



The Leadership Letter

Change is in the Air

In the next few months, our affiliate leaders and members will be introduced to some significant changes in the structure of SECA and what that means.

Many of our members have been accustomed to a membership structure that formed a partnership between the national, regional, state and local associations. That structure will soon be changing as the national, NAEYC, strategically modifies the criteria for maintaining an affiliate relationship.

With those changes within the NAEYC structure:

- ⇒ Some of the SECA state affiliates **will no longer qualify** for affiliation with NAEYC.
- ⇒ Others will make the decision **to no longer continue affiliation with NAEYC and become SECA affiliates only.**
- ⇒ Some will **maintain the structure (NAEYC, SECA and state)** that currently exists.
- ⇒ **The structure of state affiliates may change** as NAEYC allows large affiliates within the state to be recognized independently of the current state affiliate.

With change comes opportunity and members will be the beneficiary of those opportunities. **During the next few months, you'll begin receiving information about new and different membership options** and, in those states that previously required the triple membership (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia), you'll now have the option of joining either SECA and your state/local af-

filiate or NAEYC and an affiliate.

As affiliates make their decision, communication from both the state and SECA will be regularly sent your way. **We want to make sure that you know that your membership options with SECA and your state are secure and available as you make your membership decisions.**

With this revamp of the current system, SECA also has the ability to meet many of the needs that we've heard expressed over the years from directors, administrators and managers, including a new center/program membership. **SECA will be announcing a center/program membership that will allow directors to buy a group of memberships that will be transferrable among staff.** We know that staff turnover can be a negative when looking at association membership, and we're responding to that concern. A director can replace a departing current member with a new staff hire for the duration of that membership, allowing flexibility and membership benefits to staff in a program.

SECA will continue to recognize our historical relationship with the current state affiliates and we're developing support systems to help them through this transition. We understand the value that state and local organizations bring to our membership and are committed to supporting them.

Change is never easy and can be rocky at times; however, if affiliate leadership is visionary and committed to serving the early childhood professionals in our states, we'll meet the mission of supporting our professionals throughout the South.

Inside this issue:

<i>Your Role as a Change Agent</i>	2
<i>Five Key Questions</i>	3
<i>For the Dual States: Two Issues</i>	3
<i>SECA's Commitment: Future Directions</i>	4

Leadership Commission Members

- * *Jeff Leffler, MS*
- * *Anita Dailey, GA*
- * *Marti Nicholson, OK*
- * *Susan Barnes, VA*
- * *Suzi Brodof, WV*

Your Role as a “Change Agent”

If you're in a leadership position with your affiliate, you're probably stressed and concerned about how the coming changes will affect both your affiliate and members. You've spent the last few months:

- ◆ Debating the merits of maintaining what we call a “dual affiliation” (SECA and NAEYC) if you can qualify to remain an affiliate of NAEYC.
- ◆ Wondering what happens now that you can't qualify to remain a NAEYC affiliate.
- ◆ Trying to figure out just what all this change means if you weren't a part of the discussion because your state never adopted the triple membership structure that included NAEYC.

For those “**non-dual**” states that don't have the NAEYC connection (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina), it's got to be confusing. ***We want you to know that your relationship with SECA will not change and "it's business as usual."***

For the other nine “**dual states**” (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia), it's been an all-consuming discussion over many months.

As you go through the changes that are coming, there are several change management principles that it will help to remember.

1) Take the Broader View

Look at the changes in a holistic manner, thinking through how they will affect the “whole” organization. This means that not only may the state affiliate change but the historical relationship between

the state and local affiliates may change as well. Remember that modifying one thing may make a change in something else, and you must be aware of how those changes fit into the broader vision.

2) Communicate Effectively

The dynamics of the change process will cause you to adopt new leadership strategies to cope with that change. How you choose to address change will determine how effective you will be. Make sure that members understand the reason behind the changes and how that will affect them. You can avoid change resistance by doing a good job of communication and explanation. Be precise, clear and listen. Communication is usually the key to making anything work within an organization.

3) Things Won't Change Overnight

The last thing that you want to do is to move too fast or without enough preparation. This is the easiest way to generate unrest and resistance to the changes that must be made. Patience is the key and a good leader knows when to “push” and when to “retreat and let things settle.”

4) Connect Change with your Strategic Plan

As we outlined in the January 2016 issue of *The Leadership Letter*, any changes that will be necessary to adapt to circumstances should be reflected in your strategic plan and the strategies that you will employ to embrace that change. If you haven't already developed a strategic plan or if you have one in place, you need to draft or amend the plan to reflect the organizational changes that are on their way. Utilizing your strategic plan to

devise the framework for change can be one method to generate discussion around already agreed to initiatives and vision.

5) Involve All Parties

Involvement equals buy-in for most people. If your leadership and membership work together to reinvent your affiliate, you're much more likely to have a smooth transition and to avoid any meltdowns along the way. This may be the time to form ad hoc committees, create advisory groups, and focus on member retention and recruitment. Other projects may need to wait a little while until you've weathered this change.

6) Doing it Well This Time Means It Will Be Easier the Next Time

The only thing certain in this life is that change will come your way! Dealing with this organizational change will allow you to develop skills and strategies that will serve you well as the next opportunity arises. (And you can be sure there will be another opportunity.) Perhaps in the next round, you can be the elder statesman that's been there and done that! Relish your role as a “change agent” and put your organization on a future path that ensures vitality and relevance in the years to come.

If you'd like more in depth information, you might find this article, [Leading and Managing Change](#), by Christopher G. Worley, Ph.D. and Yvonne H. Vick, MSOD to be useful.

[Click here](#) to access the January issue of *The Leadership Letter*.

Five Key Questions: Success or Failure ?

If you're wondering whether this major change will be successful within your affiliate structure, ask yourself these questions.

⇒ ***How is the vision different, better and more compelling?***

Will this change allow us to meet our mission statement and serve our members? Are we maintaining important resources for our members? Can we provide better member value by making this change? Have we strengthened our affiliate by making the change?

⇒ ***Are the leaders personally committed to the change?***

Are we standing as a united front or is there dissension within the leadership core? Are we all speaking on the same page, making the same case for change? Have we devised a leadership strategy to ensure stability and a successful

transition?

⇒ ***Does the organization have the capacity to make the change?***

What effect will this change have on our Board of Directors? Will our financial stability be impacted? Can we weather the short term loss of members while generating a vital member recruitment campaign? Will our "voice" in the affairs of our state and communities remain strong during the transition period?

⇒ ***How ingrained is the current culture?***

What will be necessary to implement a new structure, one that is not familiar to many members? Will we be able to communicate what's happening effectively and ensure that the membership understands the rationale behind the decision making process? Will we have a disconnect between the old

and new "guard" who may have been instrumental in creating the current structure? Will the new membership options that give members choices be enough to make the change positive?

⇒ ***Will the change actually deliver identified outcomes?***

What are the goals in making the change...affordability, member choice, recognition of membership needs? Will the change allow more flexibility within the organization to meet those individual needs within the states? Is the structure sufficient to recognize the different cultures and philosophies within the structure and meld them to create a "whole"?

Your answers to these questions will determine how smoothly the change process moves in your state. *Source: The Key to Managing Change, Businessweek, www.bloomberg.com*

For the Dual States: Two Issues

During the last year, conversations have occurred between the SECA and NAEYC Executive staff concerning potential obstacles to resolving affiliation options for "dual affiliates".

Some of our current dual affiliates will not meet the capacity thresholds set by NAEYC and will not be eligible for affiliation, so the issues that have surfaced will not affect them. Those affiliate boards are making a decision about continuing the relationship with SECA, and the SECA office is supporting them as they transition into a new role within the SECA structure. If they choose to sign an affiliate agreement with SECA, they will join the ranks of our "non-dual" states which have the relationship with SECA only.

For those states that desire to

maintain affiliation with both organizations, SECA and NAEYC are working to find common ground in their affiliate agreements that will allow the "option to affiliate with another organization".

At this time, NAEYC is drafting a charter and affiliate policies and procedures and will release them in a few weeks. SECA has already released its charter agreement and you can find a copy of the draft agreement on the [Leadership Resource page](#) of the SECA website.

Upon release of the NAEYC charter, SECA will determine what modifications will need to occur to the basic charter agreement to accommodate the "dual affiliation" status. Issues which must be addressed are:

◆ **Branding:** Organizations

generally require that affiliates reflect the style and content of the parent organization, and it will require special language in the charter to allow dual affiliates to equally represent both SECA and NAEYC in their marketing and communications.

- ◆ **Board Composition:** If an affiliate represents both SECA and NAEYC, the affiliate board must have representatives of both organizations serving in that capacity. Again special language in the charter will dictate how this will occur.

We are pleased that the conversation is on-going and that dual affiliates will be able to maintain that status as the transition occurs within SECA and NAEYC.

This is My Association



SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION

1123 S. University, Suite 255
Little Rock, AR 72204

1-800-305-SECA (7322)

Fax: 501-227-5297

Email: info@southernearlychildhood.org

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

SECA is a "Voice for Southern Children"

*This newsletter is written and produced
by Glenda Bean, Executive Director.*

www.southernearlychildhood.org

My association is composed of many people like me. We make it what it is. It will be friendly, if I am friendly. It will make a difference for children and their families if I make a difference. We will bring other people to our association if I bring them. It will be an association of respect, loyalty and service; of hope, fearlessness and integrity, and a people with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these qualities. Therefore, I pledge that I shall dedicate myself to be all the things that I want my association to be.

(Anonymous)

[Click here](#) to access archived issues of *The Leadership Letter*. The May 2015 issue has additional information on working as a leadership team.

[Click here](#) to sign up for notices when a new *Leadership Letter* is available.

SECA's Commitment: Future Directions

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 affiliates 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.

We are committed to re-affirming our relationship with our affiliates and will develop new charters that reflect the evolution of the structure over that history.

We recognize that maintaining this affiliate structure is often challenging because of organizational and structural changes. The SECA Board of Directors has directed that the SECA office provide necessary administrative support to affiliates upon request.

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