

# Public Policy Notes

## Southern Early Childhood Association

### Testing & Standards: What's Next?

As state legislatures convened this year, the issues of standardized testing and curriculum standards...how many and how often for tests, what standards and how they align with tests...was on the agenda in many of our states.

According to a Rasmussen survey conducted by telephone in April 2016, "64% of American adults with children of elementary or high school age believe there is too much emphasis on standardized tests in schools these days....Just 18% of these parents think there is not emphasis and 12% rate the balance about right." Source: [Most Parents Say No to Standardized Testing](#), *Rasmussen Reports*, 4/26/ 2016.

This month, the Georgia Legislature sent [SB 355](#) to the Governor's desk. This bill was designed to "enact the "Student/Teacher Protection Act"; to end punitive testing consequences for both teachers and students related to federal, state, and locally mandated standardized assessments; to prevent truancy or referrals to the Division of Family and Children Services for absenteeism during standardized testing windows for federal, state, and locally mandated standardized

assessments unless a student already has a chronic history of truancy...." According to the [legislative summary](#), the bill vetoed by **Governor Nathan Deal**.

On March 17, 2016, **Governor Robert Bentley of Alabama** established by [Executive Order](#) a state committee to plan for the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This Act replaces the No Child Left Behind Act and contains new requirements and options on testing. For more information on ESSA, access the **January 2016** issue of [Public Policy Notes](#).

Many of our states have seen the development of "opt out" movements.... organizations of parents who wish to make the decision that their child/ children, will not be required to be tested according to the state mandated schedule. These movements usually began with opposition to the Common Core Standards and evolved as the testing mechanisms were developed to assess progress in meeting standards. These organizations

usually provide information on how to "opt out" of the testing regimen and often provide "forms" to submit to school districts.

A national movement has been formed as "[United Opt Out National](#)" that serves as a focused point of unyielding resistance to corporate ed. reform. We demand an equitably funded, democratically based, anti-racist, desegregated public school system for all Americans that prepares students to exercise compassionate and critical decision making with civic virtue." This website provides information on the status of these movements in each state. The "opt out" movement appears to be intrinsically tied to the implementation of the Common Core Standards.

If you're interested in more information about Common Core and its reception in the South, access [Public Policy Notes](#), **May 2014**.

**May 2016**

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#### **PACT with Tact**

In Georgia, a former school counselor has co-founded the group, [PACT with Tact](#). This group is comprised of parents and teachers "advocating 4 children & teens." Their [mission](#) includes:

- ◆ Respect for childhood and adolescence
- ◆ Regard for teachers as professionals
- ◆ Reduced class sizes for all ages
- ◆ Rights to refuse testing
- ◆ Recess & play opportunities

# The Candidates and Early Childhood Education

As the primary season comes to a close, it appears that the two candidates that will seek the presidency in November have been selected by the voters. On the Democratic side, **Hillary Clinton** has the momentum and is almost assured of the nomination. On the Republican side, **Donald Trump** is going into the Republican convention without a declared opponent. Both conventions may prove to be contentious, but these are likely the two nominees that will contest the election.



**Hillary Clinton** has a long history of support for early childhood education and services for young children. She

has put forth a proposal to provide “**universal preschool for America’s children.... Her proposal would work to ensure that every 4-year old in America has access to *high-quality* preschool in the next 10 years. It would do so by providing new federal funding for states that expand access to quality preschool for all four-year olds....As a first step in her child care agenda, Clinton on Monday called for doubling our investment in Early Head Start and the Early Head Start-Child Care partnerships.**” If you’d like to read more about her public policy position on early childhood education, [click here](#).

**Donald Trump** has remained largely silent on education issues and, after an extensive search, we were unable to locate any position statements on early childhood education. He has



stated that he will get “rid of Common Core” if he’s elected president. You will find a series of vide-

os on issues [here](#) that outline his thoughts on various topics under discussion in the campaign.

If you’d like to get information about where the candidates started, access the **March 2016** issue of [Public Policy Notes](#).

As the general election campaign unfolds, we’ll monitor both candidates for statements and positions that will be of interest to those in the early childhood education field.

## In Memoriam: Dr. Bettye Caldwell

Last month, we lost another of the giants in the field of early childhood education. **Dr. Bettye Caldwell** was one of the pioneer researchers who helped to frame a national experiment in early childhood education called Head Start. Over the years, Head Start became a critical support for ensuring the development of young children and helping their families to support that development. Head Start is now firmly entrenched in the early childhood system throughout the country.

Bettye began her research at Syracuse University along with Dr. Alice Honig and designed a program that integrated health and school readiness programs for low-income children....the precursor of the Head Start model.

When she moved from New York to Arkansas with her husband, Dr. Fred Caldwell, Bettye established the Kramer School Project, the first of its kind in the country that integrated child care and early childhood education for

children in a public school setting. She continued her research at Arkansas Children’s Hospital and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

As we develop that new generation of activists and advocates, it’s important that we remember those who led the way. In 2012, SECA recognized Bettye as the **SECA Friend of Children**. [Click here](#) to view her acceptance.



# News to Note



## North Carolina

On April 29, 2016, a Tweet announced the closing of [NC New Schools/Breakthrough Learning](#). After 13 years of operation and highly touted as an effort in school innovation heavily supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the school closed its doors, unexpectedly and dramatically. It all came down to an “expansion that outpaced its funding,” according to Jeffrey Corbett, board president. A lesson for non-profits? *Source:* [www.nonprofitquarterly.org](http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org)



## Texas

The Texas Education Agency welcomed a new Commissioner this year. **Mike Morath**, a former trustee of the Dallas Public Schools and an investment manager, joined the agency in January 2016. Of particular note in his resume is his involvement with the federal child nutrition program. Upon his return to Dallas after college, he created the tech company, Minute Menu Systems, that produced software in order to aid in the management of that \$2.5 billion per year program.



According to a [news release](#) from TEA upon his assumption of the position, “**Commissioner Morath**

will focus on supporting educators throughout the state, transitioning the state’s accountability system to an A-F framework, and improving the overall efficiency of TEA.”



## Mississippi

On May 11, 2016, Governor Phil Bryant signed four school consolidation bills. “*We need to make sure we are as efficient as we can be in state government. That includes making sure we focus on getting resources into the classrooms, where they’re most needed,*” Gov. Bryant said in a [press release](#).

[HB 987](#): Consolidates Leflore County and Greenwood school districts [SB 2495](#): Consolidates Montgomery County and Winona school districts [SB 2500](#): Consolidates Lumberton and adjoining school districts [HB 926](#): Administrative consolidation of Holmes County and Durant school districts.



## Kentucky

According to a news article, [Kentucky education commission says new accountability system should not involve ranking schools](#), **Kentucky Commissioner of Education, Stephen Pruitt** said, “*Kentuckians want a simple system of measuring school performance*



*that is fair.*”

These comments were made in response to the new accountability requirements under the **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, that requires that a system be in place by the 2017-2018 school year. Pruitt would like to see a system that does not rely on rankings of schools and districts as is now the case in Kentucky. For more information on ESSA, access the [January 2016](#) issue of *Public Policy Notes*.

The issue of accountability systems and ranking of school districts is directly tied into the issue of standardized testing and the use of student scores to assess school and teach effectiveness in many of our states. In Kentucky, the issue of students “opting out” of testing (which is not allowed) has surfaced as a part of this discussion.



## Children of Color

As our region becomes more diverse with larger numbers of children of color in our programs, it’s important to hear what parents have to say about their child’s education. A poll, [New Education Majority: Attitudes and Aspirations of Parents and Families of Color](#), released by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights provided 4 key findings about parent concerns and expectations: 1) funding disparities 2) the effect of racial inequities, 3) a system that provides rigor and great teachers and 4) high expectations for all children.

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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/public-policy/public-policy-notes/>

*to receive notice of its availability each month.*

## Standards for Educational Leaders



NATIONAL POLICY BOARD for  
EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

The [National Policy Board for Education Administration](#) (NPBEA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) worked in partnership to revise the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards for educational leadership. In February 2016, the NPBEA "officially assumed ownership of the [Professional Standards for Educational Leaders \(PSEL\) 2015](#), solidifying NPBEA's role in the education community as the leading voice for and steward of effective principal practice." The standards were formerly owned by CCSSO.

"This modernized set of standards—the first update since

1998—sets a framework for excellence upon which leadership preparation programs can ensure that candidates are prepared to meet the complex demands of educational administration. Central to the new standards is a focus on student learning, upon which all the standards are based."

Ten categories comprise the newly revised standards.

- 1) Mission, Vision and Core Values
- 2) Ethics and Professional Norms
- 3) Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
- 4) Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
- 5) Community of Care & Support for Students
- 6) Professional Capacity of School Personnel

- 7) Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
- 8) Operations and Management
- 9) School Improvement

Upon adoption of the revised standards in 2015, "a committee was convened to develop a set of leadership preparation standards that align to the PSEL standards. When finalized these preparation standards, will replace the 2011 Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards and will be used to guide design, accreditation review, and state approval of preparation programs for principals and superintendents." To view the proposed preparation standards that are aligned with the professional standards, [click here](#). Source: [www.npbea.org](http://www.npbea.org)