



The Leadership Letter

Leadership Opportunities at the 2011 SECA Conference

Leadership Summit

Wednesday, January 26th

2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Regency Ballroom A/B

In 2011, we're going to focus on "framing our message". We have a representative of the Strategic Frameworks Institute that will join us, and we'll spend the day learning how to make our message resonate with the public and policymakers. In this time of difficult budgets at both the state and federal level, it is even more important for us to understand "what works and what doesn't." We're all going to be fighting to maintain (and possibly increase) resources and early childhood professionals don't always understand how best to get our message across.

Because this session is so vitally important to us at this time, we would encourage you to bring as many of your current and emerging leaders as possible to the session in Savannah. This won't be a one year project...we'll need to continue to focus our time and attention on making sure folks understand that the early years are the critical years. SECA will

be happy to host as many of your state leadership as you can bring.

Local Affiliate Leaders Networking Session

Thursday, January 27th

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Hospitality Suite 515

This is an opportunity for you to meet your counterparts from other states, to share information, and to network with state affiliate leaders. To "jumpstart" this year's discussion, we sent you an online affiliate leadership survey to complete before this session. The Leadership Commission will be compiling this information and presenting it during the session

Just for Students

Friday, January 28th

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Ballroom BC

The Leadership Commission and the SECA Board will be hosting an event *Just for Students* on Friday evening. Students are invited to meet Don Monopoli and learn how to use music and movement in all of the curriculum areas of a preschool classroom.

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Leadership Commission Members

- Terrie Buckner, GA
- Katie Shaughnessy-Williams, KY
- Susan Carrigan, OK
- Cindy Ramagos, LA

Underestimating the Length of a Project

Planning your 2011 Conference? Working on your strategic plan? Hosting a membership drive? Experience shows that even the most organized, brilliant people become too optimistic about how much time a project will take. In order to form a more realistic, objective estimate of the time frame, you need to get outside of your frame of reference, according to Daniel Kahneman of the *Harvard Business Review*. He argues that this process requires five steps:

- **Select a reference class.** Research to find projects similar to yours that you can use for comparison. If you are planning a state-wide conference, ask Conference Chairs from other SECA states what they have found to be successful, who were the well received keynote speakers, which events drew the largest crowds and where to get the most bang

for your buck. Ask other professional organizations in your state what they are doing. See if you can collaborate with other early childhood associations or associations from closely related fields.

- **Plot the distribution of outcomes.** Arrange your reference class members as a distribution, showing the extremes, the median, and the clusters. You may have to estimate by calculating the average outcome as well as a measure of variability.
- **Make an intuitive prediction** of your specific project in the distribution. Your feelings will probably be biased, so follow steps four and five for a more accurate decision.
- **Assess the reliability of your prediction.** You can foresee events more easily

than others. You know your Board membership and its abilities and challenges. The goal here is to estimate the correlation between the prediction and the actual outcome, expressed as a coefficient between 0 and 1, where 0 indicates no correlation and 1 indicates a perfect correlation.

- **Correct your intuitive estimate.** Your estimate in step three is probably too optimistic. Adjust your estimate toward the average outcome of the reference class, based on predictability in step four. Don't be surprised if the adjustment is hefty, according to the expert Dan Lovallo.

Adapted from Delusions of Success: How Optimism Undermines Executives' Decisions by Daniel Kahneman.

10 Things that Good Leaders Do

According to General Electric's CEO, Jeff Immelt, all good leaders:

1. Accept personal responsibility.
2. Simplify constantly.
3. Understand breadth, depth

and context.

4. Do what is most important.
5. Learn and know how to teach.
6. Stay true to their own styles.
7. Set boundaries.

8. Stay disciplined and detail-orientated.

9. Leave a few things unsaid.
10. Like people.

Adapted from Things Leaders Do, Jeff Immelt, Fast Company

Board and Membership Retention

Here are some suggestions from the SECA states on how to retain members and to keep Board membership functioning:

Board Members

- When possible, pay for board members' travel to meetings.
- Provide orientation and training to new members.
- Consider 3 or 4 year terms, as opposed to shorter 1 to 2 year terms.
- Stay in touch with frequent e-mails and notices.
- Provide specific office job descriptions.
- Maintain a good mix of elected members and appointed members.
- Make sure current Board members welcome new members.
- Ensure that Board members view their position as an honor.
- Meet quarterly.
- Pay for lodging at confer-

ences, such as the SECA conference, when Board members attend as a representative of the association.

- Encourage Board members to support each other.
- Give new members committee assignments.
- Elect members from state chapters and local leadership.
- Invite potential leaders to attend a Board meeting.
- Make sure you have measurable outcomes, benchmarks, and goals.
- Make your meetings meaningful and relevant.

Membership Retention

- Contact people whose membership has lapsed.
- Send out renewal notices.
- Partner with other organizations working on behalf of children.
- Work to align and stand behind public policy issues in your state.

- Make your organization visible to early childhood professionals.
- Reach out to student groups.
- Offer early renewal incentives.
- Get people involved in the state conference.
- Provide public policy alerts to members.
- Be mentors for new members.
- Address issues pertinent to the field of early care and education.
- Create more diversity within your membership.
- Be welcoming and inclusive.
- Welcome everyone's thoughts and appreciate their ideas.
- Hold a new member session at your conference.

Source: SECA Affiliate Leadership Survey

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.

Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.

—Winston Churchill



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*Promoting Quality Care and Education for
Young Children and Their Families*

The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*

Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families

www.southernearlychildhood.org

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Students will have an opportunity to ask him questions and learn songs specific to their age group. We have a special project to make and take back to the classroom and, as always, opportunities to meet other students and win door prizes.

Sessions of Interest to Leaders:

Developmentally Appropriate Retirement: Moving and Playing as an Inspiration for Young Professionals

Ruth Ann Ball, Barbara Nilson,
and Marsha Swanson
Friday, January 28th
9:15 - 10:15 AM
Sloane

*The Five Love Languages--
Developing Communication
Skills with Faculty*

Cami Miller and LeeAnn Hackler
Saturday, January 29th
7:30 - 8:30 AM
Sloane

*Make Your Message Stick..Tips
for Effective Staff meetings and
In-Service Training*

Cami Miller and LeeAnn Hackler
Saturday, January 29th
8:40 - 9:40 AM
Sloane

*Better Together: Building Staff
Morale*

Cathleen Cullen
Saturday, January 29th
12:30 - 1:30 PM
Verelst

*TEAM is NOT a 4-Letter Word:
Building a Community Within
Your Organization*

JoAnn Frisbey
Saturday, January 29th
1:40 - 2:40 PM
Sloane

*Happy, Healthy Children Begins
with Happy, Healthy Childcare
Professionals*

Linda Whaley
Saturday, January 29th
1:40 - 2:40 PM
Verelst