**MISSISSIPPI SECAC MEETING MINUTES**

**July 7, 2022**

9:30 am - 12:00 pm

Two Museums

222 North Street, Jackson, MS

Recording of meeting available at: [MS SECAC 05-05-2022](https://os5.mycloud.com/action/share/70249009-35e0-4791-bf41-f14cbe128714)

1. **Welcome**

* Reminder there will be a public comment period towards the end of the meeting
* Reviewed meeting agreements
* Provided notice that this meeting is being livestreamed and recorded

1. **Introductions/Roll Call & Approval of Minutes**

* Council Members Present: Chad Allgood, Andrea Sanders, Linda Southward, Angela Rutherford, Candace Taylor Tina Routh, Michael Cormack, Kim Benton, Tamara Smith, Julie Parker, Jill Dent, Vicki Lowery, Susan Buttross, Wendy Bailey, Jennifer Calvert, Nita Thompson, Travonda Morris
* Council Members Absent: Dean Bobo, Dr. Stephanie Davidson, Lori Rolison (Gloyd)
* Also in Attendance: Aisha Carson, Katie Fisher, Emily Powers, Rebecca Klein
* Meeting Minutes from May 5, 2022 were shared.
  + Dr. Linda Southward made a correction: on page four it should read “risk and reach report” and that was referencing a comment she made.
  + Julie Parker made a motion to approve the minutes. Linda Southward seconded. All voted to approve the minutes.

1. **SECAC Committee Updates**

* Chad Allgood: There won’t be committee updates today because a lot of the work the committees have been doing has been focused on the asset map and strategic visioning process, which we will continue to discuss today.
* The Early Intervention Committee met in June. Unfortunately, the meeting information was not posted on the SECAC website in advance. The recording of that meeting will be posted on the website. The Family Support and Access Committee is going to meet again today immediately following the SECAC meeting. The meeting information to join is posted on the website. It will be recorded, and the recording will be posted online afterward.
* The Workforce Committee did not meet. They're scheduled to meet in July.
* The Policy, Data, and Accountability Committee did not meet, but they're working on scheduling a time to meet.
* During the asset mapping portion of the meeting, subcommittees will share more about what each group has been working on recently.

1. **Asset Map**

* Review MS Asset Map - Program Profiles and Analysis Report (Rebecca Klein, Start Early)
  + As a reminder, the asset map was intended to answer these questions:
    - How are the children, families, and the early childhood workforce currently faring?
    - What early childhood programs and services are available to children and families in Mississippi?
    - What funding exists for early childhood programs and services?
    - What supports are available to make them high-quality and effective?
    - Are access, experiences, and outcomes equitable?
  + The asset map is intended to inform the strategic vision that will articulate a path for improvements towards a comprehensive, aligned, and high-quality system of early childhood development and care.
  + The asset map is divided into two parts. The first part is the program profiles and the second part is the analysis report. The program profiles each address the following questions:
    - What is the program or service?
    - What does it provide?
    - Who benefits from the program? e.g. eligibility criteria, number of children and families currently served, estimate of the children and families who are eligible, but not served (including federal and state eligibility)
    - How much funding is there? e.g. federal, state and local, if applicable
    - Who are the providers of that program or service?
  + Program profiles are meant to be straight-forward “just the facts” reports. They include the Child Care Payment Program, Head Start, Title 1, and other programs, including health and nutrition.
  + Start Early shared drafts of the program profiles with state agency leads for review starting in April and shared with SECAC at the May meeting. We are nearing final versions of the program profiles with graphic design.
  + SECAC will review the analysis report today, which includes strengths and opportunities. These were identified through the program profiles, interviews with system leaders, data from state agencies and publicly available statistics and other reports like the risk and reach report. The analysis report also includes analysis of the surveys, focus groups and interviews held with providers and parents in the spring.
* The analysis report is divided into five categories: 1) health, mental health, and nutrition; 2) quality care and education; 3) support for young children with special needs; 4) early childhood workforce; and 5) funding and system coordination. There are strengths, opportunities, data visuals, and quotes for each section.
* A partial draft was shared with the Early Intervention Committee in June and the full draft is being shared with SECAC today.
* Note: the strengths and opportunities are not meant to be comprehensive; they include those that rose to the top with all the information gathered. We would like your feedback as it will help inform the strategic vision.
* Feedback From SECAC Members
  + Andrea and Wendy noted they would like to see the Department of Mental Health included as a resource for Mississippi children and families.
  + Jill Dent: The analysis report could be edited to be more reader-friendly for those who do not have an early childhood background e.g. spell out acronyms.
  + Susan Buttross asked why WIC eligibility requires women to breastfeed up to the infant’s first birthday (it is a federal requirement). Also inquired about number of children served with 2022 funding; curious what other states/standards are serving more children and families. Also interested in targeted case management for children 0-3 with developmental delays or disabilities and how many are served, including those served by managed care organizations (MCOs). Also noted Medicaid total funding is over $6 billion which sounds like a lot—$5 billion is federal and $1 billion is state and other funding. How much of that funding is going to children which need to be our real investment?
  + Linda Southward: cooperation with child support is a reason that we may not have as many children and families on SNAP—this could be a graphic. Also home visiting includes families served through the Mississippi Department of Human Services but didn't see any mention of home visiting program through the Mississippi State Department of Health, which has been a part of home visiting for quite a while. Sharing the small numbers that are served through each of these programs is helpful, as well highlighting the percentage served by county.
  + Kim Benton: It's so exciting to actually see this being developed so that you can look in one space and see all the different groups that are actually plugged into supporting our youngest children. She asked how the two pieces fit together.
  + Rebecca Klein noted the program profiles are more “just the facts” and the analysis report contains strengths and opportunities. The analysis report will also go through graphic design so it will be combined with the program profiles to be one cohesive asset map. And the visual funding map will show how funding flows from different federal agencies through the different state agencies in Mississippi and then either local agencies or providers. It will help illustrate how complex the system is.
  + Andrea: noted it helps to see what is federal money versus state money and what the match rate is, whether funding is capped or uncapped, etc. For example, SNAP is uncapped. For Medicaid, Mississippi has to allocate 20 cents for every 80 cents in federal money the state draws down. These kinds of visuals are impactful.
  + Chad Allgood: The Mississippi Department of Human Services recently did a map across the state that includes childcare, Head Start, family/friend/neighbor care, etc. They identified 16 counties that had a lower ratio. When you take into consideration a childcare desert, you really need to take into consideration all options for early childhood education.
  + Kim Benton: noted it would be helpful if the analysis report included more visuals. Also offered to share more current information on the early learning collaboratives (MS is now only the fifth state to meet all 10 of the NIEER quality benchmarks). She can also share a peer report that includes a chart of funding allocations over time.
  + Michael Cormack: Appreciates how accessible the information is in the program profiles. One thing that stood out was looking at children served in Part B on page 18. It would be helpful to have more context about the 50%+ decline in the number of students served and how Mississippi stacks up nationally. It would also be helpful to look at the racial and ethnic disparities of children served in Part C versus Part B and unpack the identification issue as a potential change.
  + Susan Buttross: It would also be interesting to see if there's a geographic difference in children identified for Part C and Part B because that might be one of the issues. Early intervention in some areas is a little more robust than others.
  + Michael Cormack: As a school system leader it is also helpful to identify students early and provide the supports that they need. It might be helpful to do a few child profiles from the survey data to get a system-level perspective about how children may benefit from the services, specifically those that tap into multiple services (e.g. SNAP, early intervention). Page 10 of the analysis report provides helpful context about access to early intervention services as an opportunity and page 17 about where students receive services. It would be helpful to have an infographic showing where we could look to grow and to identify some of our regional neighbors for a push around that home service connection. Also curious about pediatric referral rates, and the variability compared to other states. Arkansas is serving a smaller percentage, but additional context would be helpful to know where Mississippi stands.
  + Julie Parker: Start Early sent the early intervention subcommittee the draft program profile prior to their June 9th meeting so they have already seen much of this data and made some recommendations which were incorporated. It may be helpful to have a regional breakdown of identification numbers. She was curious if there was any data for outcomes in inclusive pre-K classrooms—even though serving a small number of children in the state, inclusive pre-K programs have had a significant impact and having outcome data to report the significance of those programs would be helpful.
  + Tamara: Nothing in the program profiles or analysis report was surprising. A lot resonated with the shortage of staff and lack of access to affordable training opportunities. She would like to see where Mississippi is as a state are on creating some systems so that policymakers have data to make decisions about child care.
  + Chad Allgood: noted there is data collection on the early childhood workforce but they rely heavily on the data that licensing collects. They are required to collect workforce data as part of our progress report that we submit to the federal government. According to licensing as of December 2021, there were a little over 12,000 teachers in childcare programs. Over 10,000 had nothing above a high school diploma or GED. Agrees a stronger system is needed for tracking qualifications and professional development in the state and that's one of the goals that they have set--to look at putting a professional development registry in place. It's taking some time to map that out. The Mississippi Information Technology Services is working with licensing right now to create a more robust system when people are signing up for trainings, where they can enter information on their background, degree, qualifications, etc. It will be voluntary whether teachers provide that information, but will help with tracking.
  + Susan Buttross: It might be helpful where you can give numbers of children eligible versus number of children served, because it seems that in some areas, there is a lower number served than those who perhaps should or would be eligible.
  + Rebecca: Start Early tried to include the numbers of eligible children when possible by relying on different sources like federal reports. They are just estimates but are helpful to provide a sense of how many are served and opportunities to increase access.
  + Angela Rutherford: hopes that for the strategic vision, we see all of the potential pots of money Mississippi receives for X, Y and Z so that we have a more systematic and strategic plan that aligns all of these funding resources and then we use that to make recommendations to the governor and legislature.
  + Andrea Sanders: noted that is the goal of this project and it’s good timing to take the unique approach of looking at the programs through the lens of funding. Looking at TANF, it appears Mississippi is not spending money on tax credits so that could be an interesting recommendation.
  + Rebecca (Start Early) noted TANF has a lot of flexibility. The general trend has been declining amounts of cash assistance and increasing amounts towards work supports. There is also an opportunity to fund child care.
  + Andrea Sanders: It is helpful to have graphics that illustrate where the opportunity is, because this process of examining the map has raised a number of really excellent questions on the content and how we use a map with the governor or legislature to show where there is opportunity.
  + Linda Southward: Many of these federal programs have historically categorical funding which has created silos. It would be helpful to trace money through communities. Legislators and others will look at their county/community to see how the funding flows.
  + Tina Routh: Only saw one reference of Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and wanted to see if there was any way that they could have our own asset map; wanted clarity about the rationale behind putting the MS Band of Choctaw Indians on the state and not federal level on page three.
  + Rebecca (Start Early) noted the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is included in the Head Start profile, the WIC profile and the childcare profiles. Start Early is happy to meet to discuss how to better represent the MS Band of Choctaw Indians in the funding map.
  + Susan Buttross: Curious if Mississippi could spend TANF pre-K/Head Start dollars on Early Learning Collaboratives. That could be an area of interest.
  + Linda Southward: It would be interesting to look at the $15 million in TANF spent on “other funds” and how other southern states are spending those dollars.
  + Tamara: As we are looking at the shortage of teachers in childcare and trying to come up with a quality system for children, can we look at TANF clients to put them on a career pathway for being an early childhood teacher?
  + Start Early wasn’t able to get a response on some of the mini profiles listed in the table of contents so the ones that did respond (e.g. Excel by Five, Employment Equity for Single Moms) will be call-out boxes in the analysis report.
  + Susan Buttross: Requests that once the graphic designer creates and designs the final asset map that at least a committee from SECAC completely reviews it.
  + Andrea: the designed version of the asset map should go to all of SECAC and suggested the group schedules another meeting to discuss.
  + Chad Allgood: The new timeline would require SECAC members to send comments, questions, suggestions to Start Early by July 29th. SECAC can hold a special session/virtual meeting in August to finalize the asset map before the September 1st meeting.
  + Michael McCormack: Motioned to set a tentative date for August 16th at 1pm for a virtual meeting to review the asset map.
  + Andrea Sanders: Seconded motion. [Motion approved]

1. **Launching Strategic Visioning Process**

* Chad Allgood: The MS Asset Map (program profiles, strengths and opportunities) will help inform the strategic vision that SECAC creates.
  + SECAC Strategic Vision Overview
    - At the May SECAC meeting, we defined the purpose, audience, guiding principles, etc. for the strategic vision:
      * Purpose: create a cohesive early childhood system; identify and leverage resources to support children and families; identify key priorities based on data and family and provider voice; inform administrative, legislative and budgetary changes; provide a roadmap for SECAC
      * Audience: governor, legislators, state agency leaders, families, program providers working in the field
      * Guiding principles: transparency, trust, cohesion, equity, accountability, being purposeful and honoring the voices of the families that we are serving
      * Structure: 3-year timeframe with annual reviews. 5-pages total with graphics and visuals to make it easy to understand. SECAC decided it will be a PDF downloadable document that will live on the SECAC website. Desired outcomes should be tied to actionable items. Recommendations can be short-term or long-term and address “low-hanging fruit” or more complex goals.
    - We’re considering this the official launch of the strategic visioning process. Committees will continue to meet in July and August, and then the full SECAC will reconvene Sept. 1st. Committees will continue to meet in September and October.
    - By the November 3rd SECAC meeting, we will look at and approve the content of the strategic vision, and then begin the process of graphic design. The goal is to have a completed strategic vision by December.
    - Role of SECAC members in the strategic visioning process: develop with any additional data that comes from surveys, feedback from our website. You all get feedback every single day from the families, the clients that you serve, existing meetings and town halls, etc. so you can use that as you draft recommendations.
    - Strategic Visioning Feedback from SECAC Members
      * Dr. Julie Parker: noted that the Early Intervention Committee has started their meetings by really thinking through what their goals and charges are as they have reviewed and made suggestions for the asset map.
      * Chad Allgood: If there are strengths or weaknesses that are being identified in committee meetings that we need to address, those are the things that we would put into the strategic vision. Reminded everyone the ultimate goal as a council is to look at our early childhood system as a whole and identify ways we can make it better.
      * Michael Cormack: Curious if there will there be space on the upcoming agendas just for general committee updates—that's a good way to lift up the work and make certain it's happening. Mentioned that SECAC members have experience and expertise beyond their committee and could help develop the strategic vision beyond their committee. Also raised that the timeline for the strategic vision ends in December, just before the legislative session. What will be the vehicle or venue to present this report beyond just posting it on the website? Have we contemplated a way that we want to lift the work in a way that could inform policy?
      * Chad Allgood: There will be space on the September agenda for committees to report out. SECAC has not yet discussed the formal avenues for getting the information out there.

**Update on Continuing Topics: Child Support Enforcement Requirements for the Child Care Payment Program**

* Holly Spivey has met with the Governor and his staff regarding the child support requirement and the recommendation from SECAC. She also advised the governor and his staff to reach out to other stakeholders to get their feedback on the requirement as well as their experience implementing the requirement in the field. Holly is currently preparing to transition to a new role at the Mississippi Department of Education but will ensure that incoming director has information needed to keep the ball rolling on the recommendation SECAC made to the governor.

1. **Public Comments**

* One person provided comments in-person and two people provided comments on Zoom.
  + Heather Hannah: “I'll be quick. And I know many of you are already aware of this effort, but I just wanted to provide a quick update to this group that the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and partners are currently convening childcare providers to create recommendations for a new childcare quality support system in Mississippi. And these recommendations will be shared with DHS in September, if all goes well. And this effort is complementary to efforts that DHS around the childcare quality system, but they are not connected. While the primary goal is to collect recommendations from childcare providers, we are engaging other groups. There's a group of over 20 people who are currently, or historically connected to childcare quality who are serving as our advisory team. And several of those folks are on the SECAC committee. And, we're also holding a focus group with parents to obtain their perspectives. And I mentioned partners, the partners to Kellogg include SSRC, Miller, Mississippi First, the BUILD Initiative. We didn't have a parent rep, a childcare rep, your own [inaudible 02:15:43]. And some others on that team. And so far we've had two meetings with childcare providers. We still have one more to go. We are building in come feedback loops. We've been folding in the information that was gathered from the advisory team into the discussions. And then, we'll circle back with the advisory team, and the broader childcare provider community to get additional input later on in the process. And this is really the initial phase of a longer process. We will move into planning and design of the quality support system, and additional interest-holders will be engaged for that. So, if you have any questions, or information that might be helpful to that process, we do have a summary of the project on the Miller website, under the Forum for the Future. And then, you can also feel free to contact me. So, thank you.”
  + Matt Williams: “All right, hello. Wish I was there in Jackson, I'll be there one day, I just, I think I just echo what my colleague, Roberta, just said in the chat. Thanks, Holly, for the update, and thanks to SECAC for pushing the child support enforcement policy change and CCDF. And I noted that it came up in the conversation regarding SNAP, and it's also a state option there in Mississippi [inaudible 02:17:18] for SNAP too. I'm happy to have more conversations about how it works in that program as well. But I just want to thank Holly for that update. And just encourage all of you to keep pushing for this every single week, and our Employment Equity for Single Moms’ program, where we're serving hundreds of single moms across the state, and we're providing case management, connection to all the resources that can help them get to a higher paying job. And very importantly, we're providing an immediate childcare assistance, and that, that is coupled with intensive application assistance for the childcare payment program. And we, we are seeing success with this model. And I noted that in your analysis report, there is some feedback from parents that you received and providers that really supports the idea of maybe looking at allowing job search to be an upfront eligibility criteria for receiving CCPP. Some states are doing that. I saw that noted in the report. We had recommended that in the past, and we'd be happy to share more on that recommendation about how we're seeing it happen in other states. And lastly, I've done, as some folks in this room know, I've done tons of research on TANF, and how it can be spent. I am happy to share with you the rules that are in place currently for how TANF can be used for various uses. But I also want to say to this group to remember TANF dollars can be transferred, up to 30% of our state TANF block grant can be transferred over to the childcare payment program. We're not doing that right now, we've done it in previous years. And I want to encourage you all, thinking past ARPA, doing that again. Going back to that to ensure the CCPP continues to, to have the funding it needs. That's it, thank you for letting me make public comments today.

1. **Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

* Next meeting is August 16, 2022 from 1:00-2:30pm
* Chad: Does this pose a problem for anyone?
* Meeting date and time was agreed upon
* Dr. Susan Buttross motioned to close the meeting
* Dr. Linda Southward: Seconded the motion

**Appendix A. Zoom Meeting Chat Log**