Department of Early Education and Care

EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE DATA ADVISORY COMMISSION

Tuesday, October 21, 2025
1:30PM to 3:00PM
Virtual Meeting: Zoom Webinar
https://www.youtube.com/c/EECMass

Minutes

Commission Member Attendees:

- Amy Kershaw–Commissioner of Early Education and Care, EEC
- Mark Reilly–Undersecretary and Chief Operating Officer, Executive Office of Education
- Kate Barrand–President and CEO, Horizons for Homeless Children
- Harold Blanco–Owner, Paula's Barn Child Care
- Ellen Dickenson–Senior Vice President for Research, Analytics, and Planning, United Way of Massachusetts Bay
- Michelle Haimowitz–Executive Director, Massachusetts Head Start Association
- Jennifer Aldworth–Executive Director, Massachusetts Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs
- Kate-Marie Roycroft–CEO, Alliance of MA YMCAs
- Victoria Bergeron – Policy Researcher, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation
- Marisa Fear–Director of Policy, Strategies for Children
- Laura Perille–President and CEO of Nurtury
- Adam Jones–Senior Policy Analyst, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, and Representative, Common Start Coalition
- Andrea Howard–CEO, West End House Boys & Girls Club
- Elizabeth Leiwant–Chief of Policy, Neighborhood Villages

EEC Staff Attendees:

Amy Checkoway–Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Strategy, & Research, EEC
Addison Koelle – Legislative Director, EEC
Jocelyn Bowne – Deputy Commissioner for Workforce, Program Support, and Innovation, EEC
Adrienne Murphy – Senior Director of Data Analytics, EEC
Ashley White – Director of Research, EEC
Emily Conner-Simons – Director of Special Projects, EEC

Minutes

1. Welcome & Introductions

Commissioner Kershaw provided opening remarks and shared an overview of the meeting agenda. She noted that the meeting will focus on the metrics articulated in the agency's 2026-2030 Strategic Action Plan, to be presented to the Board in November and in effect beginning in the new calendar year. Mark Reilly, Undersecretary and Chief Operating Officer, Executive Office of Education, provided brief welcoming remarks as well. Amy Checkoway, EEC's Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Strategy, & Research, provided an overview of the agenda including a reminder about EEC's research and data focus areas.

2. Charge of Data Advisory Commission

Deputy Commissioner Checkoway provided an overview of the Commission's charge and highlighted the agency's ongoing modernization and improvements to IT systems, as well as the agency's many external research partnerships. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway also briefly discussed the continued work of the Inter-Agency Early Education and Care Taskforce and the Education to Career (E2C) Research and Data Hub.

3. Where We've Come and Where We're Going

Adrienne Murphy, EEC's Senior Director of Data Analytics, provided an overview of areas in which EEC is required to collect and report on key data. She noted that the Commission discussed family access data and research at their July meeting and will discuss workforce data and research at their next meeting in January and then program data and research in March.

4. EEC Strategic Action Plan Metrics

Emily Conner-Simons, EEC's Director of Special Projects, provided an overview and status update of EEC's 2026-30 Strategic Action Plan development timeline. Director Conner-Simons then provided an overview of EEC's five strategic objectives which the Strategic Action Plan is aligned with, along with a summary of the process used to develop the metrics that will measure progress towards the goals in the Strategic Action Plan. She noted that the metrics are currently organized into two groups—metrics that EEC currently tracks publicly and additional metrics that the agency is committed to developing the capacity to measure and track over the next five years. She asked that for each strategic priority, the Commission weigh in on whether the metrics outlined will help EEC measure progress towards its five-year goals and whether there are additional metrics that can help EEC demonstrate progress on these goals.

Director Conner-Simons first focused on goals related to Agency Infrastructure and shared the draft metrics to measure progress towards the goals. Jen Aldworth, Executive Director, Massachusetts Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs asked for clarity about the metric around dashboard usership. Senior Director Murphy explained that EEC would like to track both quantitative data on dashboard traffic as well as qualitative data on how individuals use the data on the dashboard. Laura Perille, President and CEO, Nurtury, provided positive feedback about the goals focused on program, educator, and family engagement and partnership with EEC. Member Perille and Deputy Commissioner Checkoway discussed additional opportunities to utilize user satisfaction survey metrics across all strategic priority areas. Marisa Fear, Director of Policy, Strategy for Children, provided thoughts about additional ways to measure the goal focused on engagement with EEC, including measuring and tracking responses to public comments and feedback from working groups. Kate Barrand, President and CEO, Horizons for Children, emphasized the importance of the goal about simplifying technology for providers.

Director Conner-Simons next discussed agency goals related to Family Access and shared draft metrics to measure progress towards the goals. Member Barrand highlighted the importance of tracking the time from Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) referral to eligibility to placement. Kate-Marie Roycroft, CEO, Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs, encouraged EEC to be mindful of collecting data without adding additional administrative burdens. She also noted the data privacy bill currently under consideration by the Legislature and potential implications. Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Head Start Association, provided feedback related to the tracking and sharing of data on the different types of care available to families. In response to a question from Member Perille, Senior Director Murphy confirmed that the agency is tracking both the number of children eligible for child care financial assistance along with the number of children receiving assistance. Ellen Dickenson, Senior Vice President for Research, Analytics, and Planning, United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the metric related to family co-payments, and Commissioner Kershaw confirmed that this is referring to families participating in EEC's CCFA system. Senior Director Murphy noted that EEC is also engaged in some broader analysis of private tuition data.

Director Conner-Simons then discussed agency goals related to Workforce Supports and shared the draft metrics to measure progress towards the goals. Member Barrand and Undersecretary Reilly discussed metrics related to salary and retention. Member Barrand encouraged focus on retention rather than turnover. Jocelyn Bowne, EEC's Deputy Commissioner for Workforce Program Support and Innovation, shared with the Commission that a salary scale is currently under development. Victoria Bergeron, Policy Researcher, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, provided feedback about salary metrics for family child care providers. Member Perrille asked further questions about the implementation of a salary scale, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne acknowledged that there are many ways to implement this and noted that there will be opportunities for feedback from the field on what implementation should look like. Member Barrand and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the need to track supports for educators because they are at the core of program quality. Member Fear and Ms. Conner-Simons discussed tracking metrics around who makes up the workforce in Massachusetts, including educator language data, in service of increasing

language accessibility for educators.

Director Conner-Simons next discussed agency goals related to Program Stability and shared the draft metrics to measure progress towards the goals. Member Perille, Director Conner-Simons, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne, discussed inclusion of the term "small business" in the program stability goals and what that term is intended to capture. Member Perille also noted that this strategic priority does not seem to currently include metrics around feedback from end-users. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway noted the positive feedback about tracking the extent to which public funding streams can support programs in covering the true cost of quality care.

Director Conner-Simons finally reviewed agency goals related to Program Quality and shared the draft metrics to measure progress towards the goals. Member Aldworth asked whether EEC is supporting a particular observation tool, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed a pilot program for technical assistance support for contracted providers using the CLASS measure. Member Barrand discussed drivers of quality and encouraged continued discussion around this strategic priority.

Undersecretary Reilly expressed appreciation to the Commissioner and EEC for the work to articulate a clear set of success metrics in the 2026-30 Strategic Action Plan. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway encouraged Commission members reach out directly to Emily Conner-Simons if they have additional input about the plan.

5. **Data Advisory Commission Annual Reporting Requirements & Initial Direction for Recommendations**

Senior Director Murphy provided an overview of the proposed process to develop the Commission's annual report to the Legislature. She shared potential directions for the Commission's recommendations, organized around the agency's current data and research priorities. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway encouraged discussion about whether the proposed recommendation focus areas resonate with Commission members, whether there are additional focus areas that Commission members would like to see the Commission put forth, and whether there are additional details that the Commission members would like to see included in the report.

Member Bergeron noted that under the focus area of publicly available data, it will be helpful to include details about making all backend data from data dashboards accessible to the public. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway noted that EEC has made progress on this and is committed to making sure that this is true for all metrics on public dashboards. Member Roycroft encouraged the Commission to carefully consider the implications of publicly sharing certain data, even in aggregate form. Ms. Roycroft and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the need not just to modernize but also to streamline and integrate data systems to improve data quality and improve the user experience.

Commissioner Kershaw asked Commission members if there are any aspects of the vision for this Commission that are not captured in the recommendations. Member Fear noted that early discussions around the creation of the Commission centered on better

understanding the families that are participating in formal care.

Member Haimowitz discussed data burden for programs and staff and encouraged the Commission to consider a recommendation around finding creative ways to collect data to minimize data burden. Harold Blanco, Co-owner, Paula's Barn Child Care, noted the amount of time spent inputting data related to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Deputy Commissioner Checkoway emphasized the importance of understanding providers' experiences and a desire to collaborate with partners to streamline, where possible.

Elizabeth Leiwant, Chief of Policy, Neighborhood Villages, highlighted the increase in the amount of available data and therefore what is known about the sector now relative to five years ago. Adam Jones, Budget Analyst, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, and Representative of the Common Start Coalition, noted the iterative nature of improving data quality and suggested emphasizing in the recommendations that the end goal of improving data quality is to support key stakeholders—families and programs.

Deputy Commissioner Checkoway shared the future meeting schedule and proposed meeting topics.

The Commission members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes from July 23, 2025, with Michelle Haimowitz and Ellen Dickenson abstaining.

Commissioner Kershaw provided closing remarks.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.