

SECAC MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 24, 2019 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Jackson, Mississippi

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Margaret Chapman, Brittany Herrington, April May, Andrea Mayfield, Lora Mederos, Diana Mikula (via phone), Sandra Parks, Nita Norphlet-Thompson, Laurie Smith, Holly Spivey, Carolyn Willis, Andrea Sanders (for John Davis).

OTHERS PRESENT

Jill Dent, Sallie West, Matt Williams, Roberta Avila, Shana Harper, Larry Cox, Thelma Cox, Amy Berry, Micca Knox, Kristi McHale, Deloris Suel, Amanda Tullman, Megan Campbell, Shane Warren, Steven Grice.

MEETING OBJECTIVES

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

Approval of Minutes

The Executive Director, Dr. Laurie Smith, opened discussion on the minutes for the June, July, August, October, and December of 2018 meetings. Council members reviewed the meeting minutes. No changes or edits were proposed. Sandra Parks motioned to approve all minutes. April May seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the motion. Smith indicated that the meeting minutes will be posted on the SECAC website.

SECAC Updates

Smith welcomed Dr. Andrea Mayfield as the new appointed member at SECAC. Mayfield was appointed by the Governor with the award of the PDG Birth to Five grant.

Andrea Sanders updated the Council on the CCDF plan. Sanders said that she continues serving as Chief Counsel for all MDHS programs, including the CCDF. She introduced Kristi McHale as the CCDF Administrator. Sanders informed the Council about filing the policy manual that accompanies the CCDF state plan. She said that the state is under a CAP about criminal background checks and that it has received provisional approval for the state plan. She said that the state did not conduct as many cross checks across state lines as needed to qualify for a waiver, but the state should be back on track for the waiver status. Sanders said that the policy manual is under executive review before filing it.

McHale provided updates on the programmatic side of the CCDF plan. She mentioned that the state is “out of the back wall” and that the shutdown has had no effect on discretionary funds. She said that the agency will move along with the policy when they receive feedback. McHale said that currently there is a 60-day application process for providers to gather all

documentation on time. As soon as she receives the documents, vouchers will be distributed in time. Smith pointed out that funding is there and that there is no waiting list, which McHale confirmed. Sanders mentioned that MDHS maintains the same 1-800 number and that past complaints about 45-minute call waiting have been dissolved. Sanders said that MDHS has put forth a tremendous process on getting parents and providers through the application and supporting documents. MDHS now looks at cases in a matter of a few weeks, meeting the 60-day window for all gathered documents. In response to a question from Norphlet-Thompson about clearing the waiting list, McHale said that the agency now looks at applications from January 2019. Sanders mentioned that there is a built-in notice feature in the agency's system, so that if an applicant did not respond, then the agency eliminated those names with notice. She said that the 60-day period covers the time to complete an application, which is part of the policy. There is no more waiting of an application in the agency's database. Norphlet-Thompson asked about the turnout time, and both McHale and Sanders responded that it is 60 calendar days from submission of the last document. Mederos confirmed that the agency response times have been improved. She said that the agency is receptive and listens to all their concerns. Sanders thanked her and she said that the CCDF plan is a lofty program with a lot of vision put into it. She repeated that the Dept. of Health, ECA, and MDHS all work in concert.

Smith shared an update about the PDG Birth to Five project. She said that there was a press release by Mayfield. The state was awarded \$10.6 million, which the state accepted. She said that only five more states were awarded that amount of money. She said that this award is an endorsement of the *Family-Based Unified and Integrated Early Childhood System* plan because it builds upon existing programs. Smith mentioned that this grant will expand the Standard-Comprehensive framework to Head Start centers and Pre-K Collaboratives. There will be a pilot for the Comprehensive designation and centers will receive a higher marker rate. Smith mentioned that the state will have an opportunity to compete for discretionary funds of approximately \$50 million in August. She said that the August grant should be written by thinking that more centers and children will be helped. She reminded that back in 2012-2013, the rainbow document showed that there were silos and many programs did not have enough money to cover expenses. She said that if there is alignment, then the state has a chance to receive the \$50 million. The state needs to show that programs are not fragmented and that all work together, should another funding opportunity arises. She proposed an Alignment Committee and said that the three subcommittee Chairs will help as the Alignment Committee, develop a process and facilitate discussions for any grant available for the state. Mayfield concurred with this proposition. Willis agreed with providing time and commitment to serve in this capacity. Davenport agreed with the Alignment Committee idea. Smith explained that the Alignment Committee will work as the need arises and asked to move forward with the idea. Mederos motioned. Spivey seconded the motion.

Smith said that as Educational Advisor to the Governor, she was part of a big Workforce Summit, the first annual for the state. She said that there was an emphasis on early childhood education with speeches by the Governor and Kathryn Stevens, the author of *Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow.* Smith said that there were close to 1,000 attendees and that presentations included research on brain development and executive function skills. She said that there will be another early childhood event at the museum, hosting Pat Levent.

Legislatively wise, Smith said that there will be a bill to codify the Standard-Comprehensive framework and another bill for tax credit. Smith mentioned that there are over 100 bills on the Governor's agenda, including a bill for teacher shortage specific to science, math, special education and certain geographic areas, pay raise, and teacher assistants. There are bills about Troop assistance if wish to become teachers, an alternate route bill to becoming a teacher, a bill

about bringing back teachers in retirement, and a bill about teacher loan forgiveness. Smith continued with several other bills, including a homeland security bill for evaluation and reporting of schools, a bill for a Nuclear Academy in Hattiesburg, a bill for sexual assault for IHL, and a bill for state testing. Norphlet-Thompson suggested to look at individuals who are from early childhood education certified programs with no Praxis to be able to teach in Mississippi. Smith said that the data show correlations between Praxis completers and students with lower GPA scores. Norphlet-Thompson pinpointed to look at teachers who can pass their subject area and keep them there, since there are poor test takers who are great teachers.

Mederos asked about the Comprehensive designation and mentioned that their largest center is ready to become Comprehensive. Sanders said that this designation will have to coordinate with the progress in the PDG Birth to Five project. MDHS's priority for now is to complete the policy, a goal that becomes more approachable. Smith said that some steps about the Comprehensive designation will soon be taken for a pilot phase. Mayfield mentioned that the MCCB has submitted a budget modification for the grant; they await approval within the next 10 days. Mederos also asked about the selection of centers for the pilot. Smith said that after the partners have their first grant meeting, the requirements will be ironed out.

Public/Additional Comments

Deloris Suel suggested to conduct a survey about problems centers are currently have, as the state moves forward with the Comprehensive designation. She said that there has to be some incentive to hold centers there.

Representatives from the MS Low Income Child Care Initiative asked if the criteria for Comprehensive center have been laid out. Smith responded that the criteria have been established, as of the 2015 Family-Based plan. Mederos pointed out that in that document that there is a lot of latitude. Smith said that it is not that one center has to do all that, rather it is how a center moves through that. She also said that she relies on the Council members and providers to indicate how the criteria for Comprehensive will laid out.

Smith reminded that all future SECAC meetings are on the website. She wished for a meeting in Chapman's center in Canton, and in other centers, such as the Pre-K Collaboratives.

The Executive Director adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.
