

In 2007, federal law⁵ required the Governor of each state to create a new body or designate an existing body as the State’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC). This council serves in an advisory capacity to the Governor on early childhood system issues related to workforce, access to and quality of early childhood programs and services, and professional development. Through a memorandum of understanding in 2008, and legislation in 2010 (HB 3126), Governor Brad Henry appointed the OPSR to serve as Oklahoma’s State Early Childhood Advisory Council. This designation paved the way for Smart Start Oklahoma to be eligible to apply for federal ARRA funds. The application was granted for three years of funding for the OPSR to carry out the work as Oklahoma's State Early Childhood Advisory Council. Under the federal legislation, the OPSR accepted the following additional tasks:

- I. Conduct a statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education services;
- II. Identify opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among federally-funded and state-funded early childhood education services;
- III. Develop recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing early childhood education programs;
- IV. Develop recommendations regarding the establishment of a unified data collection system for public early childhood education;
- V. Develop recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators;
- VI. Assess the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators;
- VII. Make recommendations for improvements in early learning standards and undertake efforts to develop high-quality comprehensive early learning standards.

⁵ Section 642 B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Reauthorization Act.