Possibilities, Policies and Practices for the Future: Early Childhood Education in the South

A SECA Research Symposium • March 8, 2017 • 9:00 am-4:30 pm

The Symposium will stimulate thought and discussion as national and regional experts share with participants the challenges facing the early childhood teaching profession today as well as in the future.

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Michael Nettles, Senior Vice President and the Edmund W. Gordon Chair of the ETS Policy Evaluation & Research Center (PERC)

A native of Nashville, Tennessee, Nettles earned his bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Tennessee. He achieved two Master's degrees, one in political science and the other in higher education at Iowa State University, and a Ph.D. in education at Iowa State University.

Nettles has a national reputation as a policy researcher on educational assessment, student performance and achievement, educational equity, and higher education finance policy. His publications reflect his broad interest in public policy, student and faculty access, opportunity, achievement and assessment at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels.

Featured Luncheon Speaker

Dr. Catherine Scott-Little, University of North Carolina

Catherine Scott-Little is a Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at UNC-Greensboro, where she teaches in the Birth Through Kindergarten teacher preparation program and is the Co-Director of the Masters of Education program. Catherine's research interests include early childhood teacher education programs and state-level early childhood policies, such as early learning standards and assessment systems implemented in state-level early childhood programs. Catherine completed her undergraduate degree in Child Development and Family Relations at UNC-Greensboro and earned a Doctorate degree in Human Development at the University of Maryland at College Park.

Panel Facilitators

Dr. Cathy Grace, University of Mississippi

Dr. Cathy Grace is currently the Co-Director of The Graduate Center for the Study of Early Learning at the University of Mississippi. Dr. Grace has served as the Director of Early Childhood Policy at the Children's Defense Fund in Washington, DC and held many state and local positions during her 40+ years in the field. For 10 years she directed the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University and has a publication record which reflects published books and peer-reviewed journal articles. A former first-grade teacher, she recently completed three years as a director of one of Mississippi's first state-funded pre-kindergarten collaboratives.

Panel Facilitators

Charles W. Fluharty, Rural Policy Research Institute

Chuck is the founder, President, and CEO of the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), the only U.S. national policy institute solely dedicated to assessing the rural impacts of public policies. A Clinical Professor in the University of Iowa College of Public Health and a graduate of Yale Divinity School, he was also a German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Fellow from 2007 to 2011. Chuck is the author of numerous policy studies and journal articles, has presented dozens of Congressional testimonies and briefings.

Preliminary Agenda

- 9:00-9:30: Welcoming Coffee & Networking
- 9:30-10:30: Opening Address: *Growing and Recruiting Early Childhood Teachers: An Imperative*
  Dr. Michael Nettles
- 10:30-10:45 Break
- 10:45-11:45: *Policy, Practice and Possibilities: What's In Store for the Early Childhood Profession*
  - Dr. Cathy Grace, Facilitator
  - Dr. Michael Nettles, ETS Policy Evaluation and Research Center
  - Dr. Devon Brenner, assistant to the Vice President for Education Initiatives, Mississippi State University
  - Michelle Acardi, Public Policy Director, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
  - Tina Routh, Director of the Division of Early Childhood Education, MS Band of Choctaw Indians
  - Dr. Linda Southward, Research Fellow & Research Professor, Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University
- 12:00-1:30: *The Future of Early Childhood Education Teacher Programs: What Could They Look Like?*
  Luncheon with Dr. Catherine Scott-Little
- 1:45-2:45: *Communities That Have Successfully Addressed the Challenges of Implementing High Quality Early Childhood Programs*Panel
  - Chuck Fluharty, CEO, Rural Policy Research Institute, Facilitator
  - Dr. Jeff Hawkins, Executive Director, Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative
  - Dr. Dessie Bowling, Associate Director, Kentucky Valley Educational Cooperative
  - Morgana Freeman, Executive Director, Tallahatachie River Foundation
  - Eileen Beazley, Executive Director of Excel by 5
- 2:45-3:00: Break
- 3:00-4:30: *Building a Community of Early Childhood Teachers*
  Group Discussion Facilitated by Dr. Cathy Grace