



SECAC MEETING MINUTES – July 12, 2011

Council Attendees: Ricky Berry, Susan Boone, Nadine Coleman, Louise Davis, Jill Dent, Johnny Franklin, Brooks Ann Gaston, Cathy Grace, Annjo Lemons, Gay Logan, Steve Renfroe, Lisa Romine, Festus Simkins, Holly Spivey, Nita Thompson, Rhea Williams-Bishop

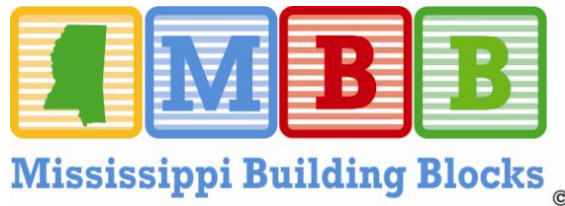
Public Attendees: Sheri Anders (MECA), Claiborne Barksdale (MBB), Rachel Canter (MS First), Laura Dickson (DHS), Tom Dodd (KAPLAN), Tamara Garner (DHS), Jamie Kilpatrick (PCG), Susan Lee (IHL), Sandra McClendon (DHS), Kate McMillin (MSCEI), Tia Merrell (NSPARC), Jackie Mockbee (MDE), Mimmo Parisi (NSPARC), Laurie Smith (MBB), Marcie Skelton (Walker Foundation), Whitney Thomas (PCG), Cassandra Welchlin (MSLICCI), Debra West (MSCJC), Richard Whipple (PCG), John Williams (Kellogg)

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action to be Taken
<i>Call the Meeting to Order</i>	Grace called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.	
<i>Approval of the Minutes from 4/7/2011</i>	Copies of the minutes from the April 7, 2011, meeting were distributed to the Council. Renfroe made a motion and Romine seconded to accept the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.	
<i>Introductions of Council & Guests</i>	Grace asked the attendees to introduce themselves and name the entities they represented.	
<i>Updates from the Chair</i>	Grace updated the Council on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft criteria for consideration for Race to the Top• 13 grant applications available for anyone interested in working with a school• New round of Promise Neighborhood applications specific for communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short turnaround time for all 3 grants
<i>Updates from the Executive Director</i>	Lemons updated the Council on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Governor's Office will work with the new administration to ensure a smooth transition. It will be recommended that SECAC remain in place to continue the work from the grant received from ACF. Grace clarified that SECAC will remain, but a new Governor will be able to appoint new members to the Council.• A web page is on the DHS website with a link to the blog for comments from the public regarding Race to the Top.• The RFP's and project timelines – on time and on target in regards to the work.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information packet for the new administration will be distributed at a later time. MDE and the Governor's Office collaborated to provide funding for the Newborn Calendars (copyrighted by the Auburn Cooperative Ext.) which will be given to every new parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work out the details for dissemination of the calendars.
Committee Reports : Data – Dr. Cathy Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSPARC gave an update on the Data System. Parisi stated NSPARC is actively working with MDE, DHS, Health Dept., and Head Start and having conversations with Medicaid and Mental Health. 	
Committee Reports : Workforce Dev. – Louise Davis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career development scope of service and budget has been approved and implemented. There will be an adjustment in the budget to add an articulation agreement person. Bishop stated the MSCEI board approved having MSCEI serve as the administrator to house the TEACH/WAGES program. Dent gave a brief overview of the TEACH/WAGES program, and Davis reminded the group that TEACH/WAGES is being piloted with the Allies for Quality Care program. 	
Committee Reports : Home Provider – Jill Dent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was funding within the ACF grant to expand Nurturing Homes. Another person will be hired therefore allowing more families to be served. The scope and budget has been approved. Dent has received 600 postcards from in-home providers that will be registered in the system at the R&R's. 	
Committee Reports : Coordinated Services Model – Steve Renfro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renfro gave an overview of the coordinated services piece. Grace stated that this was a goal set forth in the SECAC grant. Dent provided updates on the RFP process and Public Consulting Group (PCG) was awarded the contract. PCG gave a presentation to SECAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contract is in place, and PCG is ready to begin the work.
Committee Reports : Health Access – Rhea Williams- Bishop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The committee met and developed a scope of services as well as a list of barriers to be addressed. Recommendations were developed. RFP must be re-bid and is due July 28. 	
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge	<p>Grace provided an overview of RTT to the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.11.11 was the last day for public comment on the draft criteria. The RTT money is leftover ARRA funds and must be obligated by 12.31.11. 500 million given for RTT – Early Learning Challenge. Mississippi falls in the \$50 million tier for funding over 4 years. <p>Grace commented on the RTT process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency directors must sign on thru MOU's specifically agreeing to do things that are different than what is currently being done. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application would be submitted in early October.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The money received is designed to help set up the system, but it is the responsibility of the state to plan for sustainability. <p>At this point, Grace relinquished her position as Chair to Renfroe to enable further discussion of RTT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grace stated that a process must be developed that will help establish what needs to be determined for the application. This will help guide an efficient process. • Grace and Lemons will hold a meeting on 7.13.11 with agency heads to discuss whether they will commit to a change as well as determine their level of commitment. • Thompson asked that the Head Start Collaboration Office be added to the list of those signing an MOU. • Davis made a motion and Coleman seconded that the Council accept the process outline concept to include Thompson's comment. • A subcommittee will be formed to begin forming the job description for a federal grant writer. • Several Council members raised questions concerning the payment of a grant wrier. Bishop stated she would be on a subcommittee to seek funding for a grant writer. • Simkins expressed concerns about the restructuring that would be involved within the Health Department as well as sustainability. Bishop reminded the Council that we need to make a shift and examine how business is done. Thompson asked if funds from the RTT grant could be used to make these changes if we are awarded the grant. Various Council members stated yes. <p>Renfroe asked for <u>public comment</u> regarding the RTT and process outline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith asked for clarification on what is being asked of the agency heads. Grace stated that they are being asked to carefully examine the document as well as their programs to decide if they will agree to participate. Berry stressed the sustainability issue. • Williams asked what agency would be the fiscal agent. Grace stated that currently it is DHS. • Thompson commented on the issue of providers – attract, recruit, and retain them. • Grace reminded the group of the positive pieces the state has in place – data system, full day K, EDI, QRIS. • Renfroe stated the Council will be voting on approving the concept of the process and not a final product. • Parisi reminded the Council to make sure a commitment on data sharing is in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant writer must be secured no later than 8.10.11
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barksdale asked what work will be done between July 12 and August 10 when the grant writer will be hired. Lemons stated the criteria won't be released for another two weeks, but committees need to be formed now. • Franklin commented on the positive progress of the state and urged members to talk to their agency heads to encourage their participation, and Grace discussed the eligibility requirements for RTT. • Renfroe stated that further comments and questions should be directed to Lemons. • Renfroe asked all members in favor of the motion as presented with changes to raise his/her hand. Motion passed unanimously. 	
Public Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTT comments from Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative and Mississippi Building Blocks are attached. 	
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dent stated the brochures are ready to be distributed soon. They will be available in R&R's, WIC distribution sites, Health Dept., pediatrician offices, etc... Contact Dent if you are interested in obtaining some brochures. An electronic copy will be placed on the DHS website. • Renfroe recommended all Council members read <u>The Social Animal</u> by David Brooks. Renfroe gave a copy of the book to Dent for all of her hard work on the SECAC grant. • Dickson described the Kagan/Race to the Top document. • Grace reminded the group to decide their placement in RTT committees/subcommittees. 	
Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thompson made a motion and Renfroe seconded to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m. 	



In an effort to support Mississippi's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant proposal, Mississippi Building Blocks (MBB) submits the following key ideas. These ideas are based on MBB's work over the past two-plus years in centers across the state. The significant private funding (approximately \$6.5-million) provided for MBB's research is a strong indicator of private-sector support for these key ideas and for MBB's programmatic expertise. We urge that these be considered throughout the development of the grant.

Key Ideas

- Child Care Licensing standards in our state are well below national norms and a plan to considerably strengthen those standards must be specified in the grant. Alignment of child care licensing, Head Start Performance standards, Common Core standards must also be addressed. Funding for licensing should be increased so that significant additional staff can assist with the monitoring of licensing regulations. Funding for licensing is currently allocated to the Department of Human Services, but The Mississippi Department of Health administers the program. MBB has found that this structure causes confusion among care providers and creates a strong disconnect between requirements and best practices. We also recommend requiring licensure, not simply registration, for home-based child care providers. As a result, licensing requirements for home settings must be created.
- Eligibility requirements for child care certificates should be aligned with eligibility for Head Start and kindergarten by eliminating the child support requirement for single parents. In addition, the Mississippi Department of Human Services should extend eligibility re-determination to one year, and use the anniversary date of the certificate issuance as the re-issuance date (versus the current practice of re-issuing all CCDF certificates on October 1). Finally, all unexpended TANF funds should be dedicated to childcare certificates. This would significantly increase the access of high-needs children to quality care.
- QRS system (monitoring quality using ITERS-R and ECERS-R) in child care centers should be expanded and tied to significant incentives and support, and should be required for all licensed child care programs. Evaluations for all licensed child care centers should be consistent and provided by reliable evaluators with no exceptions. Evaluators need training to the 85% reliability rate and have regular supervision visits to verify reliability. Quality ratings should be released to the public entities and should be available to parents. Outside evaluations should be conducted annually to measure program performance of the QRS system.
- Professional Development should be aligned with Head Start Performance and Common Core Standards for 3's and PreK. Additional technical assistance and staff training to address critical needs of teacher should include the following MBB model components as the minimum intervention per center: (1) Extensive mentoring of 120 hours of on-site, individualized assistance should be provided. Mentoring should be ongoing over a period of 4 months (minimum) by mentors with a minimum degree of a BA in Early Childhood Education. (2) Evaluation of fidelity of implementation should occur on an on-going basis. (3) A minimum of \$3000.00 per classroom in

specific purchases based on need (not standard purchases for all centers) should be provided. (4) Regular communications, parenting classes and home visitation should be offered for every family served in licensed child care. Additionally, there is a strong need to strengthen prenatal care programs. (5) Scholarships for teachers to obtain CDA credentialing and / or AA degree in early childhood education with monetary incentives for completion and for program retention (e.g., spread incentive out over time) should be available. A career ladder for early childhood professionals should be developed in partnership with institutions of higher learning. (6) A minimum of 120 on-site clock hours of business advice for directors of child care centers should be offered. (7) A shared services model should be utilized for licensed child care centers to maximize efficiencies in purchasing. (8) Child -outcome assessments should be used to evaluate program effectiveness, with longitudinal follow-up assessment of children. (9) Program component adjustments should be based on research findings.

- Sustainability and Transitions to Early Grades should be achieved with the use of a collaborative delivery model in which certified public school teachers provide 4-year-old PreK in partnership with private child care centers and Head Start for a specific number of instructional hours a week. Such a model could be far more cost-effective than simply expanding the K-12 system to include public school PreK without sacrificing quality of services if the state sets high standards for the program. Furthermore, connecting external providers of 4-year-old services with local district schools enables a continuity of services and program alignment as well as the sharing of professional development resources and child outcome data.
- Child Outcome Assessments that are appropriate for infants-toddlers and 3's -4's are critical. The grant should specify the assessments as well as the procedures for their use and analysis, with particular attention to alignment of those assessments with K-3 curricular requirements. This is especially important given the Common Core Standards roll-out that is going to occur in the coming school year. Additionally, mentoring practices in a particular center should be tailored to the needs of that center based on the assessments.
- Common Core Standards for 3's and PreK and Head Start Performance Standards should be utilized in alignment with a developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment. The Between the Lions curriculum utilizes intentional teaching practices with strong emphasis on language and literacy. It is recommended that this curriculum become a mandatory component of all classrooms serving 3's and PreK. Continuation of "recommended" curriculum choices for child care centers yields confusion and lack of consistency among programs.
- Child Care Resource and Referral should continue to develop in order to (1) provide guidance and referrals for parents seeking child care; (2) collect information about the local supply of child care; and (3) provide significant libraries for parents to check out needed materials for in-home use. These R&R centers should serve as strong resources for parents and need to be expanded to all rural areas beyond the 13 current sites.
- Medical / Developmental Screening for children in licensed child care needs to be ongoing and mandatory. MBB evaluations of children pre – post has yielded several findings related to special needs of children. All implementation of curriculum and interventions needs to be supported by data indicating that the sampled children benefitted from the intervention as measured by nationally norm-referenced testing.

Memo to: MS State Early Childhood Advisory Council
From: Carol Burnett, MS Low Income Child Care Initiative
Date: July 9, 2011

As you prepare Mississippi's application for funds from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Program, please give consideration to the following recommendations for use of these funds in our state:

1. In order to "engage and support families," (Selection Criteria (b)(5)) please propose to use RTT-ELC funds to substantially increase the percentage of children served by the child care certificate program without reducing reimbursement rates. Mississippi is currently serving only about 16% of the state's eligible children, another 14,000 are on the waiting list and an additional 4000 were recently terminated from the program. This may worsen in FFY 2012. While high income families can afford to buy quality child care services for their children; low income families cannot. Unless we expand services to more eligible children we run the risk of exacerbating this current grim inequity by making services to a fortunate few higher quality by leaving the overwhelming majority of low income families without access to any services at all.
2. In order to demonstrate our commitment to an "ambitious early learning and development reform agenda and goals," (Selection Criteria (a)(1) and "aligning the early learning and development system to achieve success," (Selection Criteria (a)(3)) please take the following steps: 1) extend the re-determination period in the child care certificate program from every six months to once per year; and 2) eliminate the requirement that single parents initiate child support cases against the absent parent in order to qualify for services. Making these reforms would increase system alignment, reduce interruptions in child care services, and also remove barriers to child care assistance for parents who need it most: single low-income working parents thereby also addressing Selection Criteria (b)(5).
3. In order to "promote participation in the state's tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System," (Selection Criteria (c)(2)) please propose to use RTT-ELC funds to provide grants to child care centers to help pay costs related to participation in the MCCQSS. In Mississippi where only a tiny percent of eligible children are served by the child care subsidy program and rules in the subsidy program result in frequent interruptions in service, the number of subsidies is low and the duration of subsidies is both short and unpredictable. Therefore, this financing strategy is inadequate and unreliable to support quality rating system requirements. When quality improvements cost more than these rate increases generate, parent fees are increased. This results in either poor children being priced out of care or centers opting not to participate. Either outcome prevents quality improvements from reaching poor children who need these and benefit most.
4. In order to "supporting early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities," (Selection Criteria (d)(2)) please propose to use RTT-ELC funds to help pay the cost of higher wages for higher levels of education in the child care workforce. When child care workers obtain higher levels of education they expect higher wages, and rightly so. If funds are not available for this purpose, workers with higher levels of education will move into sectors that pay higher wages. In Mississippi the child care certificate program doesn't have enough money

to pay higher wages to child care workers who obtain higher levels of education. These workers move into Head Start programs that can afford higher wages. (Head Start programs receive significantly more federal funding on a per child basis than CCDBG child care.) When Head Start workers earn higher levels of education they move into public schools where they are paid higher wages. Etc. Requiring higher levels of education without providing funding to support higher wages siphons workers out of child care settings or drives parent fees higher.

Thank you.