**Board of Early Education and Care**

February 9, 2016

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Department of Early Education and Care**

51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02210

**MINUTES**

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present**

Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D., Chairperson

Mary Walachy, Vice Chairperson

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Robyn Kennedy, Designee for Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services

Joni Block

J.D. Chesloff

Elizabeth Childs, M.D.

Katie Joyce

Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.

Joan Wasser Gish, Esq.

Thomas L. Weber, Commissioner of the Department and Secretary to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair:**

Chairperson Nonie Lesaux welcomed the public and wished everyone a good month. She is continuing to meet with different groups and last month attended a readiness meeting on social-emotional learning from pre-kindergarten to higher education. The panel has people from each of the education agencies, including one Board Chairperson and One Vice Chairperson. Chairperson Lesaux provided a brief overview of the three agenda items for today. She also stated that Board Member Chesloff is ready to go with the Board's ad-hoc committee on transportation, which will be responsible for developing the scope of a transportation study.

**Comments from the Secretary**:

Secretary of Education James Peyser deferred to the Commissioner for comments.

**Comments from the Commissioner:**

Commissioner Weber thanked the Board and members of the public for their attendance. He updated the Board on the following matters:

**Eagleton School, Inc.:**

Commissioner Weber notified the Board on February 1, 2016 that EEC would be involved in an investigation at the Eagleton School, Inc. Late in the day on January 29, 2016, EEC was first notified by law enforcement that there was investigation related to allegations of abuse and neglect of children at the school and a potential cover-up of those activities, and that law enforcement activity may result in arrests. On January 30, 2016, law enforcement took action at the school, including securing evidence on campus. During the investigation, EEC joined forces with law enforcement on the premises of the school. Commissioner Weber thanked Tim Keane, Kelly Buckley, and Christine Burnett for their assistance with this matter. He added that Eagleton School houses seven residential programs and 76 male residents total with ages ranging from nine to twenty-one, with developmental disabilities, behavioral difficulties, psychiatric diagnoses, and cognitive impairment. Commissioner Weber stated that the Department ensured that the residents were supported and staff ratios were sound to ensure the health and well-being of the children during the law enforcement action. EEC is continuing to investigate jointly with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), local law enforcement, and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC), with support from the Executive Office of Education (EOE), the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS). The Commissioner thanked Carmel Sullivan, Anne Conners, Erin Craft, John Riley, and Kathleen Hart for their efforts on behalf of EEC regarding this matter.

**Release of Waitlist Remediation Funding:**

Commissioner Weber provided an update regarding the waitlist remediation funding, stating that the Department started to release funding at the end of December 2015. The goal is for 1,768 vouchers to be issued by end of March 2016, and Commissioner Weber explained that the Department has released 40% of the vouchers, which is on track with our goal. He explained that EEC is prioritizing homeless families during this release of vouchers.

**Preschool Expansion Grant Update:**

Commissioner Weber stated that the Boston, Holyoke, Springfield, and Lawrence Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) locations are at 95% or above enrolled. The Lowell PEG location has implemented a plan to get them to close to 100% enrollment, including adding a transportation component, which should get them to targeted enrollment levels. Commissioner Weber stated that there is a lot of exciting activities on the ground in these programs, but challenges have also been observed, particularly with enrollment.

**Child Care Financial Assistance Application:**

Commissioner Weber stated that the Department will be working with end users throughout February to input placement and attendance data in the Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) system as accurately as possible, with a hard date of February 20, 2016 to complete this work. This will allow the Department to run the data to see how the system will perform. Commissioner Weber added that testing will continue over course of the next several weeks, and the Department is close to making a decision to when CCFA will be re-launched.

**Quality Rating and Improvement System Validation Study:**

Commissioner Weber stated that the Department is meeting internally to review the results of the Quality Rating and Improvement (QRIS) validation study to determine the most appropriate next steps. Conversations are already underway to ensure that the Board remains connected to the QRIS work through the establishment of an ad hoc Board working group.

**Statements from the Public\***

*The Board of Early Education and Care makes up to 30 minutes available for persons in the audience to address the Board on specific agenda items. In order to hear as many speakers as possible, the Board limits individuals to three minutes, although written material of any length can be submitted to Chairperson Lesaux or Commissioner Weber.*

**Ruthie Liberman, Vice President of Public Policy at Crittenton Women's Union,** testified that Crittenton Women's Union is a non-profit organization working towards breaking the cycle of poverty by using a mentor-led system to help families cross the economic divide. Crittenton serves 1,400 families with children in the Boston area, and most of these families are homeless. Ms. Liberman testified that the biggest budget items for these families are housing and child care. According to the MIT living wage standard, child care costs are approximately 17,000 per year for a single parent with two children. Most families qualify for child care vouchers. She expressed that she is grateful that families are eligible to receive assistance in Massachusetts, but that the process of obtaining and using vouchers can be a daunting task, often requiring the assistance of Crittenton staff and in some instances legal advocates. This is challenging for families that receive vouchers through TAFDC because obtaining benefits can often require multiple trips to state offices. Ms. Liberman stated that families are having a hard time finding a center that will take a voucher because the number of centers accepting vouchers has declined. She recommended that the state adopt a twelve-month eligibility period, because allowing children to remain in care for twelve months, regardless of status, is particularly critical for her clients. Most parents work hourly jobs, and many do not know how many hours they will work in a given week. She noted that sometimes child care vouchers will fall through because a parent isn't meeting eligibility requirements, and recommended that the state not terminate families for semester breaks. Finally, Ms. Liberman recommended the creation of a single application system for benefits across the Commonwealth that would not require repeat in-person visits. She noted that she would like to ensure families that they will hear back from their case workers so they don't have to bring in legal assistance to get support. She also advocated for a single definition of the term “homeless”.

Commissioner Weber asked Ms. Liberman if she is aware of any states that currently use a single application. Ms. Liberman responded that she knows of some states who use a single application, but did not know which ones off the top of her head. Commissioner Weber replied that this information would be helpful.

**Kate Barrand, CEO and President of Horizons for Homeless Children (Horizons)**, introduced herself as the new CEO for Horizons. She testified that she sat on the Board of Horizons for fourteen years prior to taking on this role and is familiar with the needs of homeless families. She explained that for twenty-six years, Horizons has worked as a non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of homeless children. Horizons operates three child care centers and 120 family shelters statewide, with approximately 1,200 volunteers actively engaged with Horizons. Ms. Barrand stated that Horizons touches the lives of approximately 2,000 homeless children each year. She stated that she believes that the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) reauthorization encompasses a major re-envisioning of the subsidy program. She is particularly pleased that the reauthorization ensures provider and family friendly policies, including the establishment of a twelve-month authorization period. She noted that high quality programs cost more to deliver and Horizons programs need a higher teacher/child ratio due to the needs of the population. She stated that there is a need to connect children experiencing homelessness with those high-quality programs and thanked the Department for its partnership with Horizons.

**Libby Hayes, Executive Director for Homes for Families**, testified that CCDBG reauthorization is an opportunity to identify and serve the most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth. She thanked the Department for prioritizing homeless families within the waitlist remediation account. She testified that access to child care is increasingly a priority issue for her clients. Ms. Hayes explained that she submitted written testimony, but wanted to highlight a few themes. She advocated for increased coordination with other state agencies with respect for policy and programmatic alignment. She also recommended flexible requirements related to work and education mandates, advocating for twelve-month authorization periods and lower parent fees. She encouraged alignment with the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, which will help identify children with the highest needs. Finally, Ms. Hayes advocated for a focus on the safety and stability of children over the compliance of parents.

**End of Public Comment Period.**

**Routine Business:**

* **Approval of January 12, 2016 Board Minutes - Vote**

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the January 12, 2016 Board Meeting.** The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Committee Reports:**

**Fiscal and Oversight Committee:**

Board Member Elizabeth Childs stated that the Oversight Committee met on January 25, 2016. At the meeting, the Committee reviewed CCFA, with Board Member Childs noting that there has been tremendous progress and she thanked everyone who is working on moving CCFA forward. Regarding the caseload accounts, she explained that the Department is doing a workaround with the numbers due to estimated billing and therefore financial numbers are estimates. She stated that EEC paid out approximately $2.5M more for vouchers than was estimated in the spending plan, and for contracts EEC paid out $3.1M less than was projected. Board Member Childs stated that these figures will be reconciled when CCFA comes online. Board Member Childs stated that the Oversight Committee discussed the waitlist numbers, noting that the total number of children on the waitlist was 26,168 as of the date of the Oversight Committee meeting. She noted that this was an interesting conversation, with the knowledge that PEG slots are not full and some programs reporting vacancies. She expressed that there is a realization that the waitlist numbers do not lead us to one conclusion, and it oversimplifies the idea that there are children waiting because there is not enough slots. Board Member Childs suggested that the Department find out why children are having a hard time accessing programs, and added that when the Department conducted a waitlist cleanup project, only 20% of families stated that they are still waiting for slots. Board Member Childs concluded that the Department does not really know what it is reporting on when we give out the total waitlist number.

Board Member Eleanora Villegas-Reimers inquired whether the Department knows the ages of the children on the waitlist. Board Member Childs responded that the Department could pull some of this information out of the data. Chairperson Lesaux stated that it was instructive to learn about the waitlist, noting that there is rhetoric about how many children are waiting for care that we need to understand better. Board Member Childs added that there are certainly some communities where children are waiting. Vice Chairperson Mary Walachy stated that in Springfield, she heard there were six hundred vacancies, which turned out to be an incorrect number. She added that when Springfield did an inventory, there were maybe 240 openings in the provider community in that city. Vice Chairperson Walachy stated that the Department needs to think about how we can serve more children when we have slots, but families are unable to access vouchers. Board Member Sharon Scott-Chandler asked if there an opportunity in a committee to look at some of these waitlist issues. Vice Chairperson Walachy added that the YMCA has vacant classrooms because they do not have enough teachers. Chairperson Lesaux stated that the open question is about whether there should be a number deeper than the waitlist number, noting that there are perhaps a couple of categories of waitlist data that the Department can message and use to inform the legislature.

* **Disclosures**

Board Member Scott-Chandler submitted a written disclosure that she is employed by Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), a recipient of EEC funding.  Board Member Villegas-Reimers submitted a written disclosure that she is employed by Wheelock College, a recipient of EEC funding.   Board Member Joni Block submitted a written disclosure that her position as the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Coordinator with Brockton Public Schools is funded by EEC.

**Items for Discussion and Action:**

I. **Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization Plan Submission - Discussion and Vote**

 *Relevant resources included in Board Materials:*

* *Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Reauthorization and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2016-2018, PowerPoint Presentation dated February 9, 2016*

EEC Assistant General Counsel Tom Weierman presented the CCDBG Reauthorization and the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) state plan to the Board. Mr. Weierman thanked the Board for opportunity to present. He highlighted the background of CCDBG reauthorization, noting that CCDF funds accounted for $481M spent by the Department, which accounts for 92% of the Department's budget. This is the first reauthorization of the CCDBG block grant in twenty years, and as such, the reauthorization serves as a tremendous opportunity for the Department. Mr. Weierman stated that the CCDF state plan now must be submitted every three years, as opposed to every two years as was required previously. He explained that the Department is already one and a half years into CCDBG reauthorization. The Federal Office of Child Care has issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking regarding federal regulations, with the expectation that promulgation of these regulations will occur at some point in the summer.

Mr. Weierman stated that since the Board last reviewed the CCDBG reauthorization, Department staff members and subject matter experts have reviewed the plan. In addition, three public hearings were held in Springfield, Boston, and Worcester. Finally, an ad-hoc committee of the Board was formed to engage the Board and allow for recommendations on implementation of the CCDBG requirements. Themes were clear across all stakeholder groups that the Department should increase rates for subsidy, stabilize placements for children, review and implement a tiered rate structure, and implement enhanced background record checks in a provider-friendly fashion. Finally, the Department should work with other state agencies to meet its annual monitoring requirements of programs.

Mr. Weierman provided a summary of the public comments, including implementation of a twelve-month authorization period, review of the parent co-payment structure, review of the rate structure, increase investment in licensing, and increase emphasis on serving homeless families. The major themes of the Board ad-hoc committee review of CCDBG reauthorization was to review the current rate structure, increase access to high-quality child care program, provide for stable placements for children and the programs serving these children, address the staffing crisis through increase in rates, and focus on serving the highest need families.

Mr. Weierman discussed the CCDBG reauthorization implementation plan, noting that the CCDF state plan is a compliance document. There are twenty-five areas of the CCDF state plan where the Department must demonstrate compliance, and the Department is in substantial compliance with all but five areas. He noted that the areas in which the Department is not yet in substantial compliance is regarding the Department website, posting inspection reports on the website, full implementation of twelve-month authorization for subsidy for all referrals, annual inspections of license-exempt programs, and full implementation of expanded background record checks.

Mr. Weierman stated that the next step if the Board votes to approve the CCDF state plan is to submit the plan to the Federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by March 1, 2016. Mr. Weierman stated that the next step for the Department is to start forming internal working groups for implementation. He noted that the plan does not box the Department into any particular area, and we can figure out the "how" as we move along. Mr. Weierman stated that the Department will continue to work with ACF, and the Department will meet with the ad-hoc Board committee to ensure that it reviews any changes.

Chairperson Lesaux thanked Mr. Weierman for his work on this project. Board Member Block stated that the Advisory Council requested involvement with CCDBG implementation. She added that CCDBG is a vehicle to integrate all of the initiatives of the Department, including licensing, curriculum, and professional development, and she hopes the Department will use this opportunity to braid all of the initiatives together. She expressed that it behooves the Department to look at how to better serve homeless families, particularly families residing in hotels that may not be on the waitlist.

Board Member Robyn Kennedy stated that she appreciates being a part of the conversation. She noted that once the Department serves the highest-need families, there are so many other families behind them. She stated that the Commonwealth should serve families at risk of homelessness, and must connect these families to resources so they do not become homeless. She noted that access to these vouchers is a critical component of this effort.

Board Member Wasser Gish thanked Mr. Weierman for leading the ad-hoc Board committee through discussion of the CCDBG reauthorization. She noted that there is a lot of consistency between the field and Department staff, and the priorities are consistent across the board. She expressed that it is important that there is a clear planning process and that the Department have an informed perspective before putting its plan out for comment.

Board Member Childs noted that there are limitations to the CCDF state plan document, stating that the document should not tie the Department's hands in ways we want to move forward. She also asked how the CCDF state plan does not tie the Department's hands. Mr. Weierman discussed the twelve-month authorization period, noting that the Department is not required to follow a certain path when implementing this requirement. He stated that the Department has the flexibility to design a response that meets the needs of the families. Mr. Weierman noted that we should be transparent about that process when we decide how we are going to implement the initiatives.

Secretary James Peyser noted that the CCDF state plan is descriptive and asked if ACF must be notified or approve an amendment to the plan made by the Department. Mr. Weierman responded that many of the items reflected in the plan are addressed by our state regulations. Any substantial changes to the plan must be reported within sixty days. Mr. Weierman noted that to his knowledge, the Department has never had one of our amendments denied, but technically the Department must request permission to make these changes.

Chairperson Lesaux asked how the definition of “homeless” is incorporated into this process. Mr. Weierman responded that the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking suggests that states adopt the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless. Board Member Kennedy added that this speaks to the need for agencies to collaborate.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care hereby approves the Department’s process to finalize the Commonwealth’s CCDF State Plan for federal fiscal years 2016-2018, and authorizes the Department to submit the final CCDF State Plan to the Administration for Children and Families on or before March 1, 2016 on its behalf.** The motion passed unanimously.

II. **Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology and Engineering Standards - Discussion and Vote**

 *Relevant resources included in Board Materials:*

* *Draft Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology, and Engineering Standards, PowerPoint Presentation dated February 9, 2016*

EEC Educator/Provider Support Specialist Chris Pond, together with Jacob Foster from ESE and Jeff Winokur from Wheelock College, presented the Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology and Engineering (Pre-K STE) standards to the Board. Ms. Pond thanked Mr. Foster and Mr. Winokur for their partnership, as they were instrumental in moving this project forward. Ms. Pond stated that the purpose of the Pre-K STE standards is to emphasize the importance of science in early education curricula. The Department has been working with ESE because ESE has simultaneously been working on its K-12 STE standards. Ms. Pond noted that the abbreviation is STE rather than STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) because math is already incorporated in the Department's frameworks. Ms. Pond added that the development process has been collaborative, with the goal of aligning Pre-K STE standards with ESE's K-12 STE standards.

Mr. Foster explained that the proposal envisions three dimensions of standards: disciplinary core ideas, science and engineering practices, and application to real life. Ms. Pond provided an overview of the development of the Pre-K STE Standards, stating that the project started in August 2012. In May 2015, the Board voted to publish the standards for public comment. In October 2015, the Department and ESE distributed a survey regarding the Pre-K through 12 standards. The Department received sixty-nine responses to the survey. Chairperson Lesaux asked for clarification about the survey. Ms. Pond responded that the survey went to the Early Education field to solicit comments to the STE standards for Pre-K to grade 12.

Ms. Pond stated that the purpose of today's presentation is to propose a final version of the standards for adoption. Ms. Pond stated that there was a lot of engagement with the field, including the creation of a crosswalk, information sessions, and a presentation at the STEM summit. Ms. Pond noted that it was important for the Department to be a part of the STEM summit, as the Department had never taken part in the past. Ms. Pond added that there were "train the trainer" sessions to support the field around understanding the newly-developed standards. In addition, individuals have been trained to work with the EPS grantees to enhance professional learning opportunities.

Ms. Pond stated that the Department plans to continue its work with ESE. EEC also participated in the Science Ambassador program and invited six early educators to participate. WGBH is also a partner in this process, and they developed material and content around the standards. Ms. Pond continued that the Museum of Science wants to include more early childhood education as well to engage the early childhood field at the Museum. The next step if the Board approves the Pre-K STE standards is to send them to the Joint Committee on Education and the Senate and House Ways and Means Committees.

Chairperson Lesaux thanked Ms. Pond, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Winokur for their work on this project. Board Member Wasser Gish asked about the plans to support educators on curriculum and professional development for STE. Ms. Pond responded that the Department will work with EPS grantees, as they will support curriculum development in programs. Board Member Wasser Gish added that implementing the Pre-K STE standards will require intensive engagement with appropriate curriculum development, and asked how the Department is equipped to do this so that is not a problem with respect to alignment. Ms. Pond responded that WGBH has professional development materials for educators and the EPS Grantees. Chairperson Lesaux added that the Department expects a gap to fully implementing and aligning the standards, noting that the field will not get there without materials and assistance. Ms. Pond responded that there are several materials around content and curriculum geared toward early childhood education programs. Mr. Foster stated that one of the benefits of aligning work is developed materials are aligned.

Board Member Villegas-Reimers stated that there is a link to resources for early learning, noting that the website was created by WGBH with Race to the Top funding. Board Member Villegas-Reimers continued that the Department created specific documents, curriculum, and videos that would be needed by family child care providers and center-based or school-based educators to implement the standards. Parents can access specific resources, and some are already translated to Spanish. There are already materials that exist to support the kinds of standards.

Board Member Katie Joyce stated that the standards are great and robust work. She added that responses regarding the age-appropriateness of the standards may be a broader view as what our expectations are for young children. Board Member Block stated that these standards are well-entrenched in the field. She also asked Mr. Winokur for an example of what these standards might look like in a program. Mr. Winokur responded that the wording of the standards may confuse adults, but what is described in the standards is not very different from what is actually occurring in early education programs. For example, educators may discuss mealworms by asking "what do you notice about this Mealworm?" or "how do you think the legs help it survive?" The standards exist to assist the educators with asking the correct questions of children. Board Member Block added that professional development might also affect institutions of higher education and how to integrate best practices.

Board Member J.D. Chesloff thanked the panel and stated that early childhood education and STE must be linked. The standards are the ultimate infiltration of the STE standards into early education. He stated that this is really important because it launches children and continues them through the entire education and workforce system. He also noted that he gets calls about STE at least once a month from people across the country.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care hereby approves and adopts the Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology, and Engineering Standards,after receiving and reviewing public comment,as presented during the May 12, 2015 and February 9, 2016 Board presentations.**

The motion passed by majority vote. Board Member Villegas-Reimers abstained because of her work with the standards at Wheelock.

III. **2015 Annual Legislature Report - Discussion and Vote**

 *Relevant resources included in Board Materials:*

* *2015 Annual Report to the Legislature, PowerPoint Presentation dated February 9, 2016*
* *2015 Annual Legislative Report*

EEC Director of Communications and External Affairs Kathleen Hart presented the 2015 Annual Report to the Legislature (Legislative Report) to the Board. Ms. Hart provided context for the Legislative Report, stating that it provides the legislature with an update on the Department's activities, progress, and accomplishments over the past year. She noted that the Legislative Report provides a comprehensive summary for policymakers, stakeholders, and the public on the work by the Department. She set forth the framework of the report, noting that the Legislative Report sets forth the progress on each initiative for each of the four directions in the Department's Strategic Plan.

Strategic Direction number 1 is for all young children in the Commonwealth to be ready to enter the K-12 education system and be successful, and to provide families with opportunities to support their children’s cognitive, socio-emotional, language, and physical development. Key accomplishments by the Department for this strategic direction included:

* + provision of 2,500 vouchers for children on the Income Eligible Child Care waitlist in FY15 and provide approximately 1,700 vouchers in FY16 ;
	+ enrollment of first cohort of approximately 800 four-year-olds in preschool through PEG initiative in five cities;
	+ eighty-nine Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) networks are providing informal early education opportunities and resources to parents and families in their communities;
	+ support of *Resources for Early Learning* digital library of 2,500+ free media-based early learning tools for families and educators; and
	+ partnership with the Boston Children's Museum to train 171 children's museums and libraries on STEM, early literacy, kindergarten readiness, and child development.

Strategic Direction number 2 is that programs offered in early childhood, out of school time settings licensed or license exempt by EEC will promote and support the high quality education and healthy development of children that enables all children to be successful as school members and citizens. Key accomplishments by the Department for this strategic direction included:

* + completion of the 2nd pilot of the differential licensing model with targeted indicators that determine compliance with licensing regulations;
	+ development of phase one of the Licensing Education Analytic Database (LEAD) system for licensing and investigation information that replaces Licensing Manager and the Complaint Tracking Systems;
	+ promulgation of amendments to residential program regulations regarding the use of prone, mechanical and medical restraints, and use of seclusion;
	+ awarding of $7.5 million in grants to ten agencies for facilities development in program settings serving over 1,300 children;
	+ engagement with 6,035 individuals to participate in QRIS, a 7.3% increase from previous year; and
	+ development of the Pre-K STE Learning Standards and adopting of the Standards on Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning.

Strategic Direction number 3 is the early childhood and out-of-school time workforce who works with children and families in the Commonwealth is professionally prepared, adequately compensated, and diverse. Key accomplishments by the Department for this strategic direction included:

* + 2,000 educators completing college coursework and 5,000 received coaching, academic advising, and career counseling from the EPS Networks;
	+ 766 educators were approved for an Early Childhood Educator Scholarship;
	+ EEC supported new cohorts of students in the Post Master’s Certificate program in Early Education Research, Policy, and Leadership at UMass Boston, and in the Early Educators Fellowship Initiative (EEFI);
	+ with the Department of Public Health, EEC provided Strength-Based trainingon early trauma, family substance use, parent mental health, and exposure to violence;
	+ with the Department of Public Health, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Horizons for Homeless Children, EEC trained nearly 80 homeless shelter direct care providers on providing social and emotional supports to children and families; and
	+ with the Office of Refugees and Immigrants, EEC offered training on *Supporting Multilingual Children and Immigrant/Refugee Families*.

Strategic Direction number 4 is that the Department and Board of Early Education and Care will provide leadership, direction and resources to meet the mission of the agency with utmost integrity, transparency and accountability to the people of the Commonwealth. Key accomplishments by the Department for this strategic direction included:

* EEC received $550.8M in the FY16 GAA, an increase of $13.5M over FY15 available funding;
* EEC held trainings for 200 child care providers, CCR&Rs and transportation companies on regulations and policies governing transport of children in EEC-contracted and licensed programs, and; and
* EEC completed the KPMG Audit of the CCDF funds with a preliminary result of no finding.

Ms. Hart stated that the next step will be to submit the report to the Legislature on February 12, 2016. Ms. Hart noted that the Annual Report will also be available online. Board Member Joyce thanked Ms. Hart for her efforts to see in one place all of the great work the Department is doing. Vice Chairperson Walachy asked what the Legislature does with EEC's Legislative Report. Ms. Hart responded that the Department has received detailed questions from the Joint Committee on Education in the past, following their receipt of its Legislative Report. Commissioner Weber added that the Department has thought long and hard to make the report an accessible document that is more reader-friendly. He also mentioned that the Department occasionally receives questions from specific legislatures following their review of the Legislative Report.

Board Member Chesloff stated that he used to be a Ways and Means analyst, and that the Annual Report was helpful to him when he was in that role. Board Member Villegas-Reimers stated that she remembered when the Annual Report was over one hundred pages. She also suggested that the Department post the Executive Summary as a separate document. Board Member Block stated that she enjoys reading the Legislative Report, as it is an opportunity for the Department to pat ourselves on the back and point out its key accomplishments. Board Member Block also asked how the report is used internally. Ms. Hart responded that the document will be shared with Department staff and the report was heavily developed through work with staff.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board approves the 2015 Annual Legislative Report, as presented and included in the Board materials of February 9, 2016, and authorizes the Department to submit the Annual Legislative Report on its behalf.** The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

 Respectfully submitted,

 

 Thomas L. Weber

 Commissioner of the Department and

 Secretary to the Board