

For Immediate Release: January 8, 2019

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## Mississippi Awarded \$10.6 Million Federal Grant for Early Childhood Development

JACKSON, Miss.— A collaborative effort among state agencies was recently successful when Gov. Phil Bryant announced that \$10.6 million was awarded to the state from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand the scope of early childhood development for children ages 0-8 in Mississippi.

“We are thankful to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar for this grant,” Governor Phil Bryant said. “My State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC), in partnership with the Mississippi Department of Human Services, has developed a system that focuses on achieving and maintaining high quality childcare services. These federal grant funds will help expand this system and to maximize parental choice and engagement. The main goal is to ensure children have a smooth transition from child care center, Head Start, and into the public school system.”

In a departure from the state’s traditional provider-focused approach, the newly enhanced system is designed to place low-income families on a path to self-sufficiency and ensure their children can attend child care centers that provide high-quality services and learning experiences in a healthy and safe environment—regardless of location or economic circumstances. The funding will expand the opportunity for learning to more than 60,000 children in private child care centers and Head Start programs.

Oversight for these funds will be provided by the Mississippi Community College Board (MCCB), which has a long and successful track record of managing multi-million dollar federal awards, including Child Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars and TANF and SNAP training dollars.

“An effort of this size requires cooperation and support from various stakeholders,” MCCB Executive Director Dr. Andrea Mayfield said. “I want to thank all of the grant partners, the MCCB team, and specifically Dr. Laurie Smith, Executive Director of Mississippi’s State Workforce Investment Board and State Early Childhood Advisory Council, and Dr. Mimmo Parisi of NSPARC at Mississippi State University for their tireless efforts in this endeavor. I am especially grateful for the 100% commitment of support from Governor Bryant.”

Several state agencies and partners collaborated to submit the successful grant proposal. The State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC), chaired by Dr. Parisi, directed the needs assessment that identified gaps in the current system and developed the framework for Mississippi’s Family-Based Unified and Integrated Early Childhood System.

MCCB, MDHS, MDE, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation each pledged matching contributions in support of this important initiative.

“This is a great example of what can be accomplished when we work together toward a common goal, and the children of our state and their families are going to benefit greatly from this,” Dr. Mayfield added. “Mississippi’s future looks bright.”

**About MCCB**

The mission of the Mississippi Community College Board is to advance the community college system through coordination, support, leadership, and advocacy.