MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

February Data Advisory Commission Meeting

February 24, 2026

Agenda

Workforce Data and Research:

- Review of Current EEC Educator Data Sources
- Overview of New EEC Professional Portal
- Research Agenda: Workforce Questions

Preparing the Commission's FY26 Legislative Report:

- Report Outline
- Draft Recommendations
- Next Steps

Approval of Minutes

Workforce Data and Research

Current EEC Workforce Data Sources

Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR)

Workflow to be added into Portal

Contains Data On:
All educators who have ever registered with EEC over time, including demographics and educational degrees.

Challenges/Limitations:
Unclear who is still working in the field. Significant duplicate information makes it challenging to understand the size of the workforce.

Teacher Qualifications System (TQ)

Workflow to be added into Portal

Contains Data On:
All educators who have applied to EEC for certification, including the teacher, lead teacher, or Director I or II levels.

Challenges/Limitations: Old and fragile system with limited data. Significant data generated by the process lives outside the system.

Strong Start Learning Management System (LMS)

New LMS upgrade + additional integration with Portal

Contains Data On:
All LMS courses that educators have registered for and completed over time.

Challenges/Limitations:
Limited integration with other EEC data systems (including the PQR, TQ system, etc.).

Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Applications and Surveys

Contains Data On:
The number of educators employed by role, highest and lowest wages of educators by role, FCC assistant employment, educator benefits offered, educator hiring and departures.

Challenges/Limitations: Data are collected at the program level, making it challenging to answer systemic questions of interest.

Other State Administrative Data

EEC's New Professional Portal

OVERVIEW

EEC is building a new portal that will provide a “one stop shop” for early education and care professionals.

The portal will:

- Be the primary interface for current and aspiring professionals to register with the Commonwealth;
- Support the application, review, and issuance of educator certifications;
- Allow educators to participate in and track ongoing professional learning.

In the future: Once the new credentialing system rolls out, the portal will house key data on aspiring and credentialed educators across the Commonwealth.

How will we get there?

	Now	By January 2027	By January 2028
Registration		Educators will be able to register in the Portal, replacing the current PQR system.	EEC Professional Portal will integrate with BRC and LEAD, providing a more detailed view of program rosters with associated statuses (e.g. BRC renewal dates) along with support for more validation of educator data by programs.
Certification	Educators can apply for certification(s) via the new EEC Professional Portal.		
Professional Learning	Educators can access courses in EEC's Learning Management System (Strong Start) via the Portal.	The Portal will pull in LEAD program data, allowing licensors to confirm that educators have registered, completed PD, etc. at the individual and program levels.	

What additional insights will the new Portal unlock?



Who makes up the early education workforce in Massachusetts? How do educator characteristics vary by program type and role?



How do early educators progress and move through different roles throughout their careers?

How do educators move across programs and into/out of the sector over time?



What professional learning opportunities are educators engaging in across the Commonwealth?

EEC Research Agenda

To support a culture of data driven decision making, EEC has been building, enhancing, and refining an agency research agenda and infrastructure and building data analytic capacity.

Evidence-led

Designed to complement our KPIs and to support additional research and evidence that is needed to inform decision-making and program design.

Collaborative

Research questions are developed in partnership with EEC staff and external stakeholders and are aligned with EEC's strategic action plan and Governor's priorities.



Responsive

The research agenda is a living document that is responsive to the agency's priorities and the evolving needs of the field and policy context.

Quality Improvement

Promote continuous learning and research and data informed policy decisions.

Read the research agenda here.

Early Educator Characteristics and Experiences

Research Questions for Consideration

- What is the current size, composition, and distribution of early educators across Massachusetts? How do educator characteristics, qualifications, and years of experience vary by region, program type, and role?
- What are the common entry points and career pathways for early educators? To what extent do participants in different pathways enter and stay in the early education and care workforce? Does turnover and tenure vary by pathway?
- What are the rates and patterns of entry, mobility, turnover and attrition in the workforce? What are the characteristics, experiences, and backgrounds of early education and care educators with long-term retention?

Workforce Strategies and Early Educator Outcomes

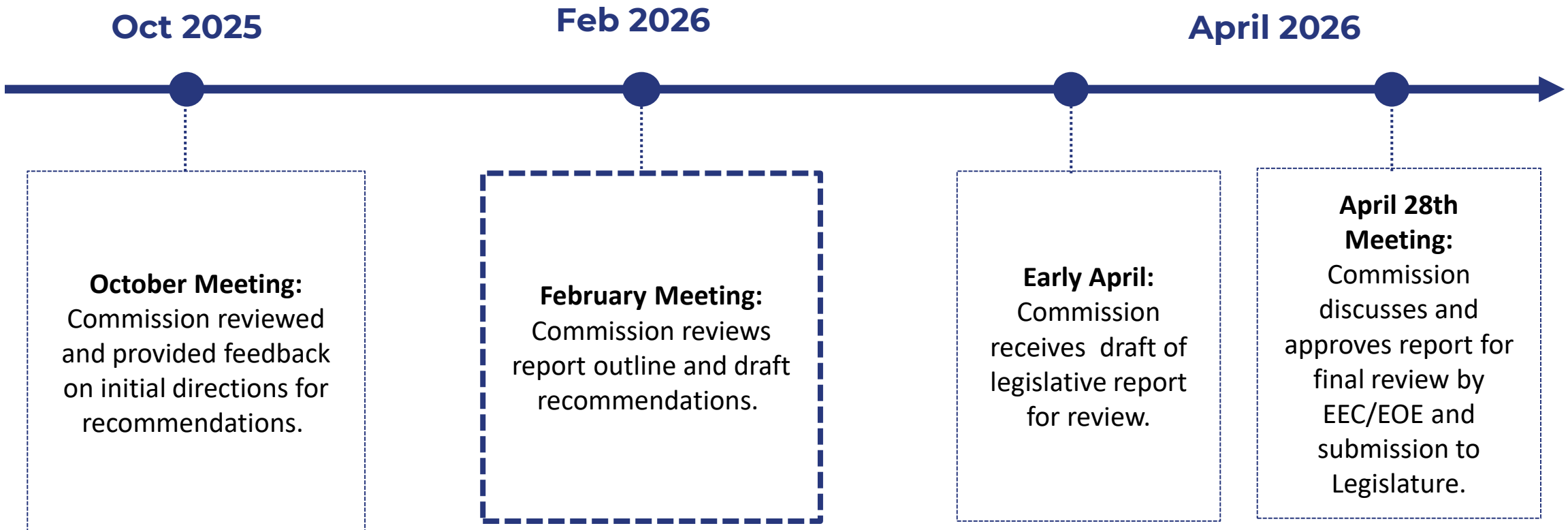
Research Questions for Consideration

- How are EEC workforce investments and programs shaping the composition and experience of the ECE workforce and which ones are having the most substantial impact in terms of recruitment, retention, career advancement, and educator well-being?
- In what ways is compensation (wages and benefits) shaping the supply, characteristics and sustainability of the ECE workforce? How are those trends impacted by and/or connected to the broader economic context?
- To what extent do educators work in supportive environments (staff support, paid planning time, support for PD including curriculum, leadership, compensation and benefits)? How do working conditions affect retention and advancement?

Preparing the Commission's FY26 Legislative Report

FY26 Legislative Report Timeline

"The Data Advisory Commission shall utilize data received by the department […] to identify, analyze and make recommendations on high-impact, cost-effective data strategies for assessing the needs of families and children…"



FY26 Legislative Report Goals

1. Share update/summary on Commission focus and discussions to date.
2. Provide overview of relevant EEC data, research, and IT infrastructure developments and plans.
3. Make recommendations to guide future EEC research and data strategy.

Report Contents

I. Summary of Data Advisory Commission Activities To Date

a) Overview of information covered and key themes from meetings

II. Overview of Data, Research, and IT Infrastructure Developments

a) Current EEC research and data analytic capacity

b) Launch and refinement of EEC research agenda

c) Current EEC research partnerships

d) New public-facing data and analyses (KPI dashboard, public data sets, research briefs)

e) IT modernization projects

f) Additional data and research infrastructure beyond EEC

III. Commission Progress and Recommendations (see next slides)

EEC Research and Data Strategy



Identifying Key Questions and Data Needed to Understand the Landscape and Inform Policy Decisions
Articulate key research priorities and build capacity to answer questions of interest through external research partnerships and additional data collection.



Expanding Public Access to EEC Research, Data, and Analyses
Ensure that EEC data, analyses, and research findings are easily accessible by supporting the development of public-facing research reports, data briefs, and dashboards.



Improving Data Quality
Ensure that the data collected are as accurate and complete as possible by partnering with internal teams on data collection processes and IT system advancements.



Streamlining Data Collection
Make sure that necessary data are collected to inform key policy decisions and provide services and supports for families, educators, and programs, while minimizing burden and redundancy.

Draft Recommendations

Identifying Key Data and Analyses Needed

Recommendation 1: EEC should continue to maintain an up-to-date research agenda that is aligned with the agency's strategic priorities, reflects emerging policy needs, and incorporates input from EEC staff and external stakeholders including the Data Advisory Commission.



Recommendation 2: EEC should continue to build and deepen research capacity and external research partnerships focused on the priorities identified in the agency's research agenda.

Recommendation 3: EEC should develop and implement a multi-year plan to measure, track, and report on the data metrics identified in the agency's new 2026-2030 Strategic Action Plan.

Recommendation 4: EEC should regularly assess data needs and gaps to identify where new data collection may be needed and ensure that key questions can be answered.

Draft Recommendations

Expand Public Access to EEC Data and Research



Recommendation 5: EEC should continue to expand and enhance its public-facing KPI dashboards by incorporating additional metrics, improving user-friendly functionality, and making available underlying data sets as appropriate.

Recommendation 6: EEC should develop additional public-facing data briefs, tools, and resources and continue to share research findings through accessible reports and presentations.

Draft Recommendations

Improving Data Quality



Recommendation 7: EEC should continue its focus on developing new technology systems that are user-centered, accessible, and improve data quality.

Recommendation 8: EEC should strengthen data quality across its systems by implementing consistent data standards, clearer guidance for data entry, validation processes, and ongoing quality monitoring.

Streamlining Data Collection



Recommendation 9: EEC should explore additional opportunities to streamline data collection for families, educators, and programs and reduce administrative burden, including and not limited to leveraging automation, improving data integration, and revisiting reporting frequency and format, while preserving essential information for reporting and decision-making.

Future Meeting Schedule and Proposed Topics

Tentative Date	Proposed Meeting Focus
April 28, 2026	Program Stability and Quality Data Discuss and Approve Annual Legislative Report

For each strategy area:

- Share relevant KPIs and ongoing data analyses
- Deeper dive into IT/data system modernization underway at EEC, where applicable
- Overview of relevant research projects/partnerships
- Discuss additional data collection, analyses, and/or reporting infrastructure needed to inform program and policy development, strategic resource allocation and implementation decisions, and streamline any duplicative reporting requirements