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Policy Update: September 2021

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

Attention SRCD Members and Officers of Grant-making Entities: Learn More about SRCD's Diversity Reviewer Database Tool

One of SRCD's primary strategic goals is to work to assure diversity in developmental science. We are writing today to ask for your help towards this core goal. In an effort to increase the diversity of developmental scientists participating in the review of research proposals at federal agencies and foundations in the United States, SRCD has created a Diversity Reviewer Database. The Diversity Reviewer Database (DRD) is a new tool that can be used by authorized scientific review officers at federal agencies and foundations to increase the diversity of scientific reviewers who evaluate research proposals focusing on developmental science. Via the DRD tool, they will have access to the curriculum vitae (CVs/biosketches) of minority scholars and others whose research focuses on the development of racial and ethnic minority children and youth. The scientific review officers can use the tool to identify scientists with relevant content and methodological expertise related to specific grant programs or initiatives. Please note only SRCD members can participate in the Diversity Reviewer Database. SRCD members interested in being added to the DRD, or review officers interested in using this tool to recruit for grant review panels should visit SRCD's website for more information about this opportunity.

Welcome to the 2021-2022 Class of SRCD U.S. Policy Fellows

The SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship Programs include placement opportunities in federal congressional offices as well as in federal and state executive branch agencies. The fellowship programs aim to 1) provide fellows with firsthand experience in federal or state policymaking, program implementation, and evaluation; 2) provide federal and state executive branch agencies and Congress greater access to research expertise on a diverse range of child development topics to enhance evidence-based policy development, implementation, and evaluation; and 3) Build a network of experts that bridge developmental science, federal and state policymaking, and practice.

SRCD Federal Executive Branch Fellows

- **Marissa Abbott**, Ph.D., Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
- **Lorena Aceves,** Ph.D., Office of Head Start (OHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS
- **Jackie Gross,** Ph.D., Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), ACF, HHS
- **Kelsey McKee**, Ph.D., Office of Head Start (OHS), Administration for Children and Families (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
- **Virginia Salo,** Ph.D., NICHD, NIH, HHS
- **Neda Senehi**, Ph.D., OPRE, ACF, HHS
- **Dianna Tran,** Ph.D., OPRE, ACF, HHS

SRCD Federal Congressional Fellow

- **Tanya Tavassolie,** Ph.D., Office of Senator Maggie Hassan

SRCD State Policy Post-doctoral Fellows

- **Alex Busuito,** Ph.D., Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Perinatal and Early Childhood Health
- **Cassandra Simons Gerson,** Ph.D., Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood
- **Lillie Moffett,** Ph.D., California Department of Education, Early Learning & Care Division

SRCD State Policy Pre-doctoral Fellows

- **Clarissa Corkins,** Oklahoma State Department of Education, Office of Curriculum and Instruction.
- **Eleanor Fisk,** Connecticut Office of Early Childhood

Legislative Branch Updates

FY 2022 Appropriations Update

House Passes Stopgap Funding Bill

On September 21, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 5305, the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, a stopgap funding bill that would extend current federal agency funding levels until December 3, 2021. The bill passed with a 220-211 party-line vote. H.R. 5305 also includes language that would suspend the statutory debt limit on federal debt through December 16, 2022, which would address the nation's concurrent debt ceiling crisis. According to CQ, "Treasury Secretary Janet L.

Yellen and private forecasters have said Treasury could run out of cash and accounting gimmicks to remain under the debt ceiling within weeks, and probably no later than the end of October." The bill also includes funding for disaster aid for natural disaster victims and Afghan refugees. To avoid a government shutdown, both chambers must pass legislation that will extend funding for the federal government before the current fiscal year ends on September 30, 2021. At the time of writing, the Senate has not considered H.R. 5305. If the Senate passes the bill, and it is signed into law, lawmakers will need to complete the FY 2022 appropriations process before the December 3 deadline.

Lawmakers Make Progress on FY 2022 Budget Reconciliation Package

The U.S. House of Representatives made progress on the proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 budget reconciliation package this month. At the time of writing, all 13 House committees completed their markups of the reconciliation package and provided the House Committee on the Budget with their recommendations. Of note, several House lawmakers have coupled the timing of the vote on the Senate-passed bipartisan infrastructure bill (H.R. 3684) with the reconciliation package. While some lawmakers have emphasized the need to advance the infrastructure bill as soon as possible, others have stated they will not advance the infrastructure bill before the reconciliation package clears both chambers. As such, the timing of both bills has been a point of contention. Last month, to address competing requests, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) agreed to schedule a House vote on the infrastructure bill on September 27. However, intraparty and interparty disagreements regarding the cost and scope of the reconciliation package, compounded by the debt ceiling crisis, has slowed this process further. At the time of writing, the House and Senate have not passed the reconciliation package nor the bipartisan infrastructure bill. For more information about the reconciliation process, read the House Committee on the Budget's summary.

Additional Hearings of Interest

- **Addressing COVID-19's Impact on Children.** On September 22, the U.S House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing on "Putting Kids First: Addressing COVID-19's Impact on Children." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Protecting Renters During the Pandemic**. On September 10, the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services held a hearing on "Protecting Renters During the Pandemic: Reviewing Reforms to Expedite Emergency Rental Assistance." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

Biden Administration Releases Memorandum on FY 2023 R&D Priorities

On August 27, Shalanda D. Young, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Eric S. Lander, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Executive Office of the President, issued a memorandum on “Multi-Agency Research and Development Priorities for the FY 2023 Budget.” The memorandum describes the Administration’s research and development (R&D) priorities for Fiscal Year 2023, highlighting several key activities: pandemic readiness and prevention; tackling climate change; research and innovation in critical and emerging technologies; innovation for equity; and national security and economic resilience. The memorandum also notes “the priorities covered in this memo require continued investments in R&D; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and engagement; STEM workforce development; technology transfer and commercialization; and research infrastructure, with emphasis on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, other Minority Serving Institutions, and disadvantaged communities who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.” For more information, read the memorandum.

President Biden Issues Executive Orders on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity

On September 3, President Biden issued an executive order on a “White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities.” The order celebrates Historically Black Colleges and Universities’ (HBCUs) achievements advancing economic mobility, recognizes "systemic barriers to accessing resources and opportunities” and outlines the initiative, noting how the initiative will play a critical role in a government-wide effort to address barriers HBCUs face. The order states, “HBCU graduates are barrier-breaking public servants, scientists, artists, lawyers, engineers, educators, business owners, and leaders. For generations, HBCUs have been advancing intergenerational economic mobility for Black families and communities, developing vital academic research, and making our country more prosperous and equitable... It is the policy of my Administration to advance educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity in partnership with HBCUs, and to ensure that these vital institutions of higher learning have the resources and support to

continue to thrive for generations to come." Read the executive order to learn more about this initiative.

This month, President Biden issued a separate order on a "White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity for Hispanics." The order celebrates the "profound and positive impact" the Hispanic community has had on schools, acknowledges systemic barriers that have impeded their access to high-quality education, notes how the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequities, and describes the goals of the initiative. The order asserts, "to ensure that our Nation reaches the ambitious goals we have set for our economy to thrive, as well as to ensure equal access to opportunity for all, we must enable Hispanic and Latino students to reach their highest potential through our Nation's schools and institutions of higher education. The Federal Government must also collaborate with Hispanic and Latino communities to ensure their long-term success. It is the policy of my Administration to advance educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity for Hispanic communities from early childhood until their chosen career." Read the executive order to learn more about this initiative.

Treasury Department Releases New Report on the U.S. Childcare System

On September 15, the U.S. Department of the Treasury released a report titled, "The Economics of Child Care Supply in the United States." The report examines the child care system in the United States and describes how the U.S.'s reliance on private financing overburdens families and does not meet many families' needs. The report notes "currently, the average family with at least one child under age 5 would need to devote about 13 percent of family income to pay for child care, a number that is unaffordable for most families. Less than 20 percent of children eligible for one of the largest federal assistance programs for low-income families, the Child Care and Development Fund, actually receives funding. Notwithstanding the high costs borne by parents, margins for child care providers are low and many struggle to make ends meet. They survive by keeping costs low. Labor, the main input, is overwhelmingly provided by women, many of whom are nonwhite, who earn low wages leading to high turnover. Many child care workers are paid so little that they rely on public services for their own economic needs." For more information, read the report.

ED Webinar Series on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Families, Students, and Educators

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is hosting a series of webinars in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments on COVID-19 and strategies to safely resume in-person instruction. Earlier this month, ED organized a webinar

on, "Lessons from the Field - Safe and Supportive Early Learning: Lessons Learned for the New School Year." The webinar series has covered a wide variety of topics, from strategies for reengaging students to how schools and districts are meeting the social-emotional and mental health needs of students and staff. Previous webinar recordings, slides, and transcripts are available online. To learn more about the series visit the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environment's website.

National Advisory Mental Health Council Holds Meeting

The National Advisory Mental Health Council (NAMHC) convened on September 14. The NAMHC advises the Director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on policies and activities related to mental health research, research training, and institute programming. Dr. Joshua Gordon, Director, NIMH, opened the meeting with the Director's Report, which was followed by presentations that covered a variety of topics (e.g., the National Institutes of Health's UNITE Initiative and COVID-19-related mental health research). For more information about the recent National Advisory Mental Health Council meeting, read the public agenda and view the recording.

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) *Designing Participant-Centered Programs: Participant Reflections on What Works Well in Social Services Programs*. This report describes the perspectives of people participating in the programs featured in the State Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Case Studies project. It highlights what the interviewed participants most appreciated about these programs and how the services supported their goals.

(2) *Case Study Brief: Recognizing and Responding to Intimate Partner Violence among Spanish-Speaking Hispanic Participants of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) Programs*. This report summarizes key takeaways from a case study conducted as part of the Responding to Intimate Violence in

Relationship Programs (RIViR) project in partnership with two HMRE grantees in Colorado and Massachusetts.

(3) *State Approaches to Extending Chafee Services to Age 23: Insights to Inform a Learning Agenda*. For the past two decades, states have been able to access federal funds through the John H. Chafee Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood program to support young adults leaving foster care up to their 21st birthday. This report aims to (1) understand why states chose or did not choose to extend Chafee-funded services to age 23, (2) explain how some states have elected to implement the extension, and (3) use this information to identify potential directions for a learning agenda focused on supporting young people aged 21 to 23 who have been in foster care.

(4) *We Grow Together (WGT) Professional Development (PD) System: Professional Development Experiences in Infant-Toddler Care*. This report describes the professional development experiences of caregivers and PD providers that participated in the field test of WGT.

(5) *Case Study of a Job Training, Housing, and Family Support Program for Young Mothers: New Moms*. This report is a case study that describes New Moms, a nonprofit organization serving the west side of Chicago and its near western suburbs and highlights its key features.

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) *Complex Rules and Barriers to Self-Sufficiency in Safety Net Programs: Perspectives of Working Parents*. This report discusses the perspectives of a group of working parents on receipt of federal benefits. Based on focus groups, it examines program design and implementation, participation barriers, and factors that could help working parents more readily reach financial independence.

(2) *Risks that Come with Increasing Earnings for Low-Income Workers Receiving Safety Net Programs: Perspectives of Working Parents*. This report summarizes findings from focus group discussions with 44 working parents receiving assistance from one or more federal programs, with many parents sharing the view that increasing earnings involves a number of risks.

(3) *How Some States Use Title IV-E Foster Care Funding for Family-Based Facilities that Treat Substance Use Disorder*. The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) permits states to use title IV-E foster care funding for children placed in foster care with their parent in a licensed residential family-based treatment facility for substance abuse. This report describes the planning processes and experiences of three states that use or plan to use this funding, and one state that funds these costs using other means.

(4) *Status Report on Protecting Our Infants Act Implementation Plan: 2019*. This report features an overview of HHS-funded activities to address gaps in data and surveillance, research and evaluation, programs and services for prenatal opioid exposure and Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), provider training, and public awareness efforts.

(5) *Equity Considerations for Delivering Human Services Virtually*. Virtual human services delivery has the potential to improve long-standing disparities in service access and outcomes. This report highlights emerging lessons from the field, identifying considerations for programs to advance equity across all elements of service delivery.

(6) *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Major HHS Data Systems*. This report identifies the impact of the pandemic on 29 HHS statistical surveys and administrative data systems widely used by policymakers and the public.

(7) *The Intersection of Environmental Justice and Human Services*. This infographic illustrates key facts about how participants in human services programs are particularly affected by environmental injustice, and the ways in which these programs can help mitigate the effects of environmental issues, including climate change.

(8) *Braiding Federal Funding to Expand Access to Quality Early Care and Education and Early Childhood Supports and Services: A Tool for States and Local Communities*. This resource was developed to assist states and local communities in braiding, blending, or layering multiple federal funding streams to increase the supply of quality early care and education and increase access to comprehensive early childhood and family support services within a coordinated, comprehensive early childhood system.

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) *State and District Strategies to Reduce Dropouts*. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) encourages states and districts to support students' transitions from one level of schooling to the next to reduce the risk of their dropping out. This report presents findings from national surveys in 2018.

(2) *Variation in Mentoring Practices and Retention across New Teacher Demographic Characteristics under a Large Urban District's New Teacher Mentoring Program*. This report and brief describe new teachers' participation in a new teacher mentoring program; how participation varied across teacher characteristics, especially how participation varied by the racial/ethnic makeup of new teacher–mentor pairs; and how participation in various aspects of the program was related to new teacher retention after the first year.

(3) *Using Enhanced Coaching of Teachers to Improve Reading Achievement in Grades PreK–2 in Chicago Public Schools*. Chicago Public Schools is working to improve early literacy outcomes through a multiyear professional development initiative for preK–2 teachers. This report and brief compare the reading achievement of students who attended schools that received the enhanced supports (priority schools) with the reading achievement of students who attended similar schools that received only the initiative's standard supports (nonpriority schools).

(4) *Arts Credits Earned in High School and Postsecondary Enrollment: Differences by Background Characteristics*. This report uses data from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009 (HSLS:09), a national study of more than 23,000 ninth-graders in 2009. Arts credits earned by high school graduates are examined by background characteristics.

(5) *Exploring Implementation of Attendance Supports to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism in the Providence Public School District*. In recent years Rhode Island's Providence Public School District (PPSD) has put initiatives in place to reduce high chronic absenteeism. This report explores attendance supports aimed at reducing chronic absenteeism that PPSD schools implemented in the 2018/19 school year.

(6) *The Effect of Discipline Reform Plans on Exclusionary Discipline Outcomes in Minnesota*. This report and brief examines the use of exclusionary discipline practices by Minnesota local education agencies from 2014/15 through 2018/19 and the extent to which the creation of discipline reform plans by identified local

education agencies was associated with changes in discipline outcomes.

(7) *Using Promotion Power to Identify the Effectiveness of Public High Schools in the District of Columbia*. This report estimates the promotion power of public high schools in the District of Columbia. Promotion power is a measure of school effectiveness that distinguishes a school's contributions to student outcomes from the contributions of the background characteristics of the students it serves.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The September 2021 FFO lists over 100 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination. Below we highlight a few funding opportunities from this month's FFO:

(1) **Grant to Establish a Youth Enjoy Science (YES) Program:** A National Cancer Institute (NCI) funding opportunity that will facilitate the education of students from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical research who will become knowledgeable about cancer, and available to focus on cancer later in their careers. Applications are due by October 28, 2021.

(2) **Grant to Study How Child and Adolescent Development is Impacted by Media:** A *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) funding opportunity that will support integrated, multi-project research programs examining the pathways by which technology and digital media (TDM) exposure and usage impact developmental trajectories and health outcomes in early childhood (ages birth-8) and adolescence (ages 9-17). Applications are due by November 29, 2021.

(3) **Dissertation Award to Improve Mental Health Research Workforce Diversity:** A National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funding opportunity that will enhance the diversity of the mental health research workforce by providing dissertation awards in all research areas within the strategic priorities of the NIMH to individuals from groups underrepresented in biomedical, behavioral, clinical and social sciences research. Applications are due by October 16, 2021.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.