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Policy Update: August 2019

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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Spotlight on the SRCD U.S. Policy Fellow

Emily Ross, Ph.D., is a SRCD Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow with a placement 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. Read about her work on a number of OPRE research projects and

her reflections on how research is and can be used to inform policy and practice.

Legislative Branch Updates

FY20 Appropriations: Spending Caps Raised, Debt Limit Suspended Until 2021

On August 2, President Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019 to raise the discretionary spending caps for fiscal years (FY) 2020 and 2021 and to suspend the debt limit until July 31, 2021. This bipartisan agreement circumvents a sequester (automatic spending cuts) mandated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 that would have resulted in approximately 10 percent cuts to discretionary spending for federal agencies starting October 1. With the bipartisan agreement in place, the non-defense top-line funding levels will now increase from $605 billion in FY19 to $632 billion in FY20 (FY20 includes additional funding for the 2020 U.S. Census) and then to $634 billion in FY21. As noted in the July edition of Policy Update, the House of Representatives has passed ten of its twelve FY20 appropriations bills, while the Senate has yet to pass any because they had been waiting to address the impending sequester before beginning work on their funding bills. Now that the agreement is in place, lawmakers will need to move quickly when they return from recess on September 9 in order to pass FY20 funding bills before the end of the fiscal year on September 30. For further details, read FABB's summary and for updates on the current status of FY20 appropriations, please see COSSA's summary.

Senate Committee Hearing on Enhancing School Safety Against Targeted Violence

On July 25, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs held a hearing entitled, "Examining State and Federal Recommendations for Enhancing School Safety Against Targeted Violence." Chairman Ron Johnson (R-WI) opened the hearing with a reference to the many recent mass school shootings, including Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary School, and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. "The death and casualty toll is simply unbelievable…This is a tragedy in terms of lives lost, people injured, families destroyed; but it's [also] a tragedy from a standpoint of the psychological effect on our nation, on our states, on our schools, on our children, on our families" said the Chairman. He emphasized his intention for the hearing to unearth why many "commonsense, obvious recommendations" provided by commissions following mass school shootings have yet to be implemented universally and "what [the committee] can do to take some of these obvious, relatively simple actions as at least a first step." Ranking Member Gary Peters (D-MI) then gave his opening remarks, noting "As policymakers, our number

one responsibility is to protect our children—and we're failing." Following the opening statements, Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) shared the names and select memories of the 17 people killed in the recent school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

A panel of witnesses then discussed a number of topics and recommendations, including the need for: implementing school security best practices, such as the need for holding regular active shooter drills in schools across the country; establishing minimum federal school safety standards and creating a clearinghouse for national school safety best practices at the federal level; holding K-12 schools accountable for accurately reporting school safety statistics (e.g., bullying, harassment, and trespassing incidents) in order to ensure transparency to families and avoid complacency by schools; continuous federal funding for school security enhancements and school safety initiatives; increasing funding to promote suicide intervention programs because more than two-thirds of mass shooters are suicidal; clarifying regulations so that school officials, law enforcement, and mental health professionals can share information and communicate regularly; the federal government to support responsible firearm ownership; and further research to better understand the impact of higher security measures in schools and the potential unintended harmful effects they may inflict upon students and staff. The witnesses included: Max Schachter, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Safe Schools for Alex; Tom Hoyer, Treasurer, Stand with Parkland - The National Association of Families for Safe Schools; Bob Gualtieri, Chair of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission and Sheriff of Pinellas County, Florida; and Deborah Temkin, Ph.D., Senior Program Area Director, Child Trends. Click here to view the full hearing and to read witness testimony.

House Subcommittee Hearing on JUUL's Role in Youth Nicotine Epidemic: Part I & Part II

On July 24 and 25, the Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform held two hearings entitled, "Examining JUUL's Role in the Youth Nicotine Epidemic," separated in two parts. Part I opened with the Subcommittee Chair Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) stating, "Between 2017 and 2018, youth e-cigarette use, also known as vaping, rose 78% to the point where over 20% of high school students now vape." He noted his interest in investigating "the role of JUUL, the country's dominant maker of e-cigarettes with almost 80% of e-cigarette market share, in the dramatic rise in vaping," especially because "the JUUL product itself contains very high nicotine levels—three to six times the amount of the e-cigarette that came before it." He also expressed concern that "63% of users aged 15 to 24 do not know JUUL contains nicotine." Ranking Member Michael Cloud (R-TX) then gave his opening statement, acknowledging the potential for the use of e-cigarettes for a broader tobacco control strategy for adults, but

also emphasizing that “no one wants kids to use tobacco. No one wants kids vaping. And, no one wants vaping companies to target children with advertisements.”

A panel of witnesses then discussed a number of issues, including: JUUL’s flavored pods, such as mint, are enticing to youth and have led many youth to believe JUULs do not contain nicotine; there has been a 48% increase in vaping among middle school students between 2017 and 2018; JUUL representatives visited the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in January 2019 to persuade tribal leaders to adopt a discounted JUUL tobacco cessation program without being transparent of their motives; adolescents’ developing brains are particularly susceptible to nicotine addiction and addiction can negatively impact areas of the brain associated with executive function, memory, and mood; JUUL’s advertising has been especially appealing to underage teens through the imagery and strategic use of social media; e-cigarettes have the potential to be a solution for adult smokers who want to stop smoking; and JUUL should be regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Witnesses included: Meredith Berkman, Co-founder, Parents Against Vaping E-cigarettes; Rae O'Leary, Public Health Analyst, Missouri Breaks Industries Research; Dr. Jonathan Winickoff, Member, American Academy of Pediatrics; Dr. Robert Jackler, Professor, Stanford University; and Dr. Raymond Niaura, College of Global Public Health, New York University. Following this panel, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) gave witness testimony, noting “Today’s youth vaping epidemic is a new version of an old battle”—referring to the fight against Big Tobacco. He stated his concern that “there is no clinical trial proving that JUUL devices helps adults quit smoking cigarettes. None.” He noted, “JUUL knows exactly where the money can be found and it’s not from adults looking to quit smoking, it’s kids.” Click here to view Part I and read witness testimony.

Part II of this hearing opened with Subcommittee Chair Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) reiterating his statements from the day before and Representative James Comer (R-KY) echoing Ranking Member Michael Cloud’s opening statement in Part I. Two panels of witnesses then gave testimony, which included James Monsees, Co-founder and Chief Product Officer of JUUL Labs, Inc., Ashley Gould, Chief Administration Officer of JUUL Labs, Inc., and Matthew L. Myers, President of Tobacco-Free Kids. Monsees began by articulating JUUL Labs, Inc’s goal to “to help improve the lives of adult smokers” and voiced his concern that underage teens are using JUUL products. He and Gould cited actions JUUL Labs, Inc. has taken to combat underage JUUL usage, including banning online sales to anyone under the age of 21, working with social media companies to delete JUUL related posts that were inappropriate, and stopping the sale of many flavored pods in retail stores. During his testimony, Myers pointed out inconsistencies between JUUL representatives’ claims that their only target was adults, when “they sponsored rock concerts, they used images that are exactly the kinds of images that appeal to youth [in their marketing].” He concluded by stating that JUUL must be forced to

comply with FDA regulations. Click here to view Part II and read witness testimony.

Executive Branch Updates

Final Rule on Public Charge Released by the Department of Homeland Security

On August 14, the Department of Homeland Security released the final rule regarding "public charge," defining the basis on which the applications of those seeking admission to the United States or seeking a change in their immigration status can be denied on the grounds that the person is likely to become a public charge, or dependent on public assistance from the government. According to the notice in the Federal Register, "this rule changes how the Department of Homeland Security interprets and implements the public charge ground of inadmissibility." Up until the new rule, interpretation of the term "public charge" has been based on 1999 guidance that interpreted public charge as meaning that a person is *primarily dependent* on the government for subsistence either through *cash assistance or institutionalization for long term care at government expense*. According to the notice in the Federal Register, the new rule "redefines the term 'public charge' to mean an alien who receives one or more designated public benefits for more than 12 months in the aggregate within any 36 month period (such that, for instance, receipt of two benefits in one month counts as two months)." The rule extends the definition of "public benefit" to go beyond cash benefits for income maintenance or institutionalization for long-term care to encompass specific types of non-cash assistance, including "SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program], most forms of Medicaid, Section 8 Housing Assistance under the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, Section 8 Project-based Rental Assistance, and certain other forms of rental assistance." The rule contains a list of positive and negative factors that the Department of Homeland Security will consider in the determination of public charge. The criteria include financial status, family size, education, age, skills and employment, English proficiency, medical conditions, private health insurance, and past use of an immigration fee waiver.

Researchers at the Migration Policy Institute have conducted analyses of Census data focusing on recent green card holders to get an estimate of the percent and characteristics of those with factors that would be negatively weighted under the new rule. Their analyses indicate that this change could involve 10 million noncitizens and 12 million U.S. citizen family members (almost 2/3 of whom are children). They express concern specifically about disenrollment from SNAP and Medicaid as having the potential to diminish child wellbeing in these families.

IES Seeks Feedback on Future Research Topics

On August 13, Mark Schneider, Director of the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education, solicited advice from the field on future research topics covered in their grant programs. His first request solicited feedback on three potential topic-specific, "off-cycle" Request for Applications (RFAs) that may be released next winter, including (1) using state longitudinal data systems to measure long-term outcomes, (2) using the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) process data, and (3) systematic evaluation of widely used math and reading programs. Director Schneider's second request solicited feedback on potential topical areas that may be retired or added to the National Center for Educational Research (NCER) grant program, which currently focuses on 13 topical areas, and the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER) grant program, which currently focuses on 12 topical areas. Comments may be sent directly to Director Schneider at Mark.Schneider@ed.gov. IES may also organize meetings to get feedback from the field and may also issue a formal Request for Information (RFI) in the future. For further details, please see the IES Director's remarks.

National Academies Release Consensus Committee Report on Child Health

On July 25, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine released the report of a consensus committee focusing on child health. The report, *Vibrant and Healthy Kids: Aligning Science, Practice and Policy to Advance Health Equity*, summarizes the evidence on the factors that contribute to health inequities from preconception through early childhood and makes recommendations for addressing these. The report notes that these factors are complex, interconnected, and systemic. While early experiences and exposures contribute in important ways to health disparities across the life course, the committee concluded that the odds of good health are not fixed early on, but rather are updated and adjusted in light of an individual's subsequent experiences and choices. The report summarizes the evidence on the importance of the prenatal and early childhood periods not only for brain development but also for the development of multiple body systems that are important in understanding the mechanisms through which early adversity contributes to health outcomes and disparities later in life. The committee concluded that addressing the roots of health inequities in early childhood would require coordination across multiple sectors.

Examples of the committee's consensus recommendations include: supporting caregivers through paid parental leave and strengthening and expanding home visiting programs; creating supportive and stable early living conditions through expanding the supply of high quality affordable housing; expanding access to

comprehensive and high quality early care and education that incorporates a clear focus on health outcomes; and taking steps to make the health care system from preconception through early childhood more continuous, equitable, integrative and comprehensive. Recommendations also focus on sector alignment, collaboration, and enhancing detection and response to early life adversity (including developing trauma-informed approaches). The report, including the full set of recommendations, is available 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) *Promoting Understanding of Community Connections in Home Visiting: State of Available Data and Future Opportunities.* This brief focuses on the state of data availability and data quality as it relates to community connections in home visiting, and presents potential opportunities to strengthen data related to community resources and referrals in the future.

(2) *The Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration: Implementation and Early Impacts of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration.* This report presents implementation findings and interim impacts (after one year) from a random assignment evaluation of the Minnesota Subsidized and Transitional Employment Demonstration (MSTED).

(3) *Child and Family Development Research - Fiscal Year 2018.* This report describes the research and evaluation activities undertaken by OPRE's Division of Child and Family Development in FY2018.

(4) *Employment Coaching: Working with Low-Income Populations to Use Self-Regulation Skills to Achieve Employment Goals.* This brief is intended to inform program developers, providers, and policymakers about employment coaching and how it may improve employment outcomes.

(5) *A Spotlight on Professional Development in Head Start: FACES Spring 2017.* This brief describes the professional development experiences of Head Start staff, including coaching, assessment, and curriculum supports.

(6) *Research and Evaluation Capacity Building: A Resource Guide for Child Care and Development Fund Lead Agencies (Revised 2019).* This guide provides an annotated list of selected written and online resources to support lead agencies of the Child Care and Development Fund seeking to build research and evaluation capacity.

New Reports and Briefs from the Institute of Education Sciences

Several new reports are available from the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Department of Education:

(1) *U.S. PIRLS and ePIRLS 2016 Technical Report and User's Guide.* This guide provides an overview of the design and U.S. implementation of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and ePIRLS 2016.

(2) *Past and Projected Trends in Teacher Demand and Supply in Michigan.* This report describes a study examining the trends in teacher demand, supply, and shortages in Michigan and projects shortages and surpluses for 2018/19-2022/23.

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

(4) *Mapping State Proficiency Standards onto the NAEP Scales: Results From the 2017 NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessments.* This report highlights the results of mapping state proficiency standards onto the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scales using state assessment results from the 2016–17 school year and the 2017 NAEP assessments for public schools.

(5) *Changes in Undergraduate Program Completers' Borrowing Rates and Loan Amounts by Age: 1995–96 Through 2015–16*. This report examines the percentage of undergraduate students who had ever borrowed for postsecondary education and compares borrowing rates and loan amounts among five age groups from 1995–96 through 2015–16.

(6) *Factors Related to Teacher Mobility and Attrition in Colorado, Missouri, and South Dakota.* This report describes teacher and school characteristics related to teacher movement within and out of public school systems in Colorado, Missouri, and South Dakota.

(7) *Trends in Undergraduate Nonfederal Grant and Scholarship Aid by Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics: Selected Years, 2003–04 to 2015–16.* This report presents data from four administrations of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study on nonfederal grant aid and scholarship aid awarded to undergraduate students.

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

(9) *Math Course Sequences in Grades 6–11 and Math Achievement in Mississippi.* This report describes a study examining how students in Mississippi met their mathematics requirements and the extent to which their mathematics sequence is related to student performance and demographic characteristics such as race and ethnicity.

(10) *The Feasibility of Collecting School-Level Finance Data: An Evaluation of Data from the School-Level Finance Survey (SLFS) School Year 2014–15.* This report presents information about the ability of states to report school-level finance data on expenditures by function from the School-Level Finance Survey.

(11) *Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Dual-Enrollment Courses: Availability, Participation, and Related Outcomes for 2009 Ninth-Graders: 2013.* This report provides the most recent national statistics on the availability of these academically rigorous courses and programs, the percentage of graduates who earn high school credits in them, and the postsecondary outcomes of students who earned varying numbers of such credits.

(12) *2015 Survey Questionnaires Results: Classroom Instructions for Mathematics, Reading, and Science.* This report takes an in-depth look at the 2015 NAEP assessment survey responses from teachers of fourth- and eighth-graders about the content, activities, and skills emphasized in their classrooms; twelfth-graders' responses to survey questions about their classroom activities or coursework in mathematics, reading, and science; and provides additional information from the 2015 NAEP achievement results.

(13) *Crime, Violence, Discipline, and Safety in U.S. Public Schools: Findings From the School Survey on Crime and Safety: 2017-18.* This report presents findings from the 2017–18 School Survey on Crime and Safety data collection.

(14) *Development of the 2018 Secondary School Course Taxonomy.* This report describes the development of the Secondary School Course Taxonomy (SSCT), to be used with high school course-taking data that have been coded using the School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED).

(15) *Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the 2017 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey.* This report uses data from the 2017 School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to show the relationship between bullying victimization and other variables of interest such as the reported presence of gangs, guns, drugs, alcohol, and hate-related graffiti at school.

U.S. Federal Funding Opportunities

The August 2019 FFO lists over 120 funding opportunities for research, evaluation, and dissemination, including three highlighted funding opportunities. The first highlight is a National Endowment for the Arts' Office of Research & Analysis funding opportunity to support research that investigates the value and/or impact of the arts, either as individual components of the U.S. arts ecology or as they interact with each other and/or with other domains of American life. Research Grants in the Arts offers support for projects in two areas: *Value and Impact* or *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs.* Applications are due by October 3, 2019. The second highlight is an Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) funding opportunity to support a social science researcher to become a member of the Family Self-Sufficiency and Stability Research Network (the Network). The goal of the Network is to support productive partnerships between social science scholars and state or local human services agencies. Applications are due by October 21, 2019. The third highlight is another Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) funding opportunity to support research on secondary data analysis of archived data, specifically the Building Strong

Families (BSF), Supporting Healthy Marriage (SHM), and Parents and Children Together (PACT) datasets. These datasets are from large-scale federal evaluation impact studies, which addressed questions related to healthy marriage and/or responsible fatherhood. Applications are due by October 11, 2019. Read about these and other funding opportunities.