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Presidential Statements at SRCD: Purpose and Process

Updated: June 2026

Purpose

Presidential Statements are issued by the SRCD President to address the Society's membership on urgent issues and events affecting children, youth and families, developmental science and the broader scientific and research enterprise.

Specific Uses and Considerations

Statements are designed to:

- Clearly communicate SRCD's perspective using evidence-informed framing and research.
- Respond to adverse or positive developments, often covered in the media.
- Fit into the rapid news cycle, moving from initiation to completion within 48-72 hours.

Responsible Parties

The best practice decision-making model RACI is used:

- Responsible (R) parties oversee the project management and execution of Statements.
- Accountable (A) parties are ultimately responsible for the end Statement and outcome.
- Consulted (C) parties need to be given the opportunity to provide input into Statements.

- Informed (I) parties need to be told of the process or decision but are not expected or required to provide input into Statements.

With respect to Presidential Statements:

- R = SRCD Policy Staff
- A = SRCD's President and Executive Director
- C = SRCD's Governing Council, Caucuses, Committees and Coalition Chairs
- I = SRCD Communications Staff

Process in Detail

- Presidential Statements are coordinated by Policy Staff, in collaboration with the Executive Director and SRCD President.
- Consideration of issuing a Statement can be triggered by SRCD staff or via member input. Recommendations from SRCD members are considered input and do not by themselves initiate the process.
- SRCD's Policy Staff research the fit with a Presidential Statement, first looking at past precedent (a prior Presidential Statement). If there is past precedent, the Policy Staff does not need to apply the criteria below to make a go/no-go recommendation to the Executive Director and President, unless the context has changed significantly.
- If there is no past precedent, the Policy Staff applies the decision framework criteria (below) to make a go/no-go recommendation.
- Policy Staff inform the Executive Director of the recommendation, providing a summary of the past precedent or decision framework criteria (below) via email.
- The Executive Director then raises the recommendation to the President via email, offers their viewpoint (go or no-go) and asks for their decision.
- If the President and Executive Director both agree to publish a Presidential Statement, the Policy Staff immediately proceeds with drafting the statement, informing the Communications Department and consulting with SRCD's Governing Bodies (see next bullet).
- Consultation with SRCD's Governing Bodies:
    - Policy Staff will consult the SRCD's Governing Council and the Chairs of SRCD's Caucuses and Committees, inviting their input via email.

    - Input must be received within 48 hours of email receipt to ensure a timely public-facing response.
    - In inviting input, Policy Staff will share the relevant recommendation that was made to the President and Executive Director and a draft statement, if one exists. In most cases, a draft statement will not exist at this juncture.
    - The consulted groups will be asked to provide recommendations via email related to: a) framing, b) language, c) relevant research, d) scientific accuracy, e) equity considerations, f) statement risks, g) advice on distribution. If email is not possible, Governing Council members or Chairs of other listed bodies may schedule a call with SRCD's Policy Staff.
    - SRCD Policy Staff will carefully review and consider recommendations on a rolling basis.
    - Statement edits and final approval rests with SRCD's Executive Director and SRCD President.
- If the President and Executive Director disagree on a course of action, the President must consult with the Governing Council's Executive Committee and use that information to determine the next step in the process.
- Within 48 hours, Policy Staff, the Executive Director and the President draft and finalize a Statement.
- The Statement will be issued that business day via a Stand-Alone email to SRCD membership, website posting and social media post. Further distribution is at the discretion of SRCD staff and may include inclusion in SRCD newsletters.
- Each Statement will include a 1-2 sentence public-facing justification explaining the rationale for the Statement, aligned with SRCD's Decision Framework Criteria for Presidential Statements, with a link to the full Criteria.

Decision Framework Criteria - Presidential Statements

SRCD should use the following checklist to guide its decisions on when to engage in a Presidential Statement. This list is not expected to be exhaustive, and judgement should be applied based on the criteria. Additionally, policy developments and policy windows can change rapidly, so the criteria may need to be reviewed multiple times during a single statement process, if context changes.

Alignment and Priority

Must meet at least 2 of these 3 requirements to proceed:

1. **Aligns with our official mission and scientific vision**, including our position and commitments on:
    - Integrity, ethics, and functioning of the research enterprise
    - Reinforcing or mitigating inequities, including structural and systemic harms
    - Anti-racist, ethical and inclusive scientific practices
2. The issue has clear and significant **implications for the safety, well-being, or development of children and families.**
3. The issue aligns with SRCD's **current policy priorities** which include (as of June 2, 2026) the areas of science funding, scientific workforce, early care and education, child and adolescent mental health, immigrant children and families, transgender youth and their families or use of technology.

Influence

- Do we have a unique contribution to make?
- Are we avoiding duplication of effort by other organizations?

Benefit and Impact

- Who is benefiting or being harmed by the development?
- What is the scale of this benefit or harm in the short- or long-term?

Consistency

- Is the decision consistent with SRCD decisions in the recent past (<5 years)?

Geography

- Is this a U.S.-based issue?
- If not a U.S.-based issue, consider the following:
    - Cultural, intercultural and/or historical contexts
    - Political considerations
    - Access to subject-matter and regional expertise within our membership to ensure the statement is accurate, contextually grounded, and responsibly informed

Risk

- Can we ensure the statement will be evidence and research-informed?

- Is there a relational or reputational risk to SRCD by engaging?
- Are there organizational, legal or security risks to SRCD?

Capacity

- What is the extent of member interest?
- Are staff resources available to devote to ongoing engagement?

Alternatives

- How else could SRCD engage on this issue?