

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Open Educational Resources: The Wave of the Future?

Traditional textbooks may be giving way to a new way of providing educational content. **Open Educational Resources (OER)** are beginning to gain momentum as a way of providing high-quality resources that meet the following goals:

- ◆ **Additional choice** to local education agencies.
- ◆ **Reduction of expenditures** for instructional materials.
- ◆ **Greater flexibility** with quality educational content.
- ◆ **Adaptability** for states to meet their particular needs using their own channels of review and development.

Open Educational Resources are high-quality, comprehensive resources aligned with state learning standards that are available online and at no cost to the user. These materials are currently being developed to support K-12 mathematics and English/ language arts.

[The K-12 OER Collaborative](#) is “an initiative led by a group of 12 states with the

goal of creating comprehensive, high-quality, open educational resources (OER).” Two SECA states, [Georgia](#) and [North Carolina](#), are among the 12 states supporting this effort.

The Collaborative has awarded \$1.3 million in grants to 10 developers to create a repository of free, open access content. The RFP specifications were “informed by extensive educator input with the goal of creating OER that offers a full range of instructional supports and state learning standard alignments. These materials will be vetted by teachers, openly licensed, regularly updated, aligned to assessments, and available for free in both digital and print format.”

The original content developed by the 10 grantees will be 2-3 week open academic units in English/language arts and mathematics. It is anticipated that this content will be utilized to provide the “foundation for more extensive, year-long academic materials.”

The Collaborative includes national organizations such as the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), [The Learning Accelerator](#) and the [Association of State Supervisors of Mathematics](#). For a complete list of national organizations, [click here](#).

Although the accessibility of educational content is of interest, why would we include this as a public policy issue? If educational content becomes open access and the purchase of textbooks and instructional materials becomes very limited, will this affect the school funding decisions made by each state? Could this option free up state funds to support other educational reforms or programs within the state? These are questions that will be answered at the legislative level in each state, with resulting discussions about future support of education.

July 2015

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2016 Presidential Candidates

In this newsletter you will find a list of **declared candidates with ties to the SECA states**. (Declared candidates are those that have made a formal announcement that they are running.) The Democratic candidates are on page 2 and the Republican candidates are on page 3.

There are links to all of their campaign websites included with their photos or names.

2015: The North Carolina Legislative Session



Although we first reported in the April issue of *Public Policy Notes* that the North Carolina Legislature was scheduled to adjourn on June 30th, the session has been extended, primarily due to a failure to reach a budget agreement.

The Legislature is still at work and facing major issues such as:

- ◆ Developing a compromise between competing spending plans by the House and Senate.

- ◆ Changes to the state tax code, including reduction of individual tax rates, increases in the standard deduction, and additional sales taxes.
- ◆ Economic development financial incentives.
- ◆ Road and infrastructure funding.

A continuing budget resolution was approved prior to July 1st (the beginning of the state's fiscal year) to con-

tinue state operations and will expire on August 14th.

Legislators will need to act prior to that August date in order to maintain state operations. One bright spot: The continuing resolution authorized \$100 million for schools to address more students this fall and raised minimum teacher salaries to \$35,000.

Source: BlueRidgeNow.com

The 2016 Declared Democratic Candidates with Ties to the SECA States: A Much Smaller Field!

Declared Democratic candidates for the 2016 presidential election are much smaller in number than the Republican field. There are really only three candidates that have had visibility on the national scene: Hillary Clinton, Senator Bernie Sanders (NH) and former Senator Jim Webb of Virginia. Two of those candidates have ties to the SECA states.



Jim Webb, former U.S. Senator from *Virginia*, served in the Reagan administration and later as a Democratic

Senator from his state. [Click here](#) to go to his website.



Michael Steinberg of *Florida* is known as an advocate for the elderly, disabled and veterans. To access his campaign website, [click here](#).



Lloyd Kelso of *North Carolina* "speaks strongly of empowering the middle class." He also advocates for changes in fiscal policy. [Click here](#) to

access his campaign website.

If you'd like to access a complete list of declared and potential Democratic candidates, [click here](#). This article featured only those declared candidates with ties to SECA states.

Source: <http://2016.democratic-candidates.org/>

The Candidates You'll Recognize



Hillary Clinton, former First Lady, Secretary of State and former First Lady of *Arkansas* needs no introduction. [Click here](#) to access her campaign website.

The Candidates You Probably Don't Know



Robby Wells of *North Carolina* announced in 2012 that he would run for president in 2016. [Click here](#) to go to his campaign website.

The 2016 Declared Republican Candidates: The South is Well Represented!

The 2016 presidential campaign season is promising to be an interesting one with the number of declared Republican candidates that are already in the media spotlight.

In reviewing the declared candidates for the 2016 election, it appears that the South is well represented with 14 declared candidates according to www.republican-candidates.org. Many of them are high-profile politicians but we found a group of candidates that certainly haven't been on the national media radar.

We'll give you info about all the currently declared candidates from SECA states, including their campaign websites. We hope you'll take some time to see who's out there.

The Candidates You'll Recognize



Jeb Bush is a former governor of *Florida* and the son and brother of former U.S. Presidents. He has extensive experience in education reform initiatives. [Click here](#) for his campaign website.



Ted Cruz is a current U.S. Senator from *Texas*. He's a staunch conservative and Tea Party favorite. [Click here](#) to go to his campaign website.



Lindsey Graham is a four term U.S. Senator from the state of *South Carolina*. He's known for his work on foreign policy and the military. [Click here](#) for his website.

Marco Rubio is a first term Senator from the state of *Florida*. He is the son of naturalized Cuban parents who fled Castro and has clearly defined policy agendas. [Click here](#) for his website.



Rand Paul of *Kentucky* is the second generation of his family to seek the presidency. His father, Ron Paul, declared as a candidate in 2008. He is seen as the leader of the conservative-libertarian bloc in Congress. [Click here](#) to access his campaign website.

Mike Huckabee is a former two term governor of *Arkansas* and, until recently, the host of a television talk show. He is also an ordained Baptist minister and author. [Click here](#) for his website.



Bobby Jindal is the current governor of *Louisiana*. Jindal has recently been embroiled in a state controversy over the adoption of Common Core Standards. To see his campaign agenda, [click here](#).



Rick Perry is known as the longest serving governor in the state of *Texas*. This will be his second try at the presidency, having run as a candidate in 2012. For a look at this campaign website, [click here](#).

The Candidates You Probably Don't Know



Top Row left to right: [Jim Hayden](#) (TN), [Jack Fellure](#) (WV), [Michael Kinlaw](#) (TX)

Bottom Row left to right: [Brian Russell](#) (FL), [Shawna Sterling](#) (KY), [Mark Everson](#) (MS)

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"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/policy_newsletter_sign.php

to receive notice of its availability each month.

Turnaround Arts Initiative Begins in Broward County Florida

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities announced in June that five districts have been added to this program. We first reported on this education initiative in the summer 2012 issue of *The SECA Reporter*.

The **Turnaround Arts Initiative** is designed to assist "turnaround schools" that fall into the bottom five percent of their states' schools in student achievement. Schools that are selected to participate are designated by the U.S. Department of Education for extra resources from federal agencies and private foundations. "As part of Turnaround Arts, schools re-

ceive an array of arts education services designed to increase their chances of success, engage their com-



munity and raise the visibility of their achievements. Key to these efforts is building arts education programming that is rigorous, effective and integrated holistically into the school, as well as strategically targeted to addressing

larger school challenges. The program works closely with each school throughout the year to help the school community plan and implement their programming and ensure its quality and impact."

The schools in the New Orleans, Louisiana system were one of the first

participants in the program and they have reported the following results:

- ⇒ A 51.32% overall reduction in suspensions.
- ⇒ A 81.13% reduction in in-school suspensions between 2011-2014.

Data from all participating schools demonstrated:

- ⇒ A 22.55% improvement in math proficiency.
- ⇒ A 12.62% improvement in reading proficiency.

[Click here](#) to access the impact data provided on the Arts Initiative website. To find out more about the schools in New Orleans and Broward County, [click here](#) for links to the schools' individual websites.