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Policy Update: October 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 Teaching Resources

In Case You Missed It: SRCD Launched SRCD Commons

SRCD launched a new online community platform to support member networking, facilitate discussion on a variety of topics, share resources, and more.

Interested in joining SRCD Commons? Introduce yourself on the *Welcome Thread* in the *Commons Lounge Community*, join discussions in the *Research Continuity* and *Teaching Tips and Questions* community, and find and share resources in the *Teaching Materials Exchange*.

Contact scholar@srcd.org with questions.

Seeking Input on Higher Education Teaching Materials

The Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is developing free higher education teaching materials based on OPRE's research. OPRE is responsible for studying ACF programs and the diverse populations they serve through rigorous research and evaluation projects. Their work includes program evaluations, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies utilizing a variety of methods and disciplinary perspectives to study topics such as adoption and foster care, early childhood care and education, home visiting, youth services, family strengthening, welfare, and employment. OPRE seeks input from higher education instructors in SRCD. Your feedback will guide OPRE toward developing useful course-related materials.

Please consider completing OPRE's brief survey.

Legislative Branch Updates

FY 2021 Appropriations Update

President Trump Signs Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act Into Law

On October 1, President Donald Trump signed H.R. 8337 Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act, a continuing resolution, into law. As reported in last month's *Policy Update*, H.R. 8337 extends funding for the first ten weeks of Fiscal Year 2021 (through December 11, 2020).

On September 22, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 8337 with a 359-57 vote. The Senate followed suit on September 30, passing the continuing resolution with an 84-10 vote. Congress is expected to reconsider Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations after the November elections.

COVID-19 Update

House Passes COVID-19 Relief Package

On October 1, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 925, a $2.2 trillion COVID-19 relief package with a 214-207 vote. According to CQ, "The bill (H.R. 925) isn't expected to get a vote in the GOP-controlled Senate, where Republicans have been reluctant to go any higher than $1 trillion." Of note, the Senate has expressed interest in a slimmer COVID-19 relief package.

Additional Hearings of Interest

House Subcommittee Holds Hearing on Compound Crises: Extreme Weather, Social Injustice, and a Global Pandemic

On September 30, the Subcommittee on Environment, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing titled, "Coping with Compound Crises: Extreme Weather, Social Injustice, and a Global Pandemic." Witnesses included: Roxane Cohen Silver, Ph.D., Professor of Psychological Science, Medicine, and Public Health, University of California, Irvine; and Samantha Montano, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Emergency Management, Massachusetts Maritime Academy. View the full recording and read member statements and witness testimonies.

Senate Hearing on the Federal Response to COVID-19

On September 23, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held a hearing titled, "COVID-19: An Update on the Federal Response." Witnesses included: Anthony Fauci, M.D., Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health; Robert Redfield, M.D., Director, United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; ADM Brett Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health, United States Department of Health and Human Services; and Stephen Hahn, M.D., Commissioner of Food And Drugs, United States Food and Drug Administration. View the full recording and read member

statements and witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

RFI: Future Topics for the NSF Convergence Accelerator

On October 9, the National Science Foundation (NSF) released a Dear Colleague Letter, replacing a previous Request for Information (RFI) on the NSF Convergence Accelerator for Fiscal Year 2021. The letter requests input on potential topics for the Fiscal Year 2022 NSF Convergence Accelerator.

Please note, "Potential topics for the FY 2022 NSF Convergence Accelerator program must have the potential for significant national-scale societal impact. Topic ideas may also relate to Industries of the Future (IotF) and/or NSF's Big Ideas. Ideas submitted in response to this RFI must be broad in scope to support and identify a set of challenges to complex problems that would be best addressed by multiple teams working together as a cohort."

Read the Dear Colleague Letter for more information and consider submitting ideas. Interested parties should submit ideas via an online questionnaire by November 9, 2020.

Interim Final Rule Request for Comment: Strengthening the H-1B Nonimmigrant Visa Classification Program

On October 8, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security published, "Strengthening the H-1B Nonimmigrant Visa Classification Program" an interim final rule (IFR) with a request for comments. The interim final rule will be effective on December 7, 2020.

The IFR states, "Congressional intent behind creating the H-1B program was, in part, to help U.S. employers fill labor shortages in positions requiring highly skilled or educated workers using temporary workers. A key goal of the program at its inception was to help U.S. employers obtain the temporary employees they need to meet their business needs. To address legitimate countervailing concerns of the adverse impact foreign workers could have on U.S. workers, Congress put in place a number of measures intended to protect U.S.

workers to ensure that H-1B workers would not adversely affect them. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) section 212(n) and (p); 8 U.S.C. 1182(n) and (p). However, over time, legitimate concerns have emerged that indicate that the H-1B program is not functioning as originally envisioned and that U.S. workers are being adversely affected… By reforming key aspects of the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program, this rule will improve program integrity and better ensure that only petitioners who meet the statutory criteria for the H-1B classification are able to employ H-1B workers who are qualified for the classification. This, in turn, will protect jobs of U.S. workers as a part of responding to the national emergency, and facilitate the Nation's economic recovery."

Read the interim final rule for more information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties must submit comments on the collection of information by November 9, 2020 and comments on the interim final rule must be submitted on or before December 7, 2020. Of note, comments only on the collection of information received after November 9, 2020 will not be considered by DHS and USCIS.

RFI: National Science Foundation Seeks Input on Evidence-Building Activities

On October 7, the National Science Foundation released a request for information seeking input on opportunities to build on "ongoing efforts to identify priority questions that can guide evidence-building activities by soliciting input from the public."

Read this request for information and consider submitting a comment. Interested parties should submit comments to Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, splimpto@nsf.gov by December 31, 2020.

New Homeland Security Rule Restricts Foreign Students' Ability to Stay in the U.S.

On September 25, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security published a notice of proposed rulemaking, "Establishing a Fixed Time Period of Admission and an Extension of Stay Procedure for Nonimmigrant Academic Students, Exchange Visitors, and Representatives of Foreign Information Media." The proposed rule would pose significant challenges for international students by placing time limits on how long F academic student, J exchange visitor, and I representatives of foreign information media can stay in the United States.

The rule would modify the current "duration of status" (D/S) framework that is applied to F, J, and I

nonimmigrants who comply with their visa requirements. The notice states, “With this notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), DHS proposes to replace the D/S framework for F, J, and I nonimmigrants with an admission period with a specific date upon which an authorized stay ends. Nonimmigrants who would like to stay in the United States beyond their fixed date of admission would need to apply directly with DHS for an extension of stay.”

Read the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security notice of proposed rulemaking for more information. Interested parties should submit comments and materials on October 26, 2020.

Accelerating Research through International Network-to-Network Collaborations

The National Science Foundation issued a new solicitation, “Accelerating Research through International Network-to-Network Collaborations (AccelNet),” providing updated guidance on a 2019 AccelNet solicitation (NSF 19-501), which sought “...international networks of networks addressing scientific grand challenges that require significant international research coordination, either aligned with one of NSF’s 10 Big Ideas or community-identified grand challenges.”

Read the notice for more information about the Accelerating Research through International Network-to-Network Collaborations (AccelNet) program. Interested parties should submit their FY 2021 Competition proposals by January 4, 2021.

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.

Child and Family Policy Organizations Updates

Children's Budget Summit 2020: The Federal Budget and the Impact of COVID-19

On September 30, First Focus on Children released their annual *Children’s Budget 2020* report and held a release event, “Children’s Budget Summit 2020.” Michelle Dallafior, Senior Vice President for Budget and Tax Policy at First Focus on Children, opened the event by laying the foundation for the unprecedented circumstances surrounding Fiscal Year (FY) 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, economic decline, environmental disasters, and a divisive national election.

Highlights from the *Children’s Budget 2020* report include in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020: children accounted for only 7.48% of total federal spending despite children making up approximately 25% of the total U.S. population, and 89 percent of children eligible for Early Head Start lacked access to it. The report also analyzed international spending for the first time and found that federal spending for children abroad made up 0.11% of the overall federal budget. Further, the report noted, the FY 2021 President’s budget request

would eliminate or block grant 59 programs that support children.

Laurie Combe, President, National Association of School Nurses and Kimberly Morrison, a teacher from Detroit Public Schools, detailed the challenges school administrators and students face during the pandemic. Combe and Morrison highlighted how school closures and the spread of COVID-19 are exacerbating existing economic and racial disparities for children and families (e.g., access to broadband, heightened risk of exposure to COVID-19). Combe and Morrison recognized the need for funding to improve school facilities to foster safe learning environments (e.g., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system improvement), and support school-based health care providers (e.g., provision of personal protective equipment (PPE)). Tom Wyatt, CEO, KinderCare Learning Centers, addressed issues the childcare industry is currently facing, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic (e.g., affordability, access, and workforce issues). Speakers Ambassador Susan Jacobs (Retired), Former Special Advisor for Children's Issues, Department of State and Roxanne Paisible, Senior Manager, Children and Youth, InterAction later discussed the impact of the U.S. federal budget on children around the globe. Jacobs emphasized the need for inter-agency coordination to better support children abroad and noted the importance of working cooperatively with host country governments. Paisible urged the U.S. government to adopt policies to ensure marginalized international youth – girls, children uprooted by conflict, and youth with disabilities - are not left behind.

Several Congress members emphasized the need for COVID-19 relief that will address children, youth, and families' unique needs. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) emphasized the importance of specific assistance for children, youth and families adversely impacted by the pandemic, and noted the pandemic has posed significant challenges for homeless children and youth in Alaska. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) recognized the need to take a broader look at the impact of federal policies on children, provide flexible emergency funding for child welfare programs, and prevent child abuse and neglect. Representative Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) noted the importance of meaningful investments to support the childcare industry, bridge the digital divide, and tackle food insecurity for children and families.

The *Children's Budget Report 2020* was supported by the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, Oak Foundation, GHR Foundation, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Read further about the Children's Budget Summit 2020 and read the *Children's Budget 2020* report.

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) *Reducing Homelessness Among Youth with Child Welfare Involvement: Phase II Implementation Experiences in a Multi-Phase Grant.* This report is a process study intended to inform future efforts to implement interventions designed to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults with child welfare involvement.

(2) *Youth-At Risk of Homelessness (YARH): What We've Done and Where We're Going*. This report describes the multi-phased Youth At-Risk of Homelessness project. This grant program started in 2013 to build evidence on what works in preventing homelessness among youth and young adults with previous involvement with the child welfare system.

(3) *Theoretical Framework and Performance Measures for the National Domestic Violence Hotline*. This report helps a broad audience (e.g., practitioners, policymakers, academicians, researchers, and the public) understand the process of developing a theoretical framework for a brief crisis intervention and associated performance measures to inform program performance monitoring and evaluation.

(4) *Workforce Development Council of Seattle–King County's Health Careers for All Program: Three-Year Impact Report*. This report describes research undertaken to evaluate whether Health Careers for All was successful in providing training to low-income, low-skilled adults and whether the program's efforts led to impacts on credentials, earnings, healthcare employment, and other life outcomes.

(5) *Using Child Care Provider Surveys to Inform Policy Responses to COVID-19*. This webinar is designed to support Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency staff, their research partners, and others collecting information from childcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(6) *Strengthening the Implementation of Marriage and Relationship Programs (SIMR): Program Participation Update*. This 1-page brief provides information for healthy marriage and relationship (HMRE) programs about participating in the SIMR project. SIMR will be recruiting programs to work collaboratively with a team of HMRE program experts to strengthen recruitment, retention, and client engagement efforts.

(7) *Developing Data Exchange Standards for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Home Visiting Programs: Summary of Discussions from Five Regional Listening Sessions held June-July 2019*. This report describes listening sessions whose purpose was to engage the home visiting field in a conversation about how data exchange standards can help achieve long-standing goals of state/territory and local programs, such as better integration of data from home visiting programs with broader early childhood strategies and programs, improved interoperability among service delivery partners, and reduced data collection and reporting burdens.

(8) *Data Snapshots from the Interim Report on the 2015 Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) Grantee Programs and Clients*. This resource includes a series of snapshots describing the 2015 cohort of 85 HMRF grantees that were awarded five-year grants in September 2015.

(9) *National and Tribal Evaluation of the 2nd Generation of Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG 2.0): Descriptive Evaluation Analysis Plan for the National Evaluation*. This report is an Analysis Plan to supplement the Descriptive Evaluation Design Report for the National Evaluation and presents detailed plans for analyses to address the research questions in accordance with the specified research design.

(10) *The San Diego Workforce Partnership's Bridge to Employment in the Healthcare Industry Program: Three-Year Impact Report*. This report contains research that was undertaken to evaluate whether Bridge to Employment was successful in providing training to low-income, low-skilled adults and whether the program's efforts led to impacts on credentials, earnings, healthcare employment, and other life outcomes.

(11) *Understanding Post Adoption and Guardianship Instability for Children and Youth Who Exit Foster Care: Study Design Options*. This report summarizes five research study design options that intend to gather information about post adoption and guardianship instability.

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) *The Value of Relationships: Improving Human Services Participant Outcomes Through Social Capital*. This report is a go-to resource for human services providers looking for practical ways to implement social capital

building practices to improve participant outcomes. Building on findings from over a year of research on ways human services can build and leverage participant social capital, or the value that arises from connections, networks, and relationships, this handbook details five principles undergirding social capital practices and eight emerging social capital practices.

(2) *Implementation Findings from the National Evaluation of the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Demonstration*. This report includes assessments of: (1) access to community-based mental health services; (2) the quality and scope of services provided by CCBHCs; and (3) the impact of the demonstration programs on the federal and state costs of a full range of mental health services.

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) *Education, Employment, and Earnings: Expectations of 2009 Ninth-Graders in 2016*. This report examines the educational, employment, and salary expectations of the 2009 ninth-grade cohort. It also explores their ranking of aspects of a job, such as teamwork or job security, compared to salary.

(2) *A First-Grade Teacher's Guide to Supporting Family Involvement in Foundational Reading Skills*. This report assists teachers in supporting out-of-school literacy activities that are aligned with classroom instruction, informed by student need, grounded in evidence-based practices (the Foundational Reading Skills Practice Guide), and facilitated by ongoing parent-teacher communication.

(3) *Examining High School Career and Technical Education Programs and the Postsecondary Outcomes of Career and Technical Education Students in the Round Rock Independent School District*. This report investigates the percentage of Round Rock Independent School District (ISD) graduates from 2012/13 through 2017/18 who completed one or more career and technical education (CTE) programs of study and attained outcomes after high school graduation including college enrollment, degree or certificate attainment, and employment.

(4) *Success Boston Coaching Intervention Reports*. This What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) intervention report and brief summarize the research on Success Boston Coaching, a coaching intervention for students who

are traditionally underrepresented in college to help them transition from high school to college.

(5) *Why School Accountability Systems Disproportionately Identify Middle Schools' Students with Disabilities (SWD) Subgroups for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI)*. The purpose of this report is to understand why middle schools in two mid-Atlantic states were apparently disproportionately identified for TSI based on the performance of their SWD subgroups.

(6) *Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary School Districts: Fiscal Year (FY) 18*. This report presents data on public elementary and secondary education revenues and expenditures at the local education agency (LEA) or school district level for fiscal year (FY) 2018.

(7) *Forum Guide to Exit Codes*. This report provides best practice information for tracking data about when students transferred, completed high school, dropped out, or otherwise exited an education agency.

(8) *Race and Ethnicity of Public School Teachers and Their Students*. This report examines the race and ethnicity of public school teachers in the United States by the race and ethnicity of the student bodies they teach.

(9) *Characteristics of Public and Private Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results From the 2017–18 National Teacher and Principal Survey First Look*. This report provides descriptive statistics and basic information from the 2017–18 National Teacher and Principal Survey Public School Teacher and Private School Teacher Data files.

(10) *Investigating the Relationship between Adherence to Connecticut's Teacher Education and Mentoring Program Requirements and Teacher Retention*. This report and brief examine data from Connecticut's induction and mentoring program for beginning teachers, called the Teacher Education and Mentoring (TEAM) Program.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The October 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 enhance the research training of promising postdoctorates, early in their postdoctoral training period, who have the potential to become productive investigators in research areas that will advance the goals of the Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative. Applications are due by December 9, 2020.

(2) National Science Foundation (NSF) funding opportunity to create a nationwide Harnessing the Data Revolution (HDR) Coordination Hub, called HDR Central. The overarching purpose of HDR Central will be to increase the impact of the HDR Big Idea by supporting coordination and communication among all HDR projects, and by sharing HDR efforts and outcomes with the public. Applications are due by November 12, 2020.

(3) National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding opportunity to continue the Integrative Neuroscience Initiative on Alcoholism (INIA), a translational, multidisciplinary, collaborative research effort studying brain mechanisms of excessive alcohol drinking associated with alcohol use disorder (AUD). Applications are due on May 26, 2021.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.