

## SECAC MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 14, 2017, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
Jackson, Mississippi

### COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

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Jacob Black, Paula Broome Rochelle Johnson, April May, Lora Mederos, Diane Mikula, Nita Norphlet-Thompson, Melissa Parker, Robin Parker, Sandra Parks, Laurie Smith, Holly Spivey, Dorthy Young (representative for David Dzielak)

### OTHERS PRESENT

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Carol Burnett, Aressa Coley, Candice Pittman

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

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

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#### Approval of Minutes

Dr. Laurie Smith opened discussion on the minutes for the June, August, September, and October 2017 SECAC meetings. Jacob Black motioned to approve the four sets of minutes. April May seconded the motion. The council unanimously approved the motion.

#### SECAC Updates

Smith pointed out it's been a year since the official state early childhood plan was presented to Gov. Phil Bryant. She said Bryant, as chairman of the Education Commission of the States, unveiled his platform topic in Denver: early childhood education alignment. Over the next two years, she said there will be a lot of work in Mississippi and across the nation attempting to answer a question: how can the 0-5 space be aligned with the PK-12 space? Smith said that typically governors don't talk about early childhood so publicly, so that's something the state can be proud of. Thus, Mississippi can be looked at as a national model.

Smith shared a print-out update from Dr. Micca Knox about the Early Childhood Academies. ECAs. She said Knox and her team have done an incredible job. The academies are fully staffed and have been doing trainings across the state. More than 200 providers have taken the online health and safety training. All ECA staff will meet in January to continue professional development courses. ECA services have been delivered face to face, on the phone, and online. Smith said the ECAs have played a significant role in assisting with the child care center application process.

Jacob Black gave an update on the redetermination process. He said MDHS is currently finalizing redetermination for parents and is still on target to finish by the end of 2017. As for provider redetermination, he said MDHS has received 467 applications; another 126

applications are in process. Black said MDHS is changing the provider redetermination timeline so that providers can have all the technical assistance (TA) they need. Providers are being notified of these deadline changes through a newsletter and emails. Black added that MDHS has been working with community colleges on TA to ensure every provider is covered. On the background check process, Black said every state is having trouble with the background check that crosses state lines. He said MDHS received a federal waiver for that process until September 30, 2018. MDHS is attending webinars to get that component addressed.

Smith said two providers emailed her about technical issues with the application process. Black said some of the issues have been related to understanding the system; NSPARC and the ECAs have been instrumental in addressing such issues. He said the MDHS newsletter can also help providers go through the application steps, and MDHS has scheduled calls and site visits to try to help everyone. Aressa Coley said having the state office, community colleges, and technical help line has helped deal with all of the issues. Smith then asked for a number of technical calls. Coley said the help line, on average, gets between 10 and 15 calls a day, and sometimes providers need to be referred to ECAs or the state office if a problem goes beyond a technical issue. Coley said the system has been managed well. Smith said it's a complex process, but the value of the application is very important. She mentioned the five hours of professional development that providers received for finishing the application. Smith said there have been cases where a provider doesn't think something has saved, but it actually has been saved—its just not apparent. She said she feels MDHS is doing everything it can to provider assistance, so providers should reach out if they need anything. Coley said providers have given a lot of positive feedback on the application workshop.

Melissa Parker gave an update on the Mississippi State Department of Health's new database, which is part of new federal guidelines that require putting information online for parents. Parker said MSDH rolled out the database on Dec. 1, but there is still more work to be done, as it will be a fluid document. She said MSDH hopes the website can help parents make informed decisions when it comes to choosing a child care facility. Parker then demonstrated the search feature on the site. She said the site shows whether centers have had required inspections, and users can also access inspection documents. Users can also view investigations of facilities and whether there was a monetary penalty. Smith asked if the site indicates whether a center has corrected a mistake. Parker said yes. Smith said this information isn't about being punitive but to help parents be aware of all information. Smith said highlighting the site more would be good. Coley confirmed that could be done.

Sandra Parks gave an update on the Health, Mental Health, and Nutrition Committee. Parks thanked the members of the committee for bringing great ideas and accomplishing tasks. She said the committee met Nov. 17. She discussed the committee's goal of promoting well-child doctor visits to parents and providers. One of the committee's ideas is passing out posters to providers. These posters would advertise the availability of these screenings and benefits. Parks said the American Academy of Pediatrics will be contacted via letter to help with these resources. She said the committee plans to present this letter to SECAC for review. The committee is also compiling a list of local and regional doctors for families. On the committee's goal of promoting breastfeeding, Parks said the committee has received great information from Rochelle Johnson about resources. She said the committee wants give parents a comprehensive breastfeeding brochure. The committee also wants to see what information ECAs are providing in regard to breastfeeding; perhaps the committee can supplement what's there.

On the topic of the letter, Smith asked what would the letter ask of the American Academy of Pediatrics? Dorothy Young said the Division of Medicaid had materials for

screenings several years ago. The American Academy of Pediatrics would be asked if it has or knows of any posters that could help the committee. Smith said the letter could describe how such material will be disseminated and could include the state plan. Parks and Young agreed with Smith's suggestions. Smith asked if there is a list of pediatricians already at MSDH. Parker said no. Smith said how could we get this list together? Young said the Division of Medicaid has a list of licensed pediatricians. Smith said that list could be handed out immediately, but it should be disseminated by local area. Rochelle Johnson said by county would work best. Black said MDHS could help get the word out. Young said the list would need to be updated regularly because of graduates. Smith said once Young get the list together, the list can be sent to MDHS, NSPARC, and the ECAs. Paula Broome asked if it would be possible to get a map online where users could click on counties for listed pediatricians. Smith said that's a good idea, and as a start, the list can be put on the SECAC website.

On the topic of breastfeeding, Smith emphasized the importance of reaching parents before their children are born. Carol Burnett suggested looking at what the Early Head Start groups have in terms of material. Smith said the committee can visit an Early Head Start center. Candice Pittman said MDHS can help with breast pump access and breastfeeding techniques.

Nita Norphlet-Thompson gave an update on the Family Support Committee. She said Brittany Herrington has done a great job of leading the committee. In regard to the committee's goal to review the parent/family section of the SECAC website, the committee has reviewed the site and will present recommended changes to SECAC at the next council meeting. As part of another goal, she said the committee is also developing a survey about the user-friendliness of the Child Care Payment Program application process for families. A subgroup of the committee will try to get a draft of the survey done by the spring. Norphlet-Thompon then described the committee's third goal: to identify any early childhood groups to get information about needed community supports. Smith said it's critical to get parents' perspective on these matters, and perhaps SECAC should do some listening sessions with families on different issues.

April May gave an update on the Early Care and Learning Committee. At a recent meeting, May said the committee discussed how it will work hand in hand with the ECAs and Knox, who attended the meeting via phone. She said the committee will align its goals completely with Knox's goals and develop deliverables. Coley said Knox was able to put everything into perspective in terms of what would most help providers and assist the ECAs. Coley said Knox also wants recommendations from the committee to help prepare graduates in early childhood for their work in child care centers. Smith said that effort will help close the gap between what's taught in colleges and what actually happens on the ground. She said there are dots that need to be connected for each institution and that a meeting could help. She said perhaps the committee can plan such a meeting. May said the committee will share more about its deliverables at the next SECAC meeting.

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#### **Public/Additional Comments**

Burnett said parental redetermination and provider online application policies will eviscerate the early childhood system in Mississippi. She said more than half of parents have lost child care, which means they can't work. She said the Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative receives phone calls about this problem frequently. These are procedural issues. Burnett said she has been in contact with MDHS about it. She said thousands of parents are losing their child care because of this system. She said she is pleading with SECAC to help. Smith said if Burnett could deliver a list of the thousands of people, that would be great. Smith said the state would need the names of people to

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provide assistance. Burnett said the point is to address the policies. Burnett said she received her numbers from the Mississippi Department of Education. Smith said she has not seen those numbers and that she wants everyone to work together to solve issues. Burnett agreed on the importance of working together.

Smith adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.

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