



Future Directions: A Message from the SECA Board of Directors

The SECA Board of Directors met on July 23-25, 2015 and deliberated on future directions in support of our existing affiliate structure. This opportunity allowed us to re-evaluate and re-affirm our support of the grassroots history of SECA and our continuation of that support into the future. These decisions were reached as a preliminary step in charting the strategic direction of the Southern Early Childhood Association.

- **SECA is committed to the organizational structure** that has evolved over the past 67 years to serve early childhood professionals in the South. That structure will remain: SECA/state/local and we are committed to strengthening that structure. We feel that the strength of our organization lies in our connection to the grassroots and professionals who work every day with young children, families, and the emerging professionals in our field. We also feel that this structure provides a stronger collective voice on behalf of the children and families in our states.
- **We remain committed to our “Southern roots”** and supporting the well-being of children and families throughout the 14 states recognized by SECA as members of the regional association. We recognize that a “new South” is emerging and that what were considered “Southern issues” in the distant past may have changed and evolved; however, we also recognize that some issues such as generational poverty are still endemic and its effects on children and adults continue to be a “Southern issue.”
- **We recognize that there are cultural and regional differences in the ways that families raise and nurture children**, and we feel uniquely qualified to assist those families in ensuring the optimal development of their children within our communities and states.
- **Because the initial affiliation discussions occurred so far in the past, we are committed to re-affirming our relationship** and will develop new charters that reflect the evolution of the structure over that history. The Board has asked that these guidelines be utilized to develop the charter.
 - One affiliate per state in the SECA region will be recognized as our state affiliate.
 - State affiliates may choose to implement an organizational structure that will benefit them within their state. This may include local affiliates, chapters, districts or other organizational entities. That structure will be designed and implemented by the state.
 - Permission will be included for states to affiliate with other organizations that serve early childhood professionals and have similar missions without the SECA affiliation

relationship being jeopardized. We recognize that this will provide member options within the states.

- SECA will set dues only for the SECA portion of membership dues in a state. The states may choose to add their state (and local) dues, depending upon the state Board's determination of what dues structure will benefit both members and organizational entities. We recommend that the dues structure be developed with affordability for the grassroots member in mind.
 - State affiliates may choose to operate under an independent 501(c)(3) or may choose to become an organization that qualifies for tax exempt status under the SECA umbrella.
 - The SECA Board of Directors will vote on the proposed charter document on its conference call scheduled for October 27, 2015. The proposed charter agreement will be available to SECA Board representatives by October 1, 2015 so that they may consult with their state affiliate boards prior to consideration.
 - The affiliation and charter will be voted upon by the state affiliate and the president of the affiliate will sign the agreement, along with the SECA President.
- **We recognize that maintenance of this structure is often challenging because the majority of our affiliates are in transition and making organizational and structural changes.** The SECA Board of Directors has directed that the SECA office provide some necessary administrative support options for affiliates for one year without charge to the affiliate upon request from the affiliate. At the end of the first year, a menu of administrative options and fees will be available to assist affiliate operations. States may choose to participate in the administrative support program or provide verification that they have created that support at the state level. Support may include but not be limited to customer service (phone, membership, etc.), bookkeeping, board support, publication production, communications, and conference planning or registration, etc.

SECA has been and will always be about “relationship building” and this focus reflects not only our Southern roots but also our understanding of our field and colleagues. This initial direction is intended to strengthen those relationships and build strong and effective associations for those professionals who work with young children. We are committed to improving the quality of programs and services that young children receive in the South and commend our colleagues for the work that they do on a local level.

SECA is committed to its mission of “advocacy and professional development” and being the Voice for Southern Children.