disrupting classrooms, distracting students, and inhibiting learning.

- Public schools should be safe, positive learning environments.
- The prevention of bullying may be achieved in part by raising awareness of the incidence of bullying in schools and communities. *Source:* <http://www.governor.sc.gov/News>

South Carolina



Governor Nikki Haley has declared October 2011 as Bullying Prevention Month in South Carolina. According to the

Governor's Proclamation:

Virginia

Governor Bob McDonnell has appointed Laura Fornash as the Virginia Secretary of Education. A vacancy in the office was created by the departure of Gerald Robinson,

who is now the Florida Secretary of Education.

Ms. Fornash spent 20 years with Virginia Tech in a number of different divisions, including student affairs, continuing education, distance learning and government relations.



West Virginia



Earl Ray Tomblin (D-WV) was just elected to a full term as the Governor of West Virginia. He has been serving as Governor for the past year

as he finished the term of former Governor, now Senator Joe Manchin. Mr. Tomblin became acting governor because of his position as West Virginia Senate president.