

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

NGA Elects New Leadership

September 2015

Public Policy Notes

At its annual meeting in July, the National Governor's Association elected new leadership for 2015-2016.



Governor Terry McAuliffe of Virginia (D)

has assumed the position of vice chair of the Association.

The National Governor's Association is the primary leadership forum for governors throughout the country. Its role is to:

- "Provide a bipartisan forum for governors to exchange views and share best practices;
- Identify priority issues and work with governors to establish bipartisan positions to influence key federal policies; and
- Develop innovative solutions to state policy challenges and provide tailored, technical assistance to governors."

Governor Pat McCrory of North Carolina (R)



will serve on the Executive Committee.



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin of West Virginia (D)

will serve as vice chair of the Economic Development and Commerce Committee.

Governor Robert Bentley of Alabama (R)



Governor Asa Hutchinson of Arkansas (R)



will serve as vice chair of the Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee.



Governor Phil Bryant of Mississippi (R)

was named to the board of the NGA Center for Best Practices.

In April, the Association announced that it would work with five states, including **Kentucky** and **Mississippi**, to improve the quality of their early care and education systems. [Click here](#) to learn more about the Association's early childhood initiatives.

Inside this issue:

<i>Recess and Teacher Contracts</i>	2
<i>News to Note</i>	3
<i>New Reports</i>	4

Why should we care about what NGA is doing and which governors are in leadership roles? As the Association develops these projects, many of their reports and conclusions translate directly into policy initiatives from governors at the state level. It's always wise as an advocate to be aware of the projects, research and reports that can influence policies that may be proposed in your state.

Recess: A New Bargaining Chip in Teacher's Contracts?

The teachers of the Seattle, Washington School District ended a nine-day strike and welcomed students to school for their first day of the new year on September 17th. This was the first strike of educators in that area in thirty years and some of the bargaining issues revolved around two issues of particular importance to our colleagues:

- ⇒ **Recess**
- ⇒ **Testing**

According to the local press, *“the contract dispute marked a strategy shift by teachers nationwide to take on broader issues that promote the public interest, experts have said. The Seattle teachers union tapped into community protests over too much testing, not enough recess and concerns about racial disparity in discipline and student performance.”* Source: [Seattle students return to school as teachers strike suspended](#), Phoung Le, [www.Komoneews.com](#)

“Highlights (of the agreement) include:

- ◆ **Recess:** Guaranteed 30 minutes of recess for all elementary students
- ◆ **Reasonable testing:** New policies to reduce the over-testing of our students.

- ◆ **Professional pay:** base salary increases of 3 percent, 2 percent, and 4.5 percent, plus the state COLA of 4.8 percent
- ◆ **Fair teacher and staff evaluations:** Test scores will no longer be tied to teacher evaluations, plus there is new contract language that supports teachers' professional growth.
- ◆ **Educator workload relief:** Additional staff to reduce workloads and provide student services.
- ◆ **Student equity around discipline and the opportunity gap:** Creating race and equity teams at 30 of the district's schools.
- ◆ **The administration's proposal to lengthen the school day:** Teachers will be compensated for additional work.

Source: [Seattle Education Association](#), 9/18/2015

The loss of recess for elementary students has been a major concern of the Southern Early Childhood Association, and our Editorial Committee recently produced the first of a series of “fact sheets” that will identify and focus on issues of particular concern for young children.



You'll find the fact sheet, *Why Do Children Need Recess at School? What Teachers and Parents Need to Know* in this issue of *The SECA Reporter*. [Click here](#) to access a copy of the Fact Sheet.

Laundromats & Early Literacy

[Too Small to Fail](#), the [Coin Laundry Association](#) and its partners have committed to engage parents through approximately 5,000 self-service laundries in underserved communities by providing them with information and tools to support their children's early brain and language development. *Too Small to Fail* will create a [Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing](#) toolkit with engaging resources to help families turn laundry time into meaningful opportunities to talk, read and sing with their children.” [Click here](#) to learn more about this initiative.

News to Note

State of California Passes Strict Immunization Law

After an outbreak of measles in Disneyland, the state legislature of California has passed one of the strictest laws in the country concerning immunization requirements for school students. SB 277 was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on June 30, 2015.

"The new law, which will be implemented July 1, 2016, protects every child's right to be safe at school by preventing preventable contagions from spreading at school and in the community. SB277 makes California one of three states in the nation where schools will only accept a medical exemption to legally required vaccinations for children attending school."

"It's a tremendous honor to be called a hero by the iconic magazine TIME in the company of giants of history including Edward Jenner and Jonas Salk," said Dr. Pan, a State Senator representing Sacramento (and sponsor of SB277). Vaccines protect our communities from diseases that crippled or killed millions of people. My efforts to strengthen immunization rates is an example of how I am keeping my promise to build a healthier and safer California."

[Click here](#) for more information.

Try This West Virginia Launches a New Effort toward Healthier Citizens

A group of organizations, local citizens and communities have joined together to launch an initiative that recognizes that far too many citizens of West Virginia are subject to debilitating chronic diseases that could be addressed through healthier lifestyle choices.

The initiative takes a four-prong approach:

- ⇒ **A new website** that is available 24/7 has been launched and is packed with hundreds of ideas, resources and "great West Virginia models."
- ⇒ **An annual conference** for "local people who want to build healthier communities."
- ⇒ **Minigrants** for "community teams that want to carry out healthy lifestyle projects in their communities."
- ⇒ **Year round availability of resources** to help local people plan projects.

On October 3, 2015, [Healthy-Bodies/Healthy Spirits of West Virginia](#) will host a meeting in Buckhannon, West Virginia.

This meeting is designed to support the faith based community in making good health "our spiritual work."

National Panel of New Principals

"The National Panel of New Principals is the only initiative of its kind that is dedicated to principals in the first or second year of their principalship. By participating, new principals will contribute to a dynamic knowledge base about what it's really like to be a new principal today. And they'll gain insights into how their experience as a new principal compares to their peers both within their state and throughout the nation."

The Panel was created by the National Association of Elementary School Principals as a way to mentor and support new professionals in these roles within education.

According to an article published in *Education Week*, "one of the "aha" findings (from a survey) was the high percentage of new principals who said they aren't prepared to lead schools with pre-kindergarten programs....While 53% of the panelists who responded said their schools house pre-K programs, and 65% said they were ultimately responsible for those children, only 1 in 5 felt well trained in instructional methods for early learners."

Source: *Rookie Principals' Group Sheds Light on Early Career Challenges*, *Education Week*, 8/19/2015

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

Southern Early Childhood Association



"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.

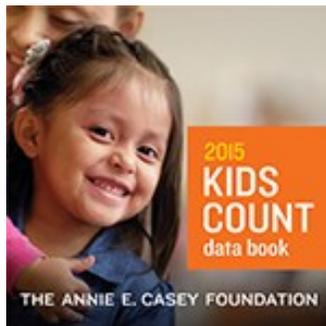
This monthly newsletter is produced by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director.

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/public-policy/public-policy-notes/>
to receive notice of its availability each month.*

New Reports



The [2015 Kids Count Data Book](#) is now available. Produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "KIDS COUNT is the premier source for data on child and family well-being in the United States." You can access state specific information on indicators of child well-being that can be utilized in your advocacy efforts.

Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness

"Researchers found statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health."

Published by the American Association of Public Health.

[Click here](#) for a PDF of the report.

Income and Poverty in the United States: 2014

The Census Bureau has released the income and poverty data for 2014. The Bureau found that the median household income remained statistically identical to the 2013 median and that poverty increased among groups that have typically not been as vulnerable: married couples with children and people 25 years and older with at least an undergraduate degree. For a copy of the report, [click here](#).

