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# Policy Update: September 2020

SRCD's *Policy Update* monitors policy developments in Washington, D.C., including federal priorities for developmental science, and legislation and programs relevant to child development. It also contains information on conferences and training opportunities, new reports, and requests for comments. *Policy Update* also highlights the work and experiences of SRCD Policy Fellows in the column *Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow*.

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### SRCD Child and Family Policy News

**Welcome to the 2020-2021 Class of SRCD U.S. Policy Fellows**

The SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship Programs include placement opportunities in federal congressional offices as well as federal and state executive branch agencies. The purpose of the fellowship programs is to provide researchers with immersive opportunities to learn about policy development, implementation, and evaluation, and to use their research skills in child development to inform public policy at the federal or state level.

*SRCD Federal Executive Branch Fellows*

**Lorena Aceves,** Ph.D., Office of Head Start (OHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
**Krystal Bichay-Awadalla**, Ph.D., Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), ACF, HHS
**Jackie Gross,** Ph.D., OPRE, ACF, HHS
**Ellen Litkowski**, Ph.D., OPRE, ACF, HHS
**Frances Martínez Pedraza,** Ph.D., Office of Childcare (OCC), ACF, HHS
**Parisa Parsafar,** Ph.D., Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institutes of Health (NIH), HHS
**Alayna Schreier**, Ph.D., Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), HHS
**Dianna Tran,** Ph.D., OPRE, ACF, HHS

*SRCD Federal Congressional Fellow*

**Christian Clesi,** Ph.D., Office of Senator Bob Casey, Special Committee on Aging

*SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow*

**Jenn Finders,** Ph.D., Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning, Indiana Family Social and Services Administration

*SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellows*

**Andrew (Drew) McGee,** Ph.D., Office of Early Childhood, Colorado Department of Human Services
**Wendy Wei,** Ph.D., Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

**Spotlights on SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship Alumni**

Christina Padilla, Ph.D., M.P.P., was a SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellow who was placed in the District of Columbia Office of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Learning. Read about Christina's contributions to an evaluation of the Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five (PDG B-5).

Emily Ross, Ph.D., was a SRCD Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow who was placed in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Read about Emily's work on the research project, "Understanding the Role of Licensing in Early Care and Education (TRLECE)".

Are you interested in learning more about the contributions that SRCD U.S. Policy Fellows have made at their placements? Visit the SRCD website to read Spotlights and abstracts describing their work.

**SRCD's 2021 Biennial Meeting Goes Virtual – New Dates**

SRCD's 2021 Biennial Meeting will be held entirely virtually and the dates have shifted slightly to April 7-9, 2021 (Wednesday through Friday) to accommodate the virtual format. Visit our event page for more information about the meeting, including FAQs.

**New *Statement of the Evidence* Volume on Inequities in Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In the United States, the pandemic has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and challenges for historically marginalized groups. SRCD's five-part *Statement of the Evidence* volume addresses the unique impact that COVID-19 has had on historically marginalized children, youth, and families. The volume includes five, two-page briefs on the experiences of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN), Asian, Black, Latinx, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) children and youth. You may download the entire Statement of the Evidence volume, including an introduction to the volume and all two-page briefs, from SRCD's website.

**New *Child Evidence Brief* on Understanding the Impacts of Natural Disasters on Children Released**

SRCD has recently released a *Child Evidence Brief*, "Understanding the Impacts of Natural Disasters on Children." This brief addresses the unique impact that natural disasters have on children, shedding light on the experiences of children who are particularly vulnerable during and after a disaster event. Learn more about Child Evidence Briefs.

## Legislative Branch Updates

*FY 2021 Appropriations Update*

**H.R. 8337: FY 2021 Continuing Appropriations & Other Extensions Act Passes House**

On September 22, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 8337, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act with a 359-57 vote. The continuing resolution, which has bipartisan support, would fund the first ten weeks of Fiscal Year 2021 (through December 11, 2020), providing the means to potentially avert a government shutdown when the current fiscal year ends on September 30, 2020.

H.R. 8337 includes provisions that would extend pandemic-related assistance for federal nutrition programs (e.g., Pandemic EBT Program), fund the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and provide the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with access to disaster relief funds, among others.

H.R. 8337 now goes to the Senate for consideration.

**H.R. 2639: Strength in Diversity Act of 2020 Passes House**

On September 15, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2639, the Strength in Diversity Act of 2020 with a 248-167 vote. H.R. 2639 would establish a federal grant program to increase diversity in public schools, fostering the "…development, implementation, and evaluation of comprehensive strategies to address the effects of racial isolation or concentrated poverty by increasing diversity, including racial diversity and socioeconomic diversity, in covered schools." H.R. 2639 includes provisions that would:

- Foster the examination of racial and socioeconomic stratification and educational outcomes of children who attend covered schools, assess teacher diversity as well as plans to improve teacher diversity, and support the creation and implementation of a family, student, and community engagement plan.
- Enable State education agencies (who apply for funding) to study segregation and prioritize school construction funding that would improve racial and economic integration.

Rep. Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11), who introduced H.R 2639, released a statement upon the bill's passage, stating, "Schools are still segregated along racial and economic lines, hurting all students, but especially students of color and students from low-income communities. Segregated schools are under-resourced and over-disciplined, and students who attend them face life-long disparities in academic success and earnings potential. By integrating our schools, we can not only ensure access to opportunity, regardless of race and economic status, but also reduce racial prejudice and strengthen our common bonds." Read Rep. Marcia L. Fudge's statement for more information.

The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

### *Additional Hearings of Interest*

**Senate Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Coronavirus Response Efforts**
On September 16, the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies of the Senate Committee on Appropriations held a hearing to review COVID-19 response efforts – "Review of Coronavirus Response Efforts." Witnesses included: Robert R. Redfield, M.D., Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Bob Kadlec, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Admiral Brett Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. View the full recording and read member statements.

**House Subcommittee Holds Hearing on the Administration's Attacks on Gender-Based Protections**
On September 10, the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services of the House Committee on Education and Labor held a hearing titled, "On the Basis of Sex: Examining the Administration's Attacks on Gender-Based Protections." Witnesses included: Jocelyn Frye, J.D., Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress; Sasha Jean Buchert, J.D., Senior Attorney, Lambda Legal; Samantha K. Harris, J.D., Senior Fellow, Foundation for Individual Rights in Education; and Fatima Goss Graves, J.D., President and CEO, National Women's Law Center. View the full recording and read member statements and witness testimonies.

**House Subcommittee Holds Hearing on the Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on University Research**
On September 9, the Subcommittee on Research and Technology of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing on "Time Change: The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on University Research." Witnesses included: Joseph Walsh, Ph.D., Interim Vice President for Economic Development and Innovation, University of Illinois System; David Stone, Ph.D., Vice President for Research, Oakland University; Theresa Mayer, Ph.D., Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships, Purdue University; and

Ryan Muzzio, Physics Ph.D. Student, Carnegie Mellon University. View the full recording and read opening statements and witness testimonies.

**Senate Committee Holds Hearing on Vaccines and Public Health**

On September 9, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions held a hearing on "Vaccines: Saving Lives, Ensuring Confidence, and Protecting Public Health." Witnesses included: Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., Director, National Institutes of Health; and VADM Jerome M. Adams, M.D., M.P.H, Surgeon General of the United States, United States Department of Health and Human Services. View the full recording and read witness testimonies.

## Executive Branch Updates

***Highlights***

**Trump Administration Announces COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Strategy**

On September 16, the Trump Administration released a COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, requesting states and localities to submit their plans to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by October 16. In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Defense (DoD), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a summary of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution strategy ("From the Factory to the Frontlines: The Operation Warp Speed Strategy for Distributing a COVID-19 Vaccine") and an interim playbook ("COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations").

Read the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' press release for more information about this announcement.

**RFI: Fostering Innovative Research to Improve Mental Health Outcomes Among Minority and Health Disparity Populations**

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) issued a request for information (RFI) seeking input on innovative research and research priorities to better mental health outcomes for racial/ethnic minority and health disparities populations in the United States. NIMH notes relevant topical areas for public comment,

which can include, but are not limited to:

- “Input on novel ways in which research on factors such as social determinants, cultural traditions, religion and spirituality, and historical trauma, etc., can be used to understand, prevent, and treat mental illnesses among minority and health disparities populations.”
- “Research that addresses racism and discrimination to test intervention strategies on mental health outcomes and informs mechanisms of action.”
- “Insights on previously unidentified or understudied social, behavioral, and/or organizational targets such as racism, bias, discrimination, stigma, etc. that may have high impact in exacerbating disparities in mental health outcomes across multiple minority and health disparities groups.”
- “Ideas about innovative systems-level or cross-systems factors that may significantly contribute to or reduce disparate mental health outcomes among minority and health disparities groups."
- “Practical or promising mental health preventive and treatment interventions that are currently used in minority and health disparities populations but have not been rigorously tested.”
- “Ideas about new methods or tools that may be critical to measuring mental health outcomes in minority and health disparities populations, including the development of valid, reliable measures of psychological functioning with enough sensitivity to gauge differences within and between groups.”
- “Ideas about prevention interventions to address racism/discrimination at the individual, family and/or community level to reduce risk for mental disorders and improve mental health.”

Read this request for information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties should submit questions and comments to nimhodwd@nih.gov by October 30, 2020.

**RFI: Federal Coordination to Promote Economic Mobility for All Americans**

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a request for information (RFI) soliciting public input on the formation of a federal interagency Council on Economic Mobility (Council). The Council includes leaders from the following member agencies: HHS, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Treasury; the Social Security Administration (SSA); and the Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) or their delegates.

The RFI provides additional details about the Council,“[a]s an interagency group, the Council is focusing on areas that are crosscutting, issues that cannot be accomplished by a single agency on its own, seeking to create an accountable and effective structure for interagency collaboration and using federal authorities to

promote family-sustaining careers and economic mobility for low-income Americans. The Council aims to promote economic recovery and build resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, learning from the response to build a more integrated and effective long-term federal strategy to promote economic mobility and help individuals sustain their economic success."

Read this request for information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties should submit questions and comments to *CouncilTeam@hhs.gov* by October 2, 2020.

***Federal Reports***

**New Reports and Briefs from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation**

Several new publications are available from the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Overview and Profiles of State-Led Evaluations: The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program—Fiscal Years (FYs) 2014–2018 (2nd edition)*. This report and expanded profile document provide information about state-led evaluations funded between FYs 2014 and 2018, including evaluation topics and designs selected by MIECHV awardees.

(2) *ELEVATE (Empower, Lay the Foundation, Enlighten, Value, Attach, Tame, Engage): Implementation of a healthy marriage and relationship education program by a statewide cooperative extension service*. This report examines (1) the context for implementing ELEVATE; (2) procedures for supporting ELEVATE implementation through Extension; (3) University of Florida's processes for recruiting and enrolling couples; and (4) couples' participation and engagement in the program.

(3) *Graphical Overview of State TANF Policies as of July 2018*. This report is a companion to the 2018 Welfare Rules Databook and provides a graphical overview of some of the policy differences across states, related to initial eligibility, benefit amounts, work and activity requirements, and ongoing eligibility and time limits.

(4) *Parents and Children Together: How Low-Income Fathers in Responsible Fatherhood (RF) Programs Perceive and Provide Financial Support for Their Children*. This report sheds light on how low-income fathers interested in RF programs perceive and provide financial support for their children.

(5) *Tips on Developing Surveys of Child Care Providers*. This report describes best practices for developing and testing surveys of childcare providers.

(6) *Short-Term Outcomes after Contacting the National Domestic Violence Hotline and LoveIsRespect (LIR): Comparing Survivors to other Contactors*. This report evaluates the services provided by the Hotline and LIR by describing the use patterns and short-term outcomes for contactors.

(7) *Challenges and Solutions to Conducting Intensive Studies in Early Care and Education Settings*. This report presents lessons learned from the Assessing the Implementation and Cost of High Quality Early Care and Education (ECE-ICHQ) project that could prove useful to the field. It discusses the challenges that exist when recruiting centers and conducting qualitative research, cost analysis, and self-reported data collection with staff in center-based settings and offers potential solutions to those challenges.

(8) *Native Language and Culture Experiences among Children in Region XI Head Start Classrooms & Programs: Findings from the American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey 2015*. This report describes the Native language and cultural experiences of children in Region XI Head Start, including insight on areas such as children's classroom peer and staff racial composition, programs' staff tribal and community memberships, teachers' Native language use, and children's Native language and cultural experiences and resources in classrooms.

(9) *Implementation of Career STREAMS (Strengthening Relationship Education and Marriage Services): An Integrated Employment and Healthy Relationship Program for Young Adults*. This report examines (1) preparations for program implementation (including documenting the process for integrating the HMRE (Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education) curriculum and JCA (job and career advancement) program; (2) procedures for hiring, training, and supervising frontline staff; (3) the extent to which the *Within My Reach* curriculum was implemented with fidelity; and (4) participants' engagement with and responsiveness to the program.

(10) *Evaluating a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program for At-Risk Youth in Alternative Schools*. This report provides a final summary of key implementation and impact findings from the evaluation of Teen Choice in New York. It encapsulates findings from two earlier reports that provide detailed evidence on the program's impacts and implementation.

**New Reports and Briefs from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation**

Several new publications are available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *State Strategies for Improving Child Support Outcomes for Incarcerated Parents.* This report describes four key strategies states use to identify and connect with incarcerated parents with child support orders. To improve outcomes for families and comply with the modernization rule, state child support agencies across the country have partnered with justice and social service agencies to share data and connect with incarcerated parents.

(2) *Trauma-Informed Approaches: Connecting Research, Policy, and Practice to Build Resilience in Children and Families.* This webpage includes links to materials ASPE has developed with James Bell Associates and Education Development Center as part of an effort to advance our understanding of trauma-informed approaches. This project examines trauma-informed efforts across sectors to assess what they look like in community settings, their impacts, and areas where further information is needed.

(3) *Developing Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines for Youth Programs: Technical Report on Effectiveness Factors for Interventions that Address Externalizing Behavior Problems.* This report describes a core components approach to using evidence to improve the effectiveness of youth programs. Meta-analysis was used to uncover the characteristics of programs effective in reducing externalizing behavior problems, which will be translated into practice guidelines for those who design, support, and implement such programs.

**New Reports and Briefs from the Institute of Education Sciences**

Several new publications are available from the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education:

(1) *Guide to Conducting a Needs Assessment for American Indian Students.* This report was designed to help state and local education agencies conduct needs assessments to better understand the strengths, challenges, and needs unique to schools serving American Indian students.

(2) *Can Texting Parents Improve Attendance in Elementary School? A Test of an Adaptive Messaging Strategy*. This report presents findings from a study that tested four versions of an adaptive text messaging strategy to see which, if any, would reduce chronic absence and improve achievement among 26,000 elementary school students.

(3) *The Reliability and Consequential Validity of Two Teacher-Administered Student Mathematics Diagnostic Assessments*. This report explores whether two teachers using the same mathematics assessment to assess the same student on two occasions within a short period of time assign the same Stage Score (inter-assessor reliability) and how useful the teachers found the assessment (consequential validity).

(4) *Relationships between Schoolwide Instructional Observation Scores and Student Academic Achievement and Growth in Low?Performing Schools in Massachusetts*. This report examines the relationships between classroom observation scores and academic growth and achievement within a school, after adjusting for the percentage of students with low incomes and the grade levels in these low-performing schools.

(5) *Are State Policy Reforms in Oregon Associated with Fewer School Suspensions and Expulsions?* This report examines the association between new state-level policies, which emphasize preventing behavioral problems and reducing unnecessary suspensions and expulsions, and suspension and expulsion rates in Oregon.

(6) *Teacher Preparation and Employment Outcomes of Beginning Teachers in Rhode Island*. This report compares teacher retention, mobility, and attrition rates across different types of preparation programs using statistical models to examine relationships between the teacher preparation institution and the employment outcomes of interest.

(7) *Teacher Turnover and Access to Effective Teachers in the School District of Philadelphia*. This report, conducted by the School District of Philadelphia and the Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic, aims to better understand students' access to effective teachers and the factors related to teacher turnover.

(8) *A 2017 Follow-up: Six-Year Persistence, Attainment, Withdrawal, Stopout, and Transfer Rates at Any Institution for 2011–12 First-time Postsecondary Students*. This report, based on data collected through the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:12/17), a nationally representative study which followed first-time college students for 6 years, provides information on students' characteristics and their 6-

year persistence and attainment. This report provides information on students' 6-year withdrawal, stopout (which is defined as "a break in enrollment of 5 or more consecutive months"), and transfer rates.

(9) *Early Childhood Program Participation: 2019*. This First Look report presents findings about young children's care and education before kindergarten, including participation rates in weekly nonparental care arrangements, how well these arrangements cover work hours, costs of care, months spent in care, location of care, factors used to select a care arrangement, and factors making it difficult to find care.

(10) *Progress of Arizona Kindergartners toward English Proficiency in Grade 3 by English Learner Student Classification*. This report examines the English language proficiency and English language arts (ELA) proficiency (reading and writing at grade level) of non-native English speaker students in kindergarten and in grade 3.

## U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The September 2020 FFO lists over 100 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination. Below we highlight a few funding opportunities from this month's FFO:

(1) National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity to support research on interventions to improve health in Native American (NA) populations. Applications are due by May 17, 2021.

(2) U.S. Department of Education (DOE) grant program to provide financial support to institutions of higher education (IHEs) with the greatest unmet needs related to coronavirus to enable them to resume operations, serve the needs of students, reduce disease transmission, and develop more resilient instructional delivery models, such as distance learning, to continue educating students who cannot or choose not to attend classroom-based instruction due to coronavirus. Applications are due by October 20, 2020.

(3) National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity for research centers to support integrated programs of high-impact, practice-based research with near-term potential to address NIMH (National Institute of Mental Health) suicide prevention priorities and help achieve the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention goals of reducing the rate of suicide in the US. Applications are due by October 15, 2020.

(4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding opportunity to support research that enhances knowledge about autism spectrum disorder (ASD), including risk factors for ASD and the expression of ASD, from childhood through early adulthood, and to obtain information that can be used to improve the health and functioning of individuals with ASD as they mature. Applications are due by November 10, 2020.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.