



*Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care*

*Annual Legislative Report  
FY2013*

*Submitted February 15, 2013*

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***



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## Introduction

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Compelling evidence shows that one effective solution for strengthening the broader range of children's educational experiences is through high-quality early learning and development programs. In Massachusetts, state leaders, local educators, and the public have responded to this evidence. A key goal of Governor Patrick, and of the Department, is to ensure all children enter school ready to succeed and to eliminate school readiness gaps between high needs children and their more advantaged peers. Through strategic planning grounded in research, and an expansive, inclusive, statewide information gathering process, the state is taking charge to use what we know—and building on what we have done—to take the next leap forward in building a truly high-quality, birth to career system.

### A Commitment

The 2010 Census reported Massachusetts' population to be 6.5 million. Children from birth to age 5 accounted for only seven percent (442,592) of this total. A significant proportion, however, may be categorized as "high need". Close to one-third of all children birth to 5 are low-income, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty, while 17.4% are English language learners, 6.7% have special needs, and .9% are homeless. These children are most at-risk of developmental delays and most likely to benefit from high-quality early learning and development experiences.

Massachusetts defines "high needs children" as those with sufficiently low household incomes, those in need of special education assistance, and other priority populations who qualify for federal and/or state aid.

Massachusetts has moved toward a broader definition of "high needs children", to include children who have multiple risk factors linked to poor school and life outcomes, including:

- Children and parents with special needs;
- Children whose home language is not English;
- Families and children involved with multiple state agencies;
- Recent immigrants;
- Children with parents who are deployed and are not living on a military base;
- Low-income households;
- Parents with less than a high school education; and
- Children who are homeless or move more than once a year."

As the state has confronted the prevalence of high-needs children in certain localities and across the state, Massachusetts has gone beyond simply understanding the research on "toxic stress" and healthy child development; it has used a science-based framework to enact smart, forward-thinking legislation and create a high quality early learning development system, which provides access to comprehensive services. Our approach is predicated on meaningful engagement—of families, of communities, and of the public and non-profit organizations, both state and local.

### Looking Ahead

The primary challenge in the coming year is three fold.

1. The first challenge is the ability to **reach all the educators** in formal and informal settings. These educators touch and/or influence children and families through service or policy which impacts the development of children. The state wants to support these educators to have the skills, knowledge and abilities to create opportunities for children that create measurable gains in all domains of development. This requires knowledge and tools to ensure educators can be guided by the Early Learning Standards that provide an outline of what we want our children to know and be able to do.
2. The second challenge is **reaching all 450,000 children birth to age five years** in our state, who may or may not be engaged with formal early education and care programming. In order to serve them, we need to ensure that parents and caregivers, as children's first teachers, have the information they need to create protective relationships, are knowledgeable about and provide high quality opportunities, and have access to screening and assessments so that they can intervene early when children appear to be off the expected developmental course.
3. Finally, the challenge of **access to formal and informal programming** that supports early learning and development that is affordable and accessible to all children. Currently, over 30,000 children are on the waitlist from birth to 5. These families are requesting financial assistance to assist in paying the cost of formal early education and care opportunities.

## Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)

### *Purpose and Goals*

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In 2005, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to create one agency to oversee early education and care and out-of-school time programs for families. The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was created by consolidating the former Office of Child Care Services with the Department of Education's (now the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) Early Learning Services unit. In 2008, the Executive Office of Education (EOE) was established to support the work of the three education departments in Massachusetts (EEC, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the Department of Higher Education) for the purpose of developing an education pipeline extending from birth through higher education and beyond.

The work of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) is steeped in the notion that *brain building is in progress* for young children in enriching environments with caring adults and meaningful and engaging interactions. The latest science shows that these early experiences actually build the architecture of the developing brain, much like how a house is built from the bottom up. Each sequential step lays the groundwork for the next set of skills – like reading and math—and a lifetime of learning, success and productive, responsible citizenship.

When you understand the sequence and process by which brains are built, it's easy to understand why it's wiser to start every child out strong. Trying to change behavior or build new skills on a weak foundation requires more work and is less effective than providing brain building interactions and environments early in life. Brain building is an investment that yields high returns; an investment in the economic prosperity of everyone in Massachusetts.

EEC fulfills a critical role in advancing important public policy goals. Research shows that access to high quality early education and care is vital to helping all children, especially low-income and at-risk children, to gain early literacy skills, academic and social school readiness skills, and increases a student's chances of successfully completing high school, attending college, and becoming a tax-paying citizen.

EEC work is guided by a strategic plan, which is being updated this year and will continue to be guided by the vision developed in 2009.

- EEC and the whole field of early education and care are highly regarded, publically recognized and supported, and clearly understood to be a value to the Commonwealth.
- EEC's system offers an array of high quality, comprehensive and affordable programs designed to meet the diverse, individual needs of children and families.
- The early education and care workforce is respected, diverse, professional, qualified, and fairly compensated.
- EEC is an effective, responsive, efficient, and resilient system.
- EEC has clear standards for accountability and evidence that those standards are being met.
- Families are engaged as partners integral to the healthy development and learning of their children, and they have access to the necessary resources to do so.
- All preschool children have access to high quality Pre-kindergarten programs that meet family needs.
- Children and families experience seamless transitions throughout their early learning and later developmental experiences.

The work of the agency is structured in four core areas: educator quality, program quality, screening and assessment and community family engagement. The work of the department seeks to support 1.3 million children and their families from birth to age 13 years.

#### Refinement of Strategic Directions and Indicators of Success

In July 2012, the EEC Board identified seven Strategic Directions and developed proposed goals to guide the Department's work for the next three years of the Department's Strategic Plan. The strategic areas work together

to achieve the department's vision, grounded in the legislative intent. The EEC Board will work to adopt an updated strategic plan, this spring. The plan will include measurable goals and indicators of success. The seven strategic directions are as follows:

- **Finance**- to develop a financing strategy for a comprehensive system of early education and care and out of school time for all children based on established Department of Early Education and Care standards.
- **Governance**- to develop policy directions for the comprehensive system of early education and care and out of school time in Massachusetts.
- **Standards, Assessment and Accountability**- to provide a foundation for a comprehensive system of early education and care and out of school time built upon program standards and early learning standards.
- **Regulations**- to develop regulations that articulate the rights and allocate the responsibilities across the systems of early education and care, out of school time, adoption, foster care, and residential
- **Workforce and Professional Development**- To facilitate a system that prepares an early education and care workforce who can engage with children and families to support their growth and development in all domains.
- **Early Education and Care and Kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Linkages**- To create policies and practices that ensure the alignment of structures that support child development from birth through grade 3 across all developmental domains, with a focus on early literacy, numeracy, and social/emotional development.
- **Informed Families and Public**- To communicate regularly with families and the public about the essential conditions for positive growth and development of children with respect for culture, language and other aspects of diversity of those constituencies

## 2013 Context (February 2012 – February 2013)

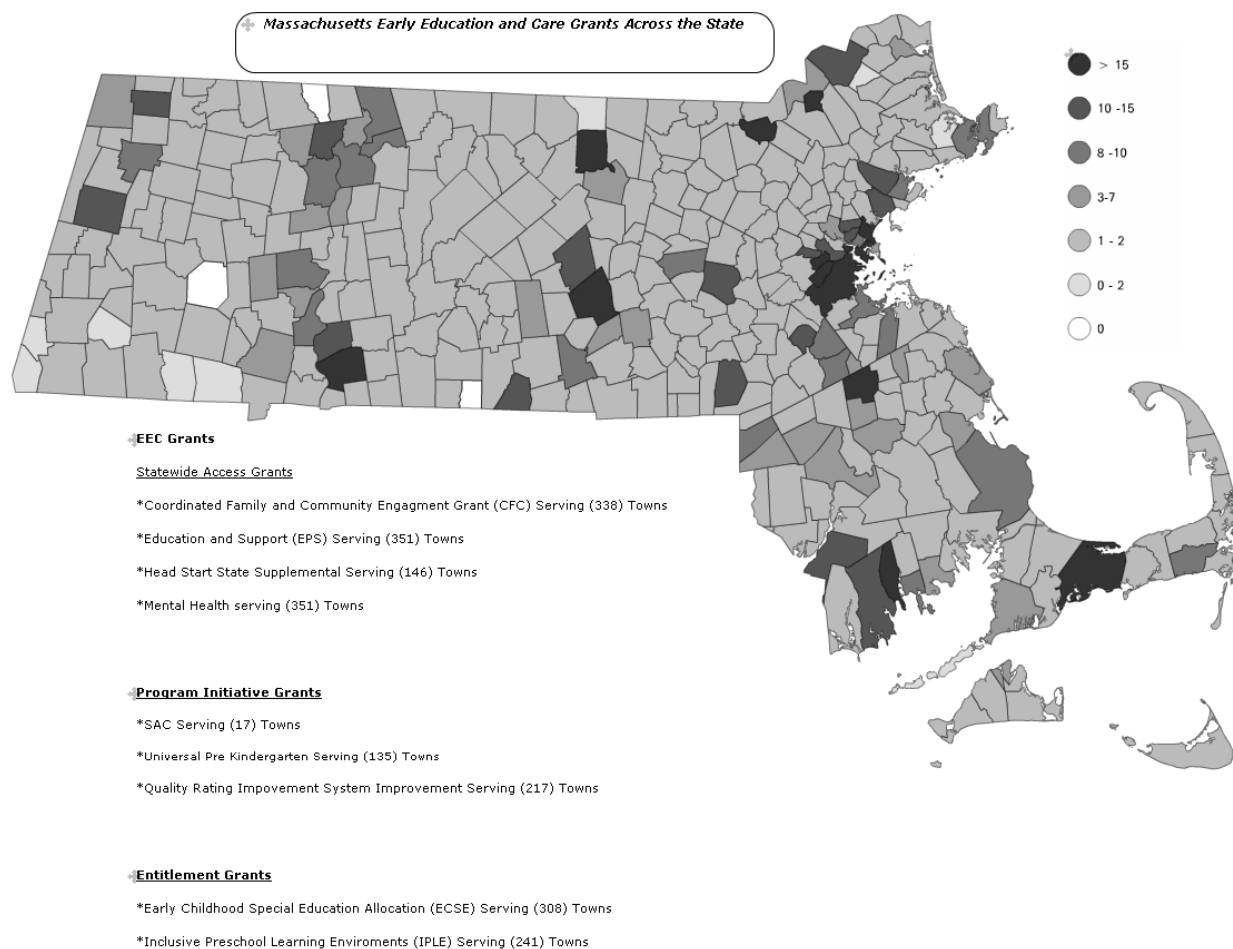
Accomplishments and activities included in this report are from the time period February 2012 – February 2013. Below are several events which set the context for the Department's work over this past year.

### **Priorities for Building the System**

EEC's statewide system of early education and care and out-of-school time is comprised of a linkage of four systems of support for improving the outcomes of the Commonwealth's children, families, educators and communities. These four systems are:

- Educator/Provider Supports (EPS)
- Coordinated Family/Community Engagement (CFCE)
- Mental Health
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)

The EPS, CFCE, CCR&R and Mental Health systems are regionally/locally-based but allow for differentiation to meet local needs. They are focused on the needs of adults in supporting adult/child interaction. The early education and care and out of school time system is designed to be a strengths-based model of family support – inclusive of all, with prioritization of those most at risk. It is not *primarily* focused on family income, though it does prioritize families with greater needs. The overall system expands upon and supports quality in the 2010 licensing regulations and the 2011 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). In support of the states efforts, EEC gives priority to Gateway communities, level four schools and districts, and communities which have been identified by the Department of Public Health (DPH) as home visiting communities. EEC's system of early education and care and out-of-school time has broad geographic reach throughout the state.



### **Federal Funding Support**

A comparison of EEC's state funding for FY13 to the amount of state funds received in FY09 -- the apex of our funding -- shows that EEC's resources have decreased by \$66M. Federal funds awarded to EEC have helped to offset this change in funding. This includes \$23.97 million in additional Child Care Development Funds that EEC received as a discretionary obligation through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; \$1,301,837 in federal State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care funding to support children from birth to school entry; \$50 million in federal Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) funding to improve the quality of the state's system of early education and care and out-of-school time, and \$175,000 annually for the Head Start State Collaboration Project.

The state of Massachusetts was privileged to be recognized for its work in early education and care by receiving the Early Learning Challenge Grant. The 50 million dollar award provides resources to accelerate the efforts to increase educator skills, knowledge and abilities; program efforts to ensure growth and development for children; increase access to screening and formative assessment; and intentional community and family engagement activities.

**The work of the department happens in four core areas: Educator Quality, Program Quality, Screening and Assessment and Community and Family Engagement.**

### ***Highlights***

#### **Educator Quality**

- The Professional Qualifications Registry provides new data on the 68,000 early educators who are working in the over 10,000 licensed early education and care and out of school time programs in the state.
- The Educator Provider Support System, provides a system of learning opportunities. Nearly 300 opportunities from July 2012 to June 2013. Over 900 individual development plans have been written with educators in the first six months of this fiscal year.
- For FY2013, \$3.2M in state funds was available for the Early Childhood Educators scholarship; 1,190 educators (of over 2,300 applicants) were approved for this funding.

#### **Program Quality**

- In 2011, the state fully defined quality for early education and care programs in Massachusetts. Over 50 percent, approximately 5000 programs, are now participating in meeting the new standards.
- Programs, which primarily support children who receive financial assistance from the state, are experiencing additional hardship. Reportedly, this is due to increase standards as well as a reduction in the number of children who receive financial assistance over the last two years. This has led to instability in some programs. For programs to be stable they require consistently full enrollment, collection of parent fees and rates from the state which support cost.

#### **Screening and Assessment**

- Universal screening was made available in July 2012, through the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grantees. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire is available in all communities across the state.
- The use of evidence based formative assessment which has been used in early education and care programs for several years, has begun to be used by teachers in Kindergarten classrooms, in all five developmental domains. This information is intended to be used to individualize teaching and learning and support parental communication.

#### **Community and Family Engagement**

- Community and Family Engagement grantees have participated in focused training and practice improvements.

- The training has included child growth and development, evidenced based literacy and post partum depression.
  - Practice enhancements have been made with regard to play groups, evidence based literacy, as well as, screening of child growth and development.
- *Over the last year the demand for subsidized early education has increased while only 8400 eligible children have been removed from the wait list.*

### **Interagency work**

- This past year has provided multiple opportunities for working with other child serving agencies. The interagency work has three foci;
  - creating a child development lens on policy and practice through joint professional development,
  - simplification of the requirements for families through the review of intake practices, and
  - developmental screening of young children to ensure family plans include opportunities for young children who present with or are at risk of developmental delay.

### **Birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade alignment**

- Increase focus has been placed on organizing at the community level to ensure partnership and shared responsibility of children from birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This requires new partnerships between organizations and programs who serve children from birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Partners include home visiting; early education and care programs; pediatricians; museums; libraries and individual public schools and their district leadership.

### **Brain Building in Progress Campaign**

Our Brain Building in Progress communication strategies in 2012 continued to expand awareness of the campaign among new constituencies, including legislators and policy-makers, community-based organizations across the state, and partnerships such as Thrive in 5. Three events on Beacon Hill promoted the campaign -- Early Care and Education and After School and Out of School Time Advocacy Day, United Way's Legislative Breakfast at the Parkman House, and Brain Building in Progress Day, where Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray, along with legislators, read to young children at the State House. In what is considered Phase Two of the *Brain Building in Progress* communications initiative, EEC is working with United Way to collaborate with key partners and leverage collective resources to raise parents', families', and the public's understanding of the importance of a child's earliest years, the value of early education and care, and the definition of program quality through the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). United Way is currently finalizing the key messages and preparing the first set for distribution as collateral material. The key messages about quality are as follows:

*Whenever you see children interacting and learning in quality environments, what you're really seeing is Brain Building in Progress. These early experiences create the foundation for a lifetime of learning, achievement and productive, responsible citizenship. By investing in the success of our youngest citizens, we're ensuring a more prosperous future for everyone in Massachusetts. Whether you're a parent, educator, business leader or legislator, all of us have a stake in supporting Brain Building in Progress. Here are five ways that you can be a Brain Builder:*

#### **Make Any Moment A Brain Building Moment**

Take a moment in a busy world to engage and interact with a child. Children's brains are built through back-and-forth interactions and meaningful conversations with caring adults. Create lasting connections that build a child's brain!

#### **Look for Brain Building Zones**

Physical environments provide a framework for children's learning and development. Seek out and support the rich network of children's museums, libraries and community centers existing throughout the Commonwealth. While Brain Building can happen anywhere, these especially stimulating environments play a critical role.



**The more we know, the more we'll help children grow**

A knowledgeable community and well-qualified education workforce give children the support they need to succeed in school and life. The more that everyone understands the importance of brain building, the more prosperous Massachusetts' future will be.

**Make the Connections that Build Young Brains**

Brain building is a community-wide commitment with a network of supports. Connect with your local resource centers, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement, go to [brainbuildinginprogress.org](http://brainbuildinginprogress.org) or call 2-1-1 to learn more about resources in your area.

**Lead So That Young Children Succeed**

Effective leaders are needed to champion brain building. Show your commitment by sharing Brain Building information among your networks, taking leadership within your child care program, signing the Brain Building Pledge or supporting investments that focus on young children. With so much at stake, now's the time to take action.

## EEC Budget

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Governor Patrick has routinely demonstrated his commitment to early education in his budget recommendations, and continually through challenging fiscal climates. A comparison of EEC's state funding for FY13 to the amount of state funds received in FY09 -- the apex of our funding -- shows that EEC's resources have decreased by \$66M. Federal funds directed to EEC have helped to offset this change in funding.

### **Federal Funds**

**ARRA Funds:** President Obama enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) in mid-February 2009. The federal economic stimulus package contained significant resources for the early education and care and after school and out of school time field. Massachusetts received \$23.97 million as a discretionary obligation from the CCDF, representing an additional 23% over its FY2009 CCDF allotment (\$102 million). The EEC Board approved thirty one projects/initiatives to be funded by ARRA CCDF. This funding allowed EEC the ability to expand child care financial assistance by serving additional children and families as well as new families. Additionally, many of these projects targeted systematic improvements in early education and care programs, including investments in professional development. EEC's projects/initiatives also included targeted funds for overall quality along with quality care for infants and toddlers. EEC disbursed all of the \$23.97 million received in CCDF by the conclusion of the grant in September 2011.

**SAC Funds:** The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 required the Governor of each State to designate or establish a council to serve as the State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care for children from birth to school entry. To be eligible to receive a grant, a state had to prepare and submit an application for a three-year period that addressed select criteria. MA received \$1,301,837 in SAC funds to be fully liquidated by July 31, 2013. SAC activities included programs that aligned with our mission and focused on:

- Needs Assessment
- B-8 Community Planning and PreK-3 Partnerships
- Early Education/Higher Education Workforce Preparation Partnership
- Policy and Best Practices for Children & Families with Limited English Proficiency and/or Developmental Delays or Multiagency Involvement
- ARRA Council Implementation Support and Accountability

**RTTT-ELC Funds:** In late Summer 2011, the Obama Administration released the application for the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) to provide \$500 million in state-level competitive grants to improve early learning and development programs. The goal of the RTTT-ELC was to better prepare more children with high needs for kindergarten because children from birth to age 5, including those from low-income families, need a strong foundation for success in school and beyond. In their applications, states had to demonstrate a commitment to building coordinated systems, aligning resources and policies, and increasing access to high-quality early learning and development programs for children who need them most. MA submitted an application which received the second highest score in the nation and was awarded \$50M for four years beginning January 1, 2012. We have successfully created 12 projects being successfully delivered through 51 activities with approximately \$24.1M devoted to statewide infrastructure investment programs and \$25.8M directed toward direct community investment programs. These funds are managed by a network of sister state agencies, institutions of higher education, non-profit agencies, and training and research firms. In FY2012 EEC utilized \$1M from the Race To The Top Early Learning Challenge Grant to support a deficiency in scholarship funds for the Spring and Summer 2012 semesters. These funds were used to support educators who had their scholarship awarded reduced, and were available to 269 educators who met the eligibility requirement of working in a program that was currently or planning to participate in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

**Head Start State Collaboration Project:** This is a five year grant awarded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) that is renewed annually during the grant period. We are now in the second year of a five year grant cycle. The total grant amount varies state to state and is based on the number of federally funded Head Start

children in the State; MA receives \$175 annually. The work of the Head Start Collaboration project highlights the importance of the work and commitment to all children and families in the Commonwealth. The HSSCO's goals, key priority areas, and activities are aligned with EEC's enabling legislation and include school transitions, professional development with higher education, and early childhood systems development and coordination.

### **State Aspirational Budget**

EEC's receipt of several short term federal resources over the last four years, including the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), the state advisory council (SAC) grant and most recently the Early Learning Challenge Grant have accelerated the Department's efforts to improve educator and program quality, provide screening and assessment and support community and family engagement. More specifically, these resources have lead to the building and implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System, efforts to enhance the partnership with the department of higher education, support for educators to attain degrees, design or build a birth to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade infrastructure in the community, and in one instance provide access to additional children from the waiting list who qualified for subsidized early education and care and/or out of school time care.

In 2012 the Board created an FY14 aspiration budget framed around the values, strategic directions, and indicators of success in the EEC Strategic Plan. Recommendations were framed in three significant areas: an investment in quality, an investment in our children and families, and an investment in health and safety. These funds would be in addition to EEC's core funding through the maintenance budget.

#### **An Investment in Quality**

Additional Funding: \$15,594,821

Aligned with our mission and Strategic Plan, EEC seeks to invest in quality through and by the categories presented below.

- Investment in Workforce Quality: A rate increase of 3% or \$13,790,577 supports an increase in salaries, benefits, and stipends for child care workers. The last rate increase was in March 2009 when we gave .45%.
- Investment in Quality Program Sustainability / Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS): A set-aside of \$1,000,000 in its own appropriation supports our investment in QRIS and helps sustain program improvements supporting children in care.
- Quality Infrastructure: \$804,244 to support staffing which holds child care providers accountable for health and safety, quality care, and quality programs. These funds would be added to 3000-1000, Administration.

#### **An Investment in our Children and Families**

Additional Funding: \$36,209,423

EEC seeks to ensure that parents of birth to age eight children have access to high quality early education and care experiences. The addition of \$36M to 3000-4060 (Income Eligible child care) would allow us to serve approximately 4,900 children which, when added to our current IE caseload of 30,283 children, returns us to the level of children we served in November 2010.

#### **An Investment in Transportation**

Additional Funding: \$17,586,713

The last transportation rate increase was May 2006 when the one way rate increased from \$5 to \$6 and the round trip rate increased from \$7.50 to \$9.00. The request for funds affirms the Board's vote in June 2012 to increase the rate paid for transportation to support improvements in the system and the addition of one adult monitor on all vehicles carrying infants, toddlers, and preschool children.

## **Governor's Education Investment Plan**

When Governor Patrick released his FY2014 budget recommendation, the Board of Early Education and Care was pleased to see its alignment with their FY14 aspirational budget request for the Department. The Governor's budget proposal included all of the Department's funding requests, and with it he also filed an education investment package that calls for approximately \$550 million in additional education spending in FY14 and increases to nearly \$1 billion annually over the next four years. The Governor's nearly \$350 million proposed aggregate investment (\$131 million in FY14) in our early education and care system will:

- Eliminate EEC's current birth – age five waitlist by providing universal access to high quality early education for all infants, toddlers, and pre-school children in Massachusetts;
- Expand initiatives to ensure the highest educational quality among providers of early education and care through EEC's Quality Rating and Improvement System, and to assist early educators and providers attain higher levels of proficiency, skill and quality; and
- Increase educational programs and supports for parents and family members to further engage them in their child's success, and expand efforts to provide comprehensive support services to children and their families.

The Governor will also dedicate new Chapter 70 funding to incentivize more school districts to offer pre-school to their 4-year olds. Currently, the Chapter 70 formula only reimburses districts for pre-school children who are in special education inclusive classrooms. The Governor's proposal would allow every pre-school student to count toward a district's Chapter 70 calculations.

## **Budget Concerns**

There are several areas of concern that could adversely impact cost projection and EEC's ability to carry out its mission in FY14, most particularly in the caseload accounts. The main areas of concern are:

- Union Bill: Chapter 189 of the Acts of 2012, AN ACT RELATIVE TO EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE BY FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS, allowed these providers to unionize and requires EEC to negotiate with them on rates and other areas. SEIU509 is the union representative. Initial demands that have significant cost implications include a 20% rate increase, 23 paid days off (excluding holidays), transportation for all subsidized children, and placement of all children from the waitlist.
- Federal Funds: The Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS), as the custodian of the Commonwealth's TANF funds, utilizes qualified EEC TANF expenditures toward the state's TANF block grant claim (estimated \$190M in FY13). A reduction in EEC caseload TANF spending will reduce this claim and thus the amount of federal reimbursement to the Commonwealth.
- Access: Access to Income Eligible voucher care is currently restricted. This limitation of access is not and should not be considered the standard policy of EEC. Access was originally restricted in February 2011 in response to an anticipated FY11 IE deficiency. If access were to remain limited throughout FY13 then it would be closed for an unprecedented 28 month span.
- Fingerprinting: Governor Deval Patrick signed H4307, "An Act Relative to Background Checks" in mid-January. This bill closes an existing criminal history background checks loophole by authorizing the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and school districts to conduct fingerprint-supported national criminal history background checks on all teachers, school employees, and early education providers in Massachusetts. Presuming the information on fingerprints comes back to EEC in the same manner as BRC and CORI (funneled through the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services / DCJIS) we will need at least two staff persons to handle this responsibility. The estimated cost for this could be as much as \$120,000. Without additional staff, we will delay the hiring process by weeks if not months. We also have to review our IT system to see what will need to be done to track this added task. We do not have a cost for this yet.

## Submission of Annual Report

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The FY13 EEC Annual Legislative Report satisfies the Board's legislative reporting mandates, as codified in M.G.L. c. 15D, §§ 3(g), 10 and 13(d), to submit an annual report describing its progress in achieving the goals and implementing the programs authorized under Chapter 15D of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. Specifically, EEC is required to submit an annual report, which includes, at a minimum, the following topics:

- Progress in achieving goals and implementing programs authorized under M.G.L. c. 15D;<sup>1</sup>
- Progress towards universal early education and care for pre-school aged children;<sup>2</sup>
- Rules and regulations promulgated by the Board related to civil fines and sanctions, including the types of sanctions and the amount of the fines;<sup>3</sup>
- Progress in reducing expulsion rates through developmentally appropriate prevention and intervention services;<sup>4</sup>
- Behavioral health indicators:<sup>5</sup>
  - Estimates of annual rates of preschool suspensions and expulsions;
  - Types and prevalence of behavioral health needs of children served by the Department;
  - Racial and ethnic background of children with identified behavioral health needs;
  - Existing capacity to provide behavioral health services; and
  - Analysis of best intervention and prevention practices, including strategies to improve delivery of services and to improve collaboration of services.
- Findings and recommendations related to the study on the programmatic financing and phase-in options for the development and implementation of the Massachusetts universal pre-kindergarten program.<sup>6</sup>

The FY13 EEC Annual Legislative Report further provides an annual update on the strategic plan ratified by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care's (the Department or EEC) Board in February 2009. A copy of the strategic plan can be viewed at: <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/eec/research-planning/state-planning/eec-strategic-plan.pdf>.

In addition, this report satisfies the Board's mandate to develop and annually update an implementation plan for a workforce development system, which is designed to support the education, training and compensation of the early education and care workforce, including all center, FCC, infant, toddler, preschool and school-age providers. See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 5.

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<sup>1</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3(g)

<sup>2</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3(g)

<sup>3</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 10

<sup>4</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3(g)

<sup>5</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3(g)

<sup>6</sup> See M.G.L. c. 15D, § 13(d)