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Policy Update: December 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

New Social Policy Report: COVID-19 and Resilience in Schools: Implications for Practice and Policy

SRCD recently released a new *Social Policy Report* by Suniya S. Luthar, Ph.D., Lisa S. Pao, Ph.D., and Nina L. Kumar titled, "COVID-19 and Resilience in Schools: Implications for Practice and Policy." The report provides an overview of a large-scale, national study of middle and high school students' mental health during the first several months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, "over 14,000 students reported their levels of anxiety and depression, concerns about schooling and their future, their abilities for learning online, and their support from adults at their schools as well as from their parents and their peers." The report also emphasizes the importance of caregiver support in helping to reduce mental health risks and concludes with a call for mental health supports for parents, educators, and students.

Call for Nominations and Applications: Editor of the Social Policy Report

We are seeking applications and nominations for the 2022 – 2026 editorship of the *Social Policy Report (SPR)* . As one of SRCD's hallmark policy publications, the SPR serves as a critical source of scientific knowledge about human development and its application to policy. The SPR is distributed to the membership of SRCD (about 5,000 researchers) and to approximately 300 policy and science organizations, federal agency officials, foundations, and policy journalists. A two-page summary brief may also be produced for circulation to Congress and executive branch policymakers at federal and state levels.

Given SRCD's strong commitment to advance the developmental sciences *and* promote the use of research to improve human lives (see SRCD's mission and vision for more information), the search committee is especially interested in candidates' unique editorial visions, with particular focus on: (1) how they would increase the policy relevance of manuscripts through the editorial process, (2) how they would encourage robust SPR submissions from a variety of policy-relevant research areas, and (3) how they would incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) approaches into the editorial process.

The new editor will assume the title of Incoming Editor on May 1, 2022, and will assume the Editor role on July 1, 2022 (at which point they will begin receiving manuscripts).

The application deadline for the editorship is February 4, 2022. Nominations of others are welcome and must be submitted by January 10, 2022. To learn more about this opportunity and how to apply, visit SRCD's website.

REMINDER: Applications for the 2022-2023 SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship Programs Due in January 2022

We are seeking applicants for the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellowship Programs for the 2022-2023 academic year. There are two fellowship programs: federal and state. The fellowship programs aim to (1) provide fellows with firsthand experience in policymaking, program implementation, and evaluation; (2) provide agencies 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, policymaking, and practice. All fellowships will run from September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.

What is the Federal Policy Fellowship Program? There are two types of federal fellowships: congressional and executive branch. Both fellowships are full-time immersion experiences in Washington, D.C., where fellows work as resident scholars within congressional or federal executive branch agency offices. We welcome applications from early, mid-career, and advanced professionals. More information about the program, application requirements, and the submission process is available on the SRCD website. **Applications for the Federal Policy Fellowship Program are due on January 4, 2022.**

What is the State Policy Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program? This fellowship is a full-immersion experience, where fellows work as resident scholars in state executive branch agency offices. Fellows will receive support from a state supervisor and an academic mentor during the fellowship experience. More information about the program, application requirements, and the submission process is available on the SRCD website. **Applications for the State Policy Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program are due on January 24, 2022.**

Legislative Branch Updates

FY 2022 Appropriations Update

President Biden Signs Stopgap Funding Bill Into Law

On December 3, President Joe Biden signed into law H.R. 6119, the Further Extending Government Funding Act, a continuing resolution that provides stopgap funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations, extending funding to federal agencies through February 18, 2022, and averting an impending government shutdown that would have happened when the continuing resolution that funded the government through December 3rd expired. H.R. 6119 passed the U.S. House of Representatives with a 221-212 vote and the U.S. Senate with a 69-28 vote. Of note, Congress must pass another stopgap funding measure that would postpone the completion of the FY 2022 appropriations process again or complete the appropriations process by February 18 to avoid a government shutdown in February.

President Biden Signs Debt Limit Measure Into Law

On December 16, President Joe Biden signed a joint resolution (S.J.Ress.33) into law that increased the statutory debt limit by $2.5 trillion, circumventing conditions that could have led to the United States' first ever default on its debt. The $2.5 trillion increase should provide the U.S. Department of Treasury with sufficient funds to cover its obligations until 2023. The measure passed the U.S. House of Representatives with a 221-209 vote, which was preceded by the U.S. Senate's passage with a 50-49 vote. Interested in learning more about the debt limit? Read the U.S. Department of the Treasury's summary.

Build Back Better Act Stalls in the Senate

On December 16, President Joe Biden released a statement about the status of H.R. 5376, the Build Back Better Act, a roughly $2 trillion social spending package that would advance President Joe Biden's economic agenda. The statement reflected on the state of ongoing conversations between Senate and House leadership and a lawmaker who has expressed concerns about the cost associated with implementing the package. Of note, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the package on November 19 and the U.S. Senate aimed to pass the package by December 25 but intraparty disagreements regarding the cost and scope of the package, as well as specific provisions, have stalled negotiations. In a "Dear Colleague" letter released on December 20, Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) provided an update on the new anticipated timeline for the Build Back Better Act, noting "Senators should be aware that the Senate will, in fact, consider the Build Back Better Act, very early in the new year so that every Member of this body has the opportunity to make their position known on the Senate floor, not just on television. We are going to vote on a revised version of the House-passed Build Back Better Act – and we will keep voting on it until we get something done."

Additional Hearings of Interest

- **Big Tech Accountability: Building a Safer Internet**. On December 9, the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing on "Holding Big Tech Accountable: Legislation to Build a Safer Internet." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Social Media and Opportunities to Protect Kids Online**. On December 8, the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing on "Protecting Kids Online: Instagram and Reforms for Young Users." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **Forever Chemicals and the PFAS Problem**. On December 7, the Subcommittee on Environment and the Subcommittee on Research and Technology of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing on "Forever Chemicals: Research and Development for Addressing the PFAS Problem." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.
- **The Overdose Crisis: An Interagency Proposal**. On December 2, the Subcommittee on Health of the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing on "The Overdose Crisis: Interagency Proposal to Combat Illicit Fentanyl-Related Substances." View the witness list, recording, and read witness testimonies.

Executive Branch Updates

Highlights

Lawrence A. Tabak Begins Term as Acting Director of NIH

On December 9, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra announced Lawrence A. Tabak, D.D.S., Ph.D., will serve as Acting Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Tabak began his term on December 20, 2021 after previously serving as the Principal Deputy Director and the Deputy Ethics Counselor of the NIH since 2010. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Dr. Tabak's long tenure and broad experience at the NIH will ensure that the agency is in capable hands and serve it well during the search for Dr. Collins' successor," Secretary Becerra said. "Dr. Tabak has a deep grasp of the most pressing scientific issues confronting our nation, he has earned respect across NIH as a thoughtful and strategic manager and is committed to building a healthier and more equitable America." This announcement follows former NIH Director Francis S. Collins', M.D., Ph.D., decision to step down as

Director of the NIH. Dr. Collins was the longest serving presidentially-appointed NIH director. For more information about Dr. Tabak and the transition, read the press release.

President Biden Announces Nominees for the White House Office of Management and Budget

Last month, President Joe Biden announced the nomination of Shalanda Young as Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Nani A. Coloretti as Deputy Director of the OMB. According to the White House, if they are confirmed by the Senate "... OMB would be led by two history-making women of color who are experienced and highly qualified. Young, who has served as Acting Director since being confirmed as Deputy Director by the Senate in a bipartisan 63-37 vote on March 23, 2021, would be the first Black woman to lead OMB. Coloretti would be one of the highest-ranking Asian American, Native Hawaiians, or Pacific Islanders serving in government." To learn more about Shalanda Young and Nani A Coloretti, read the White House statement.

Executive Order on Transforming the Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust

On December 13, President Joe Biden issued an "Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government." The order recognizes opportunities to improve the delivery of Federal government programs, services, and processes and the need to reduce administrative burden. The order also calls for the use of technology to "... modernize Government and implement services that are simple to use, accessible, equitable, protective, transparent, and responsive for all people of the United States. When a disaster survivor, single parent, immigrant, small business owner, or veteran waits months for the Government to process benefits to which they are entitled, that lost time is a significant cost not only for that individual, but in the aggregate, for our Nation as a whole. This lost time operates as a kind of tax — a "time tax" — and it imposes a serious burden on our people as they interact with the Government." The order outlines a wide variety of agency actions which will improve customer service experiences from directing the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to assess the use of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits for online purchasing and streamlining enrollment and recertification for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to encouraging the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to facilitate the coordination of benefit programs (e.g., auto-enrollment of individuals eligible for other programs, as permitted by law). To learn more about this effort, read the executive order.

NIH UNITE Initiative Listening Sessions: Register Now

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) UNITE Initiative, which was established to identify and address structural racism in the biomedical research community and foster efforts to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within the NIH, is hosting a series of virtual listening sessions. According to the NIH, "the insights shared will provide valuable information on the full range of issues and challenges facing diverse talent and will help develop UNITE initiative priorities and an action plan. Topics of interest include changing culture to promote equity, inclusivity, and justice; improving policies, transparency, and oversight; strengthening career pathways, training, mentoring, and the professoriate; ensuring fairness in review and funding deliberations; enhancing funding and research support for diverse institutions and historically under-resourced research areas; and structural racism in the biomedical research enterprise." To register for an upcoming listening session, visit NIH's website.

HHS Call for Research: Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVee)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) review involves a comprehensive review of early childhood home visiting models, evaluating the effectiveness of early childhood home visiting models that support families with pregnant women and children from birth to kindergarten. HomVEE recently issued their annual call for research which "aims to identify manuscripts that HomVEE has not previously reviewed, including unpublished manuscripts (past or recent), conference papers, book chapters, working papers, and new publications (currently in press) that do not appear in databases searched for the review. If authors submit unpublished research, it should be in the form of a full manuscript with enough text describing the study's procedure, analysis approach, and findings for HomVEE to conduct its review." The submission deadline is January 3, 2022. To learn more about this opportunity, read the call for research.

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) *Building Co-Regulation Capacity to Support Positive Development for Youth with Foster Care Experience: Convening Summary*. This report examines co-regulation for older youth in or transitioning out of foster care, and identifies next steps for advancing research and creating practice change in the field. It also provides a summary of a convening of experts that discussed the report's findings.

(2) *2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE) Snapshot: Parent Work Schedules in Households with Young Children*. This report uses data from the 2019 and 2012 NSECE to describe the work schedules of parents during a reference week in 2019 and how work schedules differed for households of different income levels; between one-parent and two-parent families; and in households where neither, one, nor both parents worked.

(3) *Supporting Families' Access to Child Care and Early Education: A Descriptive Profile of States' Consumer Education Websites*. This report explores the early care and education (ECE)-related consumer education activities described in the FY 2019-2021 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plans and the types of consumer education information available on states' ECE consumer education websites.

(4) *Center-based Early Care and Education Providers in 2012 and 2019: Counts and Characteristics*. This report presents nationally representative estimates of center-based providers serving children age 5 and under, not yet in kindergarten, using data from the 2012 and 2019 National Survey of Early Care and Education (NSECE).

(5) *Supporting Families in Region XI AIAN Head Start: Centers' Early Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. This report examines how children's centers communicated with families, the needs families expressed to children's centers, and the supports children's centers provided to children and families.

(6) *COVID-19 Research, Evaluation, and Data Agenda for Child Care and Early Education (CCEE)*. This report describes a research, evaluation, and data agenda for the CCEE field in response to COVID-19 that can be used by a wide range of stakeholders (state administrators, policymakers, advocates, funders, etc.) to prioritize research questions that need to be addressed and identify potential data sources to answer these questions.

(7) *Descriptive Data on Region XI Head Start Children and Families: American Indian and Alaska Native Family and Child Experiences Survey (AIAN FACES) Spring 2020 Data Tables and Study Design*. This report

provides information about the AIAN FACES study, including the background, design, methodology (including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection), and analytic methods; and reports detailed descriptive data on children, their families, their classrooms, and their programs.

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) *Medicaid After Pregnancy: State-Level Implications of Extending Postpartum Coverage*. This report provides an overview of the important role Medicaid plays in postpartum maternal health, reviews existing pregnancy-related Medicaid eligibility limits in state Medicaid programs, and assesses the projected eligibility impact if all states were to extend postpartum Medicaid eligibility to 12 months.

(2) *Participation in the U.S. Social Safety Net: Coverage of Low-income Families, 2018.* This report describes participation in the social safety net and describes variance across programs and racial-ethnic groups.

(3) *Network Adequacy for Behavioral Health: Existing Standards and Considerations for Designing Standards.* This report summarizes findings from a targeted environmental scan and a technical expert panel (TEP) that was convened to better understand network adequacy standards for behavioral health and best practices in developing and enforcing such standards.

(4) *Assessing Uninsured Rates in Early Care and Education Workers*. This report presents current estimates of uninsured rates among early care and education (ECE) workers, which includes individuals employed by Head Start, childcare center providers, and preschools.

(5) *Emergency Playbook for Federal Human Services Programs*. This report aims to synthesize lessons learned and recommendations from existing resources, emergency management protocols, and interviews with federal program staff about responding to emergencies and disasters. It emphasizes opportunities for federal programs to deliver human services equitably to all populations during and after major emergencies, especially those with multi-state impacts.

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) *Supporting Integrated English Learner Student Instruction: A Guide to Assess Professional Learning Needs Based on the Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide*. This report is designed to help district and school site leaders assess the professional learning needs of elementary school teachers to implement research-based recommendations for the instruction of English learner students.

(2) *How to Text Message Parents to Reduce Chronic Absence Using an Evidence-Based Approach*. A recent Institute of Education Sciences (IES) study found that a carefully designed text messaging strategy improved attendance in elementary schools. Based on the study, this report provides districts with information and tools for carrying out their own evidence-based attendance text messaging.

(3) *Estimating Changes to Student Learning in Illinois Following Extended School Building Closures due to the COVID-19 Pandemic*. This report examines data from 17 Illinois districts over five years, including four years prior to the pandemic, to measure how student learning changed in fall 2020 relative to fall terms prior to the pandemic.

(4) *Pathway to Academic Success Project Intervention Report*. This intervention report and brief summarize the research on the Pathway to Academic Success Project, which trains teachers to improve the reading and writing abilities of English learners who have an intermediate level of English proficiency by incorporating cognitive strategies into reading and writing instruction.

(5) *Forum Guide to Metadata*. This report presents and examines the ways in which metadata can be used by education agencies to improve data quality and promote a better understanding of education data.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The December 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 Enhance Capacity for Rehabilitation Research:** An Administration for Community Living (ACL) funding opportunity to increase the capacity for high-quality rehabilitation research by supporting grants to institutions to provide advanced research training to individuals in the outcome domain of community living and participation. Applications are due by January 18, 2022.

(2) **Grant to Evaluate Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Prevention Approaches:** A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding opportunity to rigorously evaluate prevention approaches (i.e., programs, policies, or practices) for their impact on the primary prevention of child sexual abuse (CSA) perpetrated by youth or adults. Applications are due by February 1, 2022.

(3) **Grant to Enhance Mental Health Treatments for Adolescents:** A National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) funding opportunity to develop and test just-in-time adaptive intervention (JITAI) augmentations to enhance the effectiveness and clinical potency of established adolescent mental health treatments. Applications are due by June 22, 2022.

(4) **Program to Support Social, Behavioral and Economic (SBE) Science Research at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs):** A National Science Foundation (NSF) funding opportunity to increase proposal submissions, advance research collaborations and networks involving MSI scholars, and support research activities in the SBE sciences at MSIs. Applications are due by March 1, 2022.

Read about these and other funding opportunities.