

Public Policy Notes

Southern Early Childhood Association

Immigration: It's a Hot Topic in 2016

As the election cycle unfolds, we're now facing a much more limited field of candidates.

Donald Trump continues his march toward the Republican nomination with a previously crowded candidate field now whittled down to three: Trump, **Senator Ted Cruz (TX)** and **Governor John Kasich (OH)**.



The Democratic field is at two: **Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** and **Senator Bernie Sanders (VT)**. Each candidate has taken a position on immigration and we'll provide you with the principles that are published on their election websites or websites of other organizations (in the case of Kasich) as well as links into those websites for more information.

Trump—1) *There must be a wall across the southern border.* 2) *Laws passed in accordance with our Constitutional system of govern-*

ment must be enforced. 3) *Any immigration plan must improve jobs, wages and security for all Americans.* [Click here](#) for his immigration plan.

Cruz—1) *Secure the border, once and for all.* 2) *Strengthen and enforce our existing immigration laws.* 3) *Pursue reforms to the legal-immigration system that will prioritize the interests and well-being of Americans.* [Click here](#) for his immigration plan.

Kasich—*In his first 100 days as President, John Kasich will send Congress a comprehensive plan that creates the climate for job creation by balancing the budget in eight years, cutting taxes for families and businesses, reining in federal regulations, tearing down barriers to increased energy production, and returning major federal responsibilities back to our states and communities where they can be performed more efficiently and responsively to serve Americans.* [Click here](#) for a summary of Kasich's comments on immigration.

Clinton—1) *Enact comprehensive immigration reform to*

create a pathway to citizenship, keep families together, and enable millions of workers to come out of the shadows. 2) *End family detention and close private immigrant detention centers.* 3) *Defend President Obama's executive actions to provide deportation relief for DREAMers and parents of Americans and lawful residents, and extend those actions to additional persons with sympathetic cases if Congress refuses to act.* [Click here](#) for her immigration plan.

Sanders—*A Fair and Humane Immigration Policy: We are a nation of immigrants. I am the son of an immigrant myself. Their story, my story, our story is a story of America: hard-working families coming to the United States to create a brighter future for their children. The story of immigrants is the story of America, a story rooted in family and fueled by hope. It continues today in families all across the United States.* [Click here](#) for his immigration plan.

Be informed!

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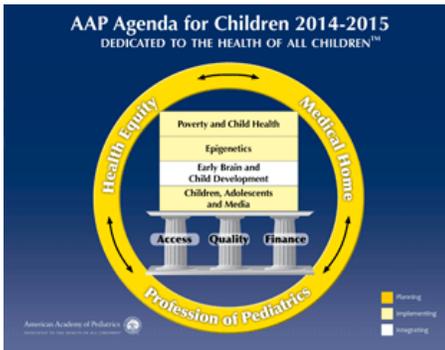
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The Southern Border: More Mexicans are Leaving the U.S. than Moving Here

According to The Pew Research Center, slightly more than 1 million Mexicans and their families, including their U.S. born children, left the U.S. for Mexico from 2009 to 2014. During the same five years, 870,000 Mexicans arrived in the U.S. The main reason: the desire to reunite families.

To read the *Fact Sheet* and find out more about immigration through the Southern borders, [click here](#).



Screen Children and Families for Signs of Poverty

In 2013, the American Academy of Pediatrics added **Poverty and Child Health** to the Agenda for Children. This was in recognition of the growing number of children living in poor and low-income households in the United States and the role that pediatricians could play in connecting these children and families with community resources.

This month, the Academy released a policy statement, [Poverty and Child Health in the United States](#), developed by the Poverty

and Child Health Workgroup that included a series of recommendations for pediatricians and a technical report “that describes current knowledge on child poverty and the mechanisms by which poverty influences the health and well-being of children.”

This statement was based on a determination that “*Almost half of young children in the United States live in poverty or near poverty. The American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to reducing and ultimately eliminating child poverty in the United States. Poverty and related social determinants of health can lead to adverse health outcomes in childhood and across the life course, negatively affecting*

physical health, socioemotional development, and educational achievement. The American Academy of Pediatrics advocates for programs and policies that have been shown to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for children and families living in poverty. With an awareness and understanding of the effects of poverty on children, pediatricians and other pediatric health practitioners in a family-centered medical home can assess the financial stability of families, link families to resources, and coordinate care with community partners. Further research, advocacy, and continuing education will improve the ability of pediatricians to address the social determinants of health when caring for children who live in poverty.”

[Click here](#) for more information about the AAP Agenda for Children.

A New Director for the U.S. Department of Education?



Dr. John G. King, Jr., who currently serves as Acting Secretary of Education for the U.S. Department of Education, moved one step closer to becoming a cabinet member as the Senate Health, Education, Labor and

Pensions Committee approved his nomination by a 16-6 vote on March 9th. A formal nomination hearing was held for Dr. King on February 25th. [Click here](#) to watch the video of the nomination hearing by the Committee and to download a copy of Dr. King’s testimony. **From Dr. King:** “...One of my highest priorities as education secretary would be to lift up the teaching profession, and find more ways to celebrate, support, and sustain our nation’s educators....In so many ways, this is a

unique moment in our nation’s educational journey...Let’s harness the bipartisan momentum of last year to make this year one of continued progress...Let’s make 2016 the year we transform career and technical education for the 21st century by driving innovation and quality.”

SECA Senators voting against confirmation were: Burr (R-NC), Isakson (R-GA), Paul (R-KY), and Scott (R-SC). Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) voted in favor. The full Senate will now consider the nomination.

News from the States



West Virginia

As in many of our Southern states, school infrastructure has aged and states are scrambling to repair and replace dilapidated school buildings.

Some schools in West Virginia have been particularly hard hit with the shutdown of the coal industry and one case in point is the schools in rural Fayette County West Virginia.

These schools have been under state administration for the past five years and patrons of the district have been unable to agree on a consolidation plan as their student population has declined dramatically. The State Superintendent of Education recently proposed closing several schools and building a new high school, a proposal that was met with little support by school patrons and the School Building Authority (a government agency that assists in funding these projects.)

Source: *Education Week*, 1/6/2016.

The School Building Authority and the Fayette County Schools have developed [an action plan](#) to address these issues and proposals will be developed with community input.



Texas

In 2015, the Texas Legislature passed [H.B. 4](#), a signature measure of Governor Greg Abbott, that requires school districts to hire pre-K teachers with **multiple credentials and to improve family engagement** in order to receive one of the new grants that were created under this bill. The new grant program is funded at \$130 million for the fiscal biennium that will end on August 31, 2017.

The approach taken to teacher credentialing is unique in that it requires certification as the baseline but also requires an additional qualification including:

- ◆ A CDA credential or another early childhood credential approved by the agency
- ◆ Certification offered through a training center accredited by Association Montessori Internationale or through the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education
- ◆ At least 8 years teaching in a nationally accredited child care program
- ◆ Current employment in an approved prekindergarten program or an equivalent qualification

The Family Engagement Plan

([Sec.29.168](#)) establishes criteria for the establishment of the plan within the prekindergarten program and includes significant community involvement criteria.

What the bill **did not do** was establish a staff/child ratio requirement for Texas pre-K programs. For a brief summary of the legislation and current implementation status, go to [Texas ties pre-k grants to more teacher training or experience](#) on the MyStatesman.com website.



Florida

The Best and the Brightest, Florida's controversial teacher

bonus-pay program has been reauthorized for another year as a budget line-item. Established last July as part of a budget compromise, the program was allotted \$44 million and is funded this year at \$49 million. The original intent of the program was to attract strong teachers to Title I schools.

The program pays teacher bonuses based upon two criteria: A ranking of a minimum of "effective" on the state teacher-evaluation system and the teacher's own SAT or ACT scores.

For more information, see the article, [Despite objections, lawmakers look to expand Best and Brightest teacher bonus program](#).

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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.

What the Candidates Have to Say About Education

Education Week published an article entitled, *5 Key Takeaways on Education from White House Candidates* in the February 24, 2016 edition. Since that time, the field has narrowed, but it's worth looking at the key points that were outlined for the current candidate field.

Clinton: Early childhood education a long time priority—Supported NCLB and now supports ESSA—Received the endorsement of the NEA and AFT—Supports the Common Core Standards

Sanders: Voted against NCLB but supports ESSA—College free for everyone—Skeptical of alternative routes to teaching credential—Did not like Race to the Top—Educational equity in K-12

Cruz: Cut or abolish the U.S. Department of Education—Doesn't support Common Core—Supports state accountability, not federal—Does not support ESSA—School choice

Kasich: Reduce the size of the U.S. Department of Education—Supports the Common Core Standards—Supports eliminating bargaining rights for teachers and public employees—Mixed record

on charter schools

Trump: Current educational system is doing a "shoddy" job—Opposes the Common Core Standards—Wants to eliminate gun-free school zones—Reduce the U.S. Department of Education—Beliefs beyond K-12?—look at Trump University

This candidate field provides some very clear cut choices, both philosophically and pragmatically. If you'd like more detailed information about their education platforms (or lack thereof), go to page 1 of this newsletter and click on the links that will lead you to the candidates' websites.