

## SECAC Council Meeting

### MEETING MINUTES

MAY 28, 2015, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Stoneville, Mississippi

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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Vickey Berryman (phone), Margarett Davenport, Louise Davis, Johnny Franklin (phone), April May, Mimmo Parisi, Sandra Parks, Marcie Skelton, Laurie Smith, Carolyn Willis

#### OTHERS PRESENT

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Lydia Bethay, John Davis, Debbie Ellis, Judy Harris-Brown, Robin Lemonis, Karen Matthews, Candice Pittman

#### MEETING OBJECTIVES

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1. Approval of Minutes
  2. Committee Updates
  3. Public/Additional Comments
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#### MINUTES

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##### Approval of Minutes

Margarett Davenport motioned to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Dr. Mimmo Parisi seconded the motion. The council noted that Lydia Bethay and Eileen Beazley should be added to the public attendees list of the minutes. The council unanimously passed the motion.

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##### Committee Progress Update

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: Robin Lemonis, director of intervention services for MDE, shared the results of the 2014-15 kindergarten readiness assessment. Lemonis pointed out that it's an adaptive assessment that gives students harder or easier questions based on whether they get questions right or wrong, respectively. Lemonis said in fall 2014, 34.6 percent of children scored 530 or above (a score of 530 represents 70 percent mastery of literacy skills). Lemonis said the average score in fall 2014 was 501, which increased to 680 in the spring. The higher average score in the spring suggests the majority of children were at a transitional reader level. Lemonis then brought the council's attention to the districts with the greatest gains in average score; Kosciusko School District had the highest. Lemonis said talking with districts is helping MDE figure out where technical assistance is needed.

Davenport asked how important are the benefits of a pre-K child being computer literate? She said having too much screen time was considered not good in the past, but she

wondered whether being computer literate is an advantage for this test. Lemonis said MDE did a technological survey before the assessment. She said MDE is providing technical assistance to account for computer literacy. She said the more time a student spends with a computer, the better they will do on any computer test because there will be no fear. Davenport said if the childcare providers know this about computer literacy, they can make sure their children are one step ahead of the assessment.

April May asked if the pre-K results are in. Lemonis said no and clarified that the results at the meeting only apply to kindergarten and that MDE is still going over the pre-K data. Skelton asked what should the children be scoring to be successful first-graders? Lemonis said a “transitional reader” score can be considered a success. She also said the scale score shouldn’t be overemphasized, that it just shows where an individual is at. Sandra Parks said the average of 680 seems like good news.

Lemonis brought the council’s attention to the districts with the least gain. She said MDE will visit these places and survey them to see what kind of technical assistance needs to be provided. She said the districts with the greatest gains can be used to develop best practices. Lemonis added that there has been a significant gain in transitional readers and a significant drop in probable readers. Dr. Smith asked about the third-grade results and if there are consistencies between the districts with good kindergarten scores and those with good third-grade scores. Robin said yes, there is a correlation.

Karen Matthews asked about low birthweight being connected to a lack of kindergarten readiness. She asked if there is a way that data can answer this question. She said she would be curious to see if there is a connection. Dr. Parisi said eventually that correlation can be analyzed.

Debbie Ellis asked is there any way to track the outcomes of children who are coming from places that do not receive significant funding? Lemonis said that information is not available presently but that it will be captured in future assessments. Lemonis said future assessments would also capture whether children came straight from home.

Ellis asked how much did MDE account for the maturation of children over the first nine months to how well they score on the assessment. Lemonis said the assessment did not capture social or emotional background characteristics. She said MDE is trying to come at it from all angles, but this assessment is just a start.

Ellis asked about Delta children who might not have computers and who would have to be transported to an unfamiliar location to take the assessment. She said what plans do you have to level the playing field? Ellis said children need to be assessed in the exact same way to compare districts. Lemonis said the single most important factor to remember is that these data are for information purposes. She said the information is not punitive and will only be used to make recommendations on how to do things through the state to make sure all children get to a level playing field. Ellis said that helping private child care centers have access and understand the assessment process is her biggest concern. We cannot just label childcare centers as good or bad as they enter Kindergarten based on this assessment.

Johnny Franklin said we should make sure to use data to improve services, not as a way to punish people. He said it’s about best practices.

Data System: Dr. Parisi gave the update. He said this year is the third generation of the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), where states can apply with the purpose of using data to make strategic decisions in regard to early childhood. He said Dr. Wright has been in favor of this grant effort. He said he would be coordinating the effort. The grant is due June 8. Dr. Parisi shared the two objectives via PowerPoint. He said the first objective is

based on the continued work of SECAC to find out how children's starting points before kindergarten might affect their kindergarten readiness scores. He said the second objective based on SECAC work is to determine how these scores predict success in the third grade. He said this grant isn't about building a new thing but learning how to use the data that the state has to build better outcomes. He said the Data Committee would like SECAC to write a letter of support for the grant package. Johnny Franklin asked if this letter would just need to be from SECAC or all the individual organizations represented on the council. Dr. Parisi said just SECAC. He said the purpose is to endorse the idea to show that this is a statewide project including SECAC in the governing structure and is not a single agency project.

Johnny Franklin motioned to approve SECAC writing a letter of support for the SLDS grant. Sandra Parks seconded the motion. The council unanimously approved the motion.

Carolyn Willis asked about the state early childhood model and the corrections suggested by Rhea Williams-Bishop at the last meeting. Dr. Smith stated that no corrections have been received yet, but this document would always be changing as programs come and go due to funding. Dr. Parisi said the basic framework is building the data systems around learning, family, and health.

Quality Rating Standards: April May said the committee hasn't had a recent meeting and that the listening sessions for QRS input are still going on. Dr. Candice Pittman said they have completed seven sessions and that there are two more coming. Willis said the last listening session was really well constructed and that the participants felt comfortable. Dr. Smith asked for volunteers to go June 17 in Vicksburg. April May said she could attend that session. Dr. Smith asked John Davis for any updates on when the Frank Porter Graham report will be made available. Davis said MDHS is anticipating the report by the end of July.

Standards Committee: April May gave the update. The council looked at a draft of a telephone survey that will be given to childcare centers about the standards. May said that activities, the timeline, and people required for implementing the survey will be discussed at today's Standards Committee meeting. She said if any SECAC members want to add anything to the survey, the committee would like to hear it. Dr. Parisi said this survey can be made available electronically for comments. May said they need comments before the start of the summer. May said a pilot survey will be done with center directors. Dr. Parisi said the relevancy of the questions will be tested by these directors. May and Dr. Parisi said personal letters in the mail will be sent before the survey to prepare respondents.

Professional Development and Workforce: Dr. Davis gave the update. She said existing articulation agreements in the state are good, but the committee is focusing on articulation in regard to technical degrees. She said the committee has discussed doing a 2+2 pilot, an idea that has worked well in Texas. Dr. Parisi asked about the existing agreements. Louise Davis said with early childhood, there are degree agreements between universities and community colleges. She said some agreements are made between programs. Dr. Parisi said the SLDS could be used to examine how students who gain early childhood degrees perform once they get in the workforce. Dr. Davis said the disparity in program names for early childhood between universities will need to be addressed. Dr. Davis said she would rather have a two-year certificate person over a four-year person because the universities have taken lab experience out of their programs. She said elementary education students at universities typically get instruction for teaching children 5 and up.

Skelton asked if the licensing process could capture the professional development data that are currently collected through surveys. Dr. Parisi said that is a great idea. Vickey

Berryman said this is something MSDH can do. She said licensure regulations could provide for this to be mandatory. She said otherwise it would be up to the respondent to put it there. Dr. Davis said she and Berryman have discussed taking the professional development survey and marrying it to the data that MSDH collects. Judy Harris-Brown said early childhood practitioners have to provide their certifications to MSDH. Berryman said the department does collect assistant director and director info, but she doesn't think it gets professional development info for all staff.

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#### Public/Additional Comments

Ellis said as a licensed childcare provider, she agrees the licensing process should collect the professional development information. She said she doesn't know if MSDH can collect information that doesn't involve licensing. She said regardless, the licensing application needs to be simple and clear so that it doesn't become a headache for providers. She said in regard to QRS listening sessions and Frank Porter Graham, a disparate impact of QRS across Mississippi has been noted by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She said it needs to be determined if the number of low-income or African American children are having an impact on QRS scores – that is, if there is a racial or class bias. She said QRS is expensive and does not measure child outcomes, so what is the point when there are disparate impacts on childcare centers? She stated that QRS needs to focus on helping private child care centers in a real way. Measuring student growth through assessment should be the measure on whether the assistance was effective. Centers need real help over time, not just one or two visits from a TA. She asked Dr. Smith to disseminate this concern. Dr. Parisi asked if there are specific findings that back up this concern. Ellis said yes. She said the fact that there are only two Delta facilities that have good QRS ratings over the course of eight or nine years is a finding that suggests there might be disparate impact. She said a disparate impact doesn't mean the process is intentionally biased. Dr. Smith said when she sees a report on this subject, she will share it.

Dr. Parisi motioned to adjourn. May seconded the motion. Dr. Smith adjourned the meeting.

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