

Policy Update: February 2017

Table of Contents

- [SRCD Fellowship Panel and Reception](#)
- [Federal Agency Sessions at 2017 SRCD Biennial Meeting](#)
- [Reminder: Register for Preconferences at SRCD Biennial Meeting](#)
- [New Social Policy Report and Social Policy Report Brief Released](#)
- [Register Now: Upcoming Webinar on Teaching About Race to Children and Adolescents](#)
- [Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow](#)
- [115th Congress: Senate Committee Leadership](#)
- [House Committee Hearing on Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education](#)
- [ESSA Implementation Briefing](#)
- [Betsy DeVos Confirmed as Secretary of Education](#)
- [Representative Tom Price Confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Friends of NIDA](#)
- [National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council January 2017 Meeting](#)
- [Reports](#)
- [Federal Funding Opportunities](#)

SRCD News Related to Child and Family Policy

SRCD Fellowship Panel and Reception

Are you a doctoral student or a scholar who is interested in learning more about opportunities to work at the nexus of research and public policy? Come to the SRCD Policy Fellowship Panel and Reception at the SRCD

Biennial Meeting, which will be held on Thursday, April 8 from 4:00-5:30 pm. During this session, current SRCD Policy Fellows with placements in Congressional and Executive Branch agency offices will discuss their experiences as fellows and answer questions from attendees. Following the panel, we invite fellows, former and prospective fellows, and friends of the fellowship to join us for a reception. For more information on the event, click [here](#).

Federal Agency Sessions at 2017 SRCD Biennial Meeting

The 2017 SRCD Biennial Meeting will be welcoming representatives from a wide range of federal agencies and will be hosting a number of federal agency sessions specifically focused on research, funding, and career development opportunities. They are:

- Federal Agency Poster Session (Thursday, April 6, 1:45-3:00 pm, Exhibit Hall 4 of the Austin Convention Center). *This session will feature representatives from many agencies and is a great opportunity to speak one-on-one with federal agency representatives!*
- A Strengths-Based Vision for America's Youth: Developing a Research Agenda for Positive Youth Development (Thursday, April 6, 10:00-11:30 am, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 9B)
- Dual Language Learner Research: Federal Funding Opportunities and Investments (Thursday, April 6, 12:00-1:30 pm, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 4A)
- Federal Support for Early Learning and Development Research: Current Research Priorities and Opportunities (Thursday, April 6, 4:00-5:30 pm, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 4BC)
- Investigating Child Development: Data Available for Secondary Analysis from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (Friday, April 7, 8:15-9:45 am, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 5A)
- Keys to Writing a Successful Research Proposal - Writing Your First Grant Application for Federal Funding (Friday, April 7, 10:15-11:45 am, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 4BC)
- Resources for Addressing the Challenges in Measuring Early Childhood Settings and Development (Saturday, April 8, 10:30 am -12:00 pm, Austin Convention Center, Meeting Room 4A)

Full descriptions of all federal agency sessions are available in the [online program](#). Please see also the preconference below on *Supporting Young Children and Their Parents*, which will include federal agency representatives discussing two recent National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine reports.

Reminder: Register for Preconferences at SRCD Biennial Meeting

Two policy-relevant preconferences will be taking place on Wednesday, April 5.

The Supporting Young Children and Their Parents Preconference will take place from 2:00-3:45 pm in room 416 A/B of the Austin Hilton. Chaired by Dr. Vivian Gadsden, this session will highlight findings and recommendations from two studies conducted by The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. Committee members will summarize major research themes and policy recommendations from each report, followed by a federal response designed to highlight salient issues in the recommendations, opportunities for research emanating from each report, and options for moving forward to advance implementation and evaluation. *There is no registration fee for this preconference, but please [click here](#) to RSVP.*

The Zigler Policy Preconference will take place from 4:00-7:30 pm in room 406 of the Austin Hilton. This year, the Zigler Policy Preconference will focus on the research on social and emotional learning and its applications. It will feature presentations by Dr. Mark Greenberg, Dr. Stephanie Jones, Dr. Nancy Guerra, and Dr. Roger Weissberg, addressing social and emotional learning in the context of school and culture across developmental periods, as well as implications for policy and practice. Registration is \$25 for student and early career attendees and \$45 for all other attendees. *[Click here to register for the preconference through SRCD's Biennial Meeting registration system.](#)*

New Social Policy Report and Social Policy Report Brief Released

SRCD has recently released a new *Social Policy Report* and *Social Policy Report Brief* by Dr. Deborah Stipek and colleagues entitled “PK-3: What Does it Mean for Instruction?” The report draws upon research to help inform productive PK-3 instructional alignment, providing guidance to both policymakers and education leaders. Visit the SRCD website or follow the embedded links to read the full *Social Policy Report* and the two-page *Social Policy Report Brief*.

Register Now: Upcoming Webinar on Teaching About Race to Children and Adolescents

Date: Monday, March 13

Time: 3:00-4:00 pm Eastern Time

About the Webinar: The focus of this webinar is on how recent and past events of racial dehumanization of Black and Brown people and children have left parents struggling with how to raise children. The stress of parenting children of color, and especially boys and young men of color, requires a racial literacy or the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful encounters for youth and their parents.

This webinar will summarize the research on the emotional costs of racial dehumanization on health, identify strategies for parents, educators, and youth to counter that dehumanization, and demonstrate how children influence adults through their struggles, triumphs and questions about racial issues.

Dr. Howard Stevenson, Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, will present: "Disrupting Racial Dehumanization: Bidirectional Conversations with Babies, Boys, and Men about Racism." Dr. Diane Hughes, Professor of Applied Psychology at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Development, and Education, will present: "Intentional Parenting for Racial Equity and Justice." This webinar is adapted from a session at the 2016 SRCDC Special Topic Meeting on Babies, Boys, and Men of Color.

Click [here](#) to register for this webinar.

Spotlight on the SRCDC Policy Fellow

Jameela Conway-Turner, Ph.D., is an Executive Branch Fellow whose placement is in the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at the U.S. Department of Justice. Click [here](#) to learn more about her work, including her contributions to the congressionally mandated Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI).

Legislative Branch Updates

115th Congress: Senate Committee Leadership

In the December edition of Policy Update we reported on the committee chairs appointed by the House Republican Steering Committee. Below, please find a list of expected as well as confirmed Senate Committee Chairmanships.

- Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: Pat Roberts (R-KS)
- Appropriations: Thad Cochran (R-MS)*
- Armed Services: John McCain (R-AZ)
- Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Michael Crapo (R-ID)
- Budget: Michael B. Enzi (R-WY)*
- Commerce, Science, and Transportation: John Thune (R-SD)*
- Energy and Natural Resources: Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
- Environment and Public Works: John Barrasso (R-WY)

- Finance: Orrin Hatch (R-UT)*
- Foreign Relations: Bob Corker (R-TN)
- Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Lamar Alexander (R-TN)*
- Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Ron Johnson (R-WI)
- Indian Affairs: John Hoeven (R-ND)
- Judiciary: Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
- Rules and Administration: Richard Shelby (R-AL)
- Small Business and Entrepreneurship: Jim Risch (R-ID)
- Veterans' Affairs: Johnny Isakson (R-GA)

[Click here](#) to learn more about the Senate leadership of the 115th Congress.

* indicates committees of special interest to SRCD member's research, science policy broadly, and committees with funding jurisdiction.

House Committee Hearing on Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education

On February 7, the House Education and the Workforce Committee held a hearing entitled "Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education." Chairwoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) opened the briefing by stating that "These are exciting times in higher education...there are more opportunities for more individuals to pursue higher education than ever before. However, America's higher education system is also facing a number of significant challenges." In particular, she noted that the cost of college is rapidly increasing but graduation rates remain relatively low. In his opening remarks, ranking Member Bobby Scott (D-VA) highlighted some of the bipartisan achievements of the Education and the Workforce Committee during the last Congress and said he sees the opportunity for more bipartisan collaboration in the realm of higher education.

Representative Scott also expressed concern about college access for working class families, noting that "Higher education feels out of reach for...too many students." Witnesses addressed a variety of issues in their testimonies, including: rising college costs, the complexity of the current federal student aid system, regulatory burdens, the importance of investing in innovation in higher education, and the need for equity for all students, especially those traditionally underserved by postsecondary institutions. Witnesses included: Dr. Beth Akers, Senior Fellow, Manhattan Institute; Dr. William E. Kirwan, Co-Chair, Task Force on Federal Regulation of Higher Education; Dr. José Luis Cruz, President, Lehman College of the City University of New York; and Kevin Gilligan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Capella Education Company. [Click here](#) to watch the hearing and read witness testimonies.

ESSA Implementation Briefing

On February 15, Results for America hosted a Congressional briefing entitled “Implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act: How State & Local Flexibility and Evidence Can Improve Student Outcomes.” Lindsey Fryer, Vice President of the PennHill Group and former Senior Education Policy Advisor for the Senate HELP Committee opened up the briefing by describing evidence provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), focusing on ESSA’s ability to provide flexibility to states, districts, and schools in creating their own intervention programs. This is possible through the policy’s inclusion of more flexible evidence standards, including 3 tiers of acceptable evidence required to apply for school improvement grants, and a 4th level for all other evidence currently “under evaluation.” This tier system allows for strong quasi-experimental designs and correlational studies to be eligible for Title I Part D (Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youths Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk) grant funding, as opposed to only including the “gold standard” of randomized control trials. A moderated panel followed, featuring school, district, and state level participants who each spoke about how the evidence provision and increased flexibility has been useful in their work, along with future directions and federal level support needed for ESSA implementation.

The panelists spoke of several evidence-based programs that have shown promise through rigorous evaluation, such as the Building Assets and Reducing Risks (BARR) program, an intervention program designed using the top tier of evidence in ESSA (randomized control trial) to provide professional development to existing staff in schools; and the Diplomas Now program designed to bring in dedicated volunteers to act as case workers for the highest need students. The panelists discussed the value of expanding and adjusting the programs to fit other districts’ needs. Participants from the state and district level spoke about how “winning over the hearts and minds” of staff was the biggest challenge in testing and implementing evidence-based interventions and upholding accountability. Especially in low performing schools, the panelists noted that there is a lack of capacity to focus on selecting, monitoring, and evaluating an evidence-based intervention. Panelists suggested a need for more resources, such as state level versions of currently existing federal research/practice partnerships to help take the burden off of on-the-ground staff and to provide schools access to qualified researchers who can help adjust programs to fit unique local needs. The panel discussion closed with speakers calling for legislators to be patient with school improvement, as even strong evidence-based interventions take time to yield real improvement in the highest need schools. Speakers included: Moderator Jeremy Ayers, Vice President of Policy, Results for America; Bob Balfanz, Co-Founder, Diplomas Now; Janice Eldridge, BARR Coordinator, Noble High School, ME; Brad McMillen, Assistant Superintendent for Data, Research, and Accountability, Wake County Schools,

NC; Nate Schwartz, Chief Research and Strategy Officer, TN Department of Education; Matt Stern, U.S. Senate HELP Committee-Majority Staff; and Amanda Beaumont, U.S. Senate HELP Committee-Minority Staff.

Executive Branch Updates

Betsy DeVos Confirmed as Secretary of Education

On February 7, the Senate confirmed Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education with a vote of 51-50, following Vice President Mike Pence casting the tiebreaking vote. This marks the first time in history a Vice President has broken the tie for a cabinet nominee. Two Republican Senators, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, broke with their party and voted against DeVos' nomination.

Representative Tom Price Confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services

On February 10, the Senate confirmed Tom Price as Secretary of Health and Human Services with a party-line vote of 52-47. Prior to being confirmed as HHS Secretary, Price served six terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing Georgia's 6th district.

Friends of NIDA

On January 25, the Friends of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) held its annual meeting. Members heard remarks from NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow on successes and challenges of the previous year and future directions for the institute. Dr. Volkow focused on three specific areas relating to substance abuse research. First, she spoke about NIDA's efforts to address the ongoing opioid epidemic through the promise of existing drugs (such as Naloxone) to improve emergency room outcomes in the event of an overdose, and new drugs shown to reduce the potential for divergence from addiction treatment. She pointed to a need for more research on alternative treatments, treatment administration, and implementation strategies. Next, she spoke about the importance of sustaining funding for the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study, the largest long-term study to date of cognitive and brain development in children throughout the United States. This study stands to be extremely valuable in identifying negative developmental pathways during a highly sensitive developmental period, and in understanding how to reverse them. Her third focal point was the 2016 Monitoring the Future Study, which showed a decrease in drug use in 8th, 10th, and 12th graders for both legal and illegal drugs – with the exception of marijuana use remaining stable for 12th graders. Dr. Volkow stated that it is important as a field to understand why this age group seems to be “protected,” while other age groups have seen increases in drug use in recent years. Following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to participate in a Q&A with Dr. Volkow and other members of

the leadership team of NIDA.

National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council January 2017 Meeting

The National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council met on January 31, 2017 to advise the Director of the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). New NICHD Director Dr. Diana Bianchi opened the meeting with the New Director's Vision Report. Dr. Bianchi provided an outline of her vision for NICHD, highlighting a range of focus areas including: defining NICHD's brand; increasing synergies at NICHD to better integrate obstetrics and pediatrics research; advocating for personalized medicine in pediatrics, obstetrics, and rehabilitative medicine; collaborating with other institutes; stressing the importance of data sharing; and finding ways to identify the trainees most likely to succeed. The Director's Report was then given by Deputy Director Dr. Catherine Spong. She provided updates from NIH as a whole, as well as NICHD-specific updates. Regarding NIH-wide issues, Dr. Spong provided an update on the Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) study, noting that \$157 million in awards were given in FY2016 to launch this initiative and that a kickoff meeting was held in November, attended by over 200 scientists. Dr. Spong also noted that Dr. Francis Collins has been held over as NIH Director, the Precision Medicine Initiative has been renamed "All of Us," and that the revised regulations to the Common Rule were published on January 19. Turning to NICHD-specific issues, Dr. Spong provided an update on the work related to the Zika virus. She noted that the rapid funding announcement for Zika research closed on January 13, but that the program announcement was reissued with standard due dates, stating that Zika is still a very high priority for the institute. She also provided an update on the Zika in Infants and Pregnancy (ZIP) study, noting that they had just reached 1,000 enrolled participants. Finally, Dr. Spong provided information about the Zika workshop NICHD sponsored in September 2016 focused on understanding the impact of prenatal Zika exposure on child development. The webcasts of this two-day workshop are available [here](#). Dr. Spong also provided brief updates on Pregsource, a crowdsourced, interactive mobile app for pregnant women, which is currently in beta testing, and the Human Placenta Project, which will be holding its 4th annual meeting this July and will include presentations from grantees. Dr. Spong concluded her presentation with a discussion of legislative and budget issues, noting that it is difficult to make any firm predictions related to the budget since there is currently a continuing resolution through April 28. She did note, however, that the 21st Century Cures Act reauthorizes NIH for 2018-2020 and includes an additional 4.8 billion in funding over 10 years, but that most of that funding is directed toward specific initiatives including the BRAIN Initiative, Cancer Moonshot, and All of Us (formerly the Precision Medicine Initiative).

Federal Reports and Requests

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, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:

(1) *Portfolio of Research in Welfare and Family Self-Sufficiency 2016*. This [research portfolio](#) summarizes all active and newly funded projects from the Division of Economic Independence in fiscal year 2016. The research focuses on five topic areas related to welfare and family self-sufficiency.

(2) *Seven Key Principles of Self-Regulation and Self-Regulation in Context*. This [brief](#) provides a framework for understanding self-regulation by summarizing seven key principles.

(3) *Promoting Self-Regulation in Adolescents and Young Adults: A Practice Brief*. This [brief](#) provides definitions and guidelines in key areas of self-regulation for practitioners working with 14-25 year-olds.

(4) *How Do Acute and Chronic Stress Impact the Development of Self-Regulation?* This [brief](#) summarizes a comprehensive literature review on the relationship between self-regulation and stress.

New Publications from the Institute of Education Sciences

(1) *A Randomized Experiment Using Postcards to "Nudge" Attendance*. This [report](#) from the Regional Education Laboratory (REL) Mid-Atlantic looks at the effectiveness of sending postcards to guardians to encourage school attendance. This study was conducted in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia.

(2) *Odyssey Math Has Potentially Positive Effects on Math Achievement*. This [intervention report](#) from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) looks at the effectiveness of Odyssey Math, an online math program for grades K-8 designed to support differentiated and data-driven instruction. The report found potentially positive effects on mathematics achievement.

(3) *Instructional Time for Third- and Eighth-Graders in Public and Private Schools: School Year 2011–12*. This new [Statistics in Brief](#) from the National Center for Education Statistics looks at variations in instructional time by activity, school sector, and grade. Data focus on third and eighth graders in 2011-2012.

Federal Funding Opportunities

This month's FFO highlights a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration funding opportunity aimed at enhancing the effort to network the 105 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) throughout the United States to promote behavioral health, expand campus service capacity, and facilitate workforce development. The initiative seeks to address behavioral health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities by encouraging the implementation of strategies to decrease the differences in access, service use, and outcomes among the racial and ethnic minority populations served and trained by the program. Completed applications are due by March 24, 2017. Click [here](#) to read about this and other federal funding opportunities.