NEWS | POSTED DECEMBER 15, 2018

Policy Update: December 2018

Table of Contents

- Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow
- FY19 Appropriations: One Government Shutdown Avoided, Another Looming
- Senate Passes Juvenile Justice Bill
- Compromise Farm Bill Awaits President's Signature
- Congressional Briefing on Teaching Science and Engineering
- Congressional Briefing on Preventing Child Maltreatment
- National Institute on Drug Abuse Releases Annual Monitoring the Future Report
- Reports
- Federal Funding Opportunities

Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow

Sarah Blankenship is a second year SRCD Executive Branch Fellow whose placement is in the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Click here to learn more about her work, including her role in managing a contract that aims to identify barriers and promising solutions to states' implementation of interstate background checks mandated by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014.

Legislative Branch Updates

FY19 Appropriations: One Government Shutdown Avoided, Another Looming

On December 7, President Trump signed a continuing resolution (CR) to avoid a partial government shutdown that was set to start at midnight on December 7 if no action was taken. This current stopgap funding only funds the government through midnight on December 21. Disagreements between Congress and the White House regarding the president's request for $5 billion in funding for a border wall in the Department of Homeland Security bill have led to an impasse in the appropriations process. Several options have been proposed by members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, including a CR through January 3 (the first day of the next Congress), a CR through the end of the fiscal year, or packaging together the six noncontroversial remaining 2019 appropriations bills for passage, while funding the Department of Homeland Security with a continuing resolution. The most likely scenario at the moment appears to be a bill that would extend the current CR through February 8. This stopgap funding measure was introduced by Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and passed by a voice vote in the Senate on December 19. The bill must now clear the House and be signed by the president before midnight on December 21 to avoid a government shutdown.

Senate Passes Juvenile Justice Bill

On December 11, the Senate passed a bipartisan reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) by voice vote. The House had previously passed its version of this legislation in September. Press releases from Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), the original cosponsors of the Senate bill, state that the recently passed bill is a "bicameral compromise that blends the previous Senate and House versions." The legislation focuses on: promoting community-based alternatives to incarceration; reducing unnecessary incarceration; eliminating detention of youth for minor offenses such as running away and truancy; requiring states to use trauma-informed screens when youth enter the justice system; and strengthening services for youth with mental health and substance use issues, as well as transition services for when youth leave detention and transition back into society. The JJDPA was first enacted in 1974 and has not been updated since 2002. This bill is now expected to be taken up by the House of Representative under suspension of the rules and sent to the president for his signature in the coming weeks.

Compromise Farm Bill Awaits President's Signature

On December 12, the House of Representatives voted 369-47 to approve the final version of H.R. 2, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, colloquially known as the Farm Bill. The Senate had previously approved the conference report for H.R. 2 on December 11 with an 87-13 vote. The bill reauthorizes farm, nutrition, conservation, and other agricultural programs for five years. This legislation is a compromise version of the Farm Bill that stalled earlier in the legislative session due to partisan disagreements over changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Congressional Quarterly reports that the compromise bill "rejects House provisions that would have broadened SNAP work requirements, toughened eligibility criteria, and changed the way monthly food aid benefits are calculated." Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN), Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committee, noted that he was proud they had turned "a partisan bill into a bipartisan bill. That's the way Congress is supposed to work." House Agriculture Committee Chairman K. Michael Conaway (R-TX) also expressed satisfaction with the final bipartisan bill, stating "there are compromises in there from both sides. Most of them make [the legislation] better."

Congressional Briefing on Teaching Science and Engineering

On November 28, the STEM Education Coalition hosted a congressional briefing entitled "New Approaches to Engaging Middle and High School Students in Science and Engineering." The key focus of the briefing was a major new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that finds that students learn best when engaging in hands-on science and engineering projects. The new report, of which a final version will be released in early 2019, builds on and provides updates to the 2005 America's Lab Report, which examined in-depth the role that laboratory experiences play in high school science learning in the United States. A panel of science and engineering educators, researchers, and industry leaders discussed a range of topics related to STEM education, including: the need to take traits and skills that are desired in the workforce down to the classroom level and find a way to effectively teach them in middle and high school settings; the fact that hands-on investigation and design are key elements of science and engineering learning, but that most teachers do not have expertise in how to teach using scientific investigation and engineering design; the need to concentrate reforms at the district and school level so as not to overburden classroom teachers; and the potential for virtual platforms to help connect students in rural schools with virtual hands-on science and engineering experiences as well as mentors in STEM fields.

The key themes throughout the briefing were that the best way for students to learn science is for them to *do*

science and that students want to solve real problems that they see in their own lives in their science and engineering courses. Speakers included: James Brown, Executive Director, STEM Education Coalition; Jim Short, Program Director for Leadership and Teaching to Advance Learning, Carnegie Corporation of New York; Scott Heimlich, Vice President, Amgen Foundation; Kerry Brenner, Senior Program Officer, Board on Science Education, National Academy of Sciences and Study Director, *Engaging Middle and High School Students in Science and Engineering: New Approaches to Investigation and Design*; Erin Furtak, Professor and Associate Dean of Faculty, University of Colorado School of Education; and Bruce Wellman, Chemistry and Engineering Teacher, Chemistry Academy, Olathe (KS) Northwest High School. Additional information, including slides from the briefing, is available here.

Congressional Briefing on Preventing Child Maltreatment

On December 4, the Child Maltreatment Solutions Network at Penn State University held a congressional briefing entitled "Preventing Child Maltreatment through CAPTA." The briefing opened with remarks from Jennie Noll, Director of the Child Maltreatment Solutions Network and Professor at Penn State University, who noted that 7.4 million children are referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) each year and "more children die from child abuse than all pediatric cancers combined." She added, "these numbers haven't changed much in the last several decades." She also mentioned that in a single year, $124 billion, or one percent of the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is spent on victims of child maltreatment—a cost that does not even consider broader public health costs associated with child maltreatment. To address the problem of child maltreatment, Dr. Noll stressed the importance of primary and targeted prevention, data-driven efforts, and coordinated work across agencies.

A staff representative from the office of the incoming Chair of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA), gave brief remarks, noting that as the incoming Chair of the committee which has jurisdiction of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Congressman Scott's priorities for CAPTA's reauthorization are geared towards prevention, research, and evidence-based practice. A panel of experts then discussed a range of topics including: the need to focus on the quality of implementation, including large-scale implementation of prevention programs; the importance of public-private partnerships; the critical need for additional investments to build community capacity to support service agencies; the importance of CAPTA to enhance the capacity for program innovation; the need to reorient CPS to reduce the risk of child maltreatment; and the lack of evaluation funding through CAPTA, which only provides for implementation funding. Panelists included: Kristin O'Connor, North Carolina

Department of Health and Human Services; Dan Comer, Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect; Sarah Font, Child Maltreatment Solutions Network, Penn State University; and Nathan Ross, Foster Adopt Connect, Missouri. Click here to watch a recording of the briefing.

Executive Branch Updates

National Institute on Drug Abuse Releases Annual Monitoring the Future Report

On December 17, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) released the findings from its annual Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey. MTF reports on drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and related attitudes in a nationally representative sample of eighth, 10th, and 12th graders in schools across the United States. Key findings indicate promising declines in opioid and alcohol abuse, but concerning increases in teen nicotine exposure due to a substantial increase in vaping. Key findings from the 2018 Monitoring the Future survey include that:

- There was a dramatic increase in vaping from 2017 to 2018, with statistically significant increases in vaping across all three age groups.
- Regular tobacco use was found to be at its lowest point since the survey began, with 3.6 percent of 12th graders smoking daily, compared to 22.4 percent twenty years ago.
- Prescription opioid misuse has declined amongst teenagers in recent years, despite the ongoing opioid crisis. Among 12th graders, 3.4 percent reported misusing prescription opioids in 2018, compared to 4.2 percent in 2017. Additionally, 1.7 percent of 12th graders reported misusing Vicodin in 2018, down from a peak of 10.5 percent of 12th graders fifteen years ago.
- Marijuana use among 10th and 12th graders remained fairly steady in 2018, with a noticeable decline for eighth graders over the past five years. Daily marijuana use was reported by 5.8 percent of 12th graders in 2018; this is consistent with historical trends, as for the past 20 years, daily marijuana use for 12th graders has been between 5 and 6.6 percent.
- Most measures related to underage alcohol use declined in 2018 across all three age groups, including declines in the percentage of 12th graders who reported binge drinking in the last two weeks or being drunk in the past 30 days.

Additional information on the findings of the 2018 Monitoring the Future survey can be found here and here.

Federal Reports

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) Using The Science About Self-Regulation To Improve Economic Outcomes For TANF Families This research brief articulates a vision for TANF programs that is informed by the science about self-regulation and goal achievement.

(2) Grantee-Led Evaluations in the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program: A Compilation of Grantee Evaluation Plan Profiles This report, which is a compilation of Grantee Evaluation Plan Profiles, introduces and describes the evaluation studies developed by the Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting grantees.

(3) The Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration: New Perspectives on Creating Jobs – Final Impacts of the Next Generation of Subsidized Employment Programs This report presents the final impacts from the U.S. Department of Labor's Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD) program, which tested seven transitional job programs that were "enhanced" in various ways to address shortcomings of previous programs.

(4) Welfare Rules Databook: State TANF Policies as of July 2017 This report provides researchers and policymakers with access to detailed information on how states provide cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

(5) Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness Review: Executive Summary & Brief - November 2018 This report provides an executive summary and brief on the latest updates to the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) review of home visiting program models that serve families with pregnant women and children from birth to age five.

(6) Measuring Self-Regulation Skills in Evaluations of Employment Programs for Low-Income Populations: Challenges and Recommendations This report discusses issues related to measuring self-regulation skills in evaluations of employment programs for low-income populations.

New Brief from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

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

(1) Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in the Child Welfare Context: Challenges and Opportunities This brief describes four key challenges related to the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT) in child welfare contexts for parents with opioid use disorder.

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) Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2018 This report presents statistics on high school dropout and completion rates at the state and national levels.

(2) Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2015–16 (Fiscal Year 2016) This First Look report introduces new data for national and state-level public elementary and secondary revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 2016.

(3) Graduation Rates for Selected Cohorts, 2009-14; Outcome Measures for Cohort Year 2009-10; Student Financial Aid, Academic Year 2016-17; and Admissions in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2017 This First Look includes fully edited and imputed data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) winter 2017-18 data collection.

Federal Funding Opportunities

This month’s FFO highlights a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) funding opportunity. NCIPC is soliciting investigator-initiated research that will help expand and advance our understanding about what works to prevent violence that impacts

children and youth, including child abuse and neglect, teen dating violence, sexual violence, youth violence, youth/parent suicidal behavior, and exposure to adult intimate partner violence. This initiative is intended to support the evaluation of primary prevention strategies, programs, or policies that target universal or selected high-risk populations (i.e., populations that have one or more risk factors that place them at heightened risk for violence). Funds are available to conduct such studies focused on preventing child abuse and neglect and at least one other form of violence affecting children and youth, including teen dating violence, sexual violence, youth violence and exposure to adult intimate partner violence as detailed elsewhere in this announcement. Completed applications are due by March 8, 2019. Click here to read about this and other federal funding opportunities.