

**Board of Early Education and Care  
Tuesday, January 14, 2020  
12:00 PM – 3:00pm  
Department of Early Education and Care  
51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02210**

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**MINUTES**

**\*EEC RECORDED THIS BOARD MEETING; THEREFORE, THE MINUTES CONSTITUTE A SUMMARY OF THE BOARD ACTIVITY.\***

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

Nonie Lesaux, Ph.D., Chairperson  
Mary Walachy, Vice Chairperson  
Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education  
Samantha L. Aigner-Treworgy, Commissioner of Early Education and Care (EEC) and Secretary to the Board  
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders (remote)  
David Cruise  
Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.  
Joni Block (remote)  
Joan Wasser Gish  
Alison Schonwald, M.D.  
Sheila Balboni  
Nicki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

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

None.

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 P.M.

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chairperson Lesaux commented on Board Vice Chairperson Mary Walachy's well-deserved retirement and glad to have her until June. There is a new phase of work for the Commissioner and her team. The Board retreat will be in February 2020.

**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 Aigner-Treworgy.*

There were no statements from the public.

**Routine Business:**

- **Disclosures**

Board Member Joni Block submitted a written disclosure that her position as the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (“CFCE”) Coordinator with Brockton Public Schools that is funded by EEC. Sheila Balboni provided a disclosure that she is employed by Community Day Care d/b/a the Community Group, Inc., that receives EEC funding.

- **New Business**

**There was no new business.**

- **Routine Business**

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

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the December 10, 2019 Board Meeting.** The motion passed unanimously.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy commented on Vice Chairperson Walachy’s upcoming retirement and that she has learned from her expertise. She thanked all who have been at the myriad of meetings as we moved forward with the priorities the Board set at the last meeting regarding the Governor’s budget and expressing those to the Legislature, and also staffing capacity at the Department in order to fulfill the mission and the end goals. The Commissioner hopes the Board will approve the strategic roadmap in March. She spoke about the need to achieve the strategic goals in relation to the staffing structure. Know that our real effort is to both respond to the fragility we are hearing from our providers and our partners in the field and be able to set systems that help protect them from the realities of a changing landscape, but also that we are setting lofty goals for what we know children and families need to thrive and be successful to third grade and beyond.

**Board Committee Updates**

Chairperson Lesaux stated that there were two agenda items that are central to the most recent Program Committee, the ECSO’s work and the strategic planning. She spoke to the goal for shorter presentations and more discussion.

**1. Strategic Planning: EEC Stakeholder Discovery & Engagement – Update & Discussion**

Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy stated this conversation will be about the feedback from the field, the strategic plan, and EEC’s staffing. She indicated that we are looking at how we orient ourselves towards the field we are trying to support and the components of the fields that need to engage with EEC, and how we structure ourselves to achieve that goal. We are engaging other agencies, and we are in a co-creative process. What do we think about the community level change that needs to happen and does

this support children and families? We will bring this back to the Board at the retreat. We will go out again after the Board retreat and before the March Board meeting and talk to the field. Thirty-five different meetings coming up and then second listening tours with the strategies that we hope the Board will approve in March. Statewide meetings at end of February and beginning of March for final feedback and conversations. We hope the Board will come to those meetings to hear what the community is saying in relation to the Board's feedback after the retreat.

The goal of EEC is to think about child development and child outcomes, while also making sure children are cared for in quality settings. There is a business economic priority as well as a development and child outcome priority, and yet we have a system in need of support. We have 1 million children aged birth to 12 and only 236,000 licensed slots. Infant and toddler care is a critical need and an expensive level of care, yet less than 25% of our funding goes there. EEC's three goals of safety, access, and quality are still relevant, with room for improvement. An integration of all three across all departments will improve our ability to support the field to stabilize and move to the next level.

Four components that frame our strategy are children/families at core, educators/workforce, programs of all types, and system and policy (EEC and across all agencies). These are inter-connected, and how are we measuring the impact of our strategies, what level are we measuring these at to ensure success and continuous quality improvement? Families want to know what is on track towards third grade. Feedback from families is that system is not accessible, and they are not sure what they should be looking for. Educators and program are distinct. Systems and policy are another unit of change with some of our strategies. Educators are grappling in a system that requires a lot of support to navigate. There is the issue around compensation. Safety and quality need to be integrated, not either or, and it's a continuous pathway. Coordination with K-12 for a continually supported process for a child.

Vice Chairperson Mary Walachy commented that businesses have a lot to gain or lose based on our success and our families' success. Businesses weigh in heavily in the K-12 realm and she would like to see them do so in our work. The Commissioner stated that will come into play in the coming weeks. Discussion among the Board regarding positive economic impact when businesses engage with early childhood issues such as not having affordable child care. This also links to training, workforce development and how we can partner in that realm. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy discussed how our strategies across the four targets end up with meaningful, tangible, measurable outcomes that allow us to track if we are doing better. We need meaningful test points that will show if we are not going to achieving third-grade outcomes in real time.

Chairperson Lesaux indicated that safety and quality should be synonymous. As we continue to evolve as a field and agency that leads and supports, we should know when to direct resources towards individuals and when towards programs. We should be building systems and stronger units and supporting them to develop individuals. Commissioner agreed that they should be synonymous. How you can ensure the system does integrity to both is the question of how we make them synonymous. Safety, quality, and access are all necessary and not independent. Board Member Wasser Gish stated the issue of targeting resources to support program quality to thereby support educator quality or are we focusing on individual educators and workforce development comes up cyclically. We end up with different degrees of emphasis at different times, which she thinks speaks to the question about capacity and scale. This agency has perpetually been undersized relative to the ambitions of the mandate and vision for children that it is meant to deliver. How can we deliver on child-level outcomes and business and economic outcomes, knowing where we are in terms of agency capacity to deliver, while working in a state and federal context? Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy stated we are a month away from the internal agency process, so we

cannot discuss fully at the upcoming retreat, but there is enough that we can draw those connections across.

## **2. Early Childhood Support Organizations – Update & Discussion**

Sarah Volkenant, Ola Friday, and Amy Whitehead-Pleaux, provided an update and to support a discussion around the Early Childhood Support Organization (ECSO) Initiative. The group indicated that they are in the midst of a procurement process and are working in partnership with New Profit to support the ECSO initiative. It is designed to test and scale promising practices that can bring programs from good to great and understand the system context and how we are supporting quality along a continuum. The revised QRIS standards reflect a shift in how we are thinking about program leadership. Through the initiative, we are soliciting models supporting instructional leaders to be the drivers of quality through job embedded support. Curriculum instruction and assessment are at the core. We want to know the pathways and partnerships and supports necessary to bring quality to scale.

Secretary Peyser said it could be the ECSOs come in, build capacity, and then the organization is ready to take it from there, and we can take lessons from that and apply those more rapidly and fully across entire system. There isn't going to be just one way we standardize across the whole system. There should be continued diversity within the field, and this may help to stimulate how to have diversity that is tied to better outcomes and greater capacity, as opposed to just different. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy said that we have great demonstration projects that have shown great movement that have not been shown to do it for 9,000 programs. We have to figure out the balance of fostering good programs and sustain that work in a cost-effective manner.

Ms. Volkenant discussed how internal and external program supports will reinforce each other. Our licensing standards provide the foundation for quality and then sustaining quality. For the user experience, we expect licensing and QRIS to be seamless and make sense. The core is practice based support that has the goal of capacity building. There is a question about developing tools and resources, developmental rubrics or assessments, that could be used across the delivery system. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy responded that this is a project that sits at the intersection of implementation and improvement science. How do we set our theory of change and set our system level understanding up front in a way that allows us to have the ECSOs implement with fidelity while still also thinking about scalability?

This is a five-year initiative and New Profit's funding decreases over time with an increased investment from the Commonwealth over the course of the initiative. This is a per ECSO level, so New Profit will fund \$1 million per ECSO over the course of the initiative, and EEC at \$2.75 million for a total of \$3.75 million per ECSO over the course of the initiative. Applicants have to demonstrate that they have a professional learning model that is built on explicit theory of change that has clarity around the mechanisms that they expect need to be in place to demonstrate success and a track record of successful implementation. The defined model also needs to include a cohesive approach to coaching and training for instructional leaders in service of job embedded supports for educators that are focused on curriculum instruction and high-quality assessment. The organization capacities in place need to have executive leadership in place that can help bring this model to scale in Massachusetts. They also have to demonstrate fiscal health, that they can take on the funding at the rate we are providing it. We expect data systems to be in place to support the implementation. During the first couple of years, we need to understand implementation and then coalesce around a common theory of change.

There was discussion amongst the Board around data collection, baseline, improvement science, rubrics, and low lift data to collect right at the start. It is the hope that ECSOs can prioritize working with high needs children, i.e., at least 25% of their enrolled children are EEC subsidy recipients or Early Head Start. Collaborative process among ECOSs once awarded. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy indicated that this initiative sits at the intersection of workforce improvement and program quality improvement.

Ms Volkenant provided ECSO selection process. Expect startup to be in spring of 2020 with partial implementation over the summer with full implementation by September, subject to change. There will be four ECSOs. It's 50 classrooms, not 50 programs. Ms. Volkenant indicated that we have an expectation that the ECSOs will work with a diverse set of programs and we expect EEC will be able to address issues if we feel it is not equitable. Chairperson Lesaux stated that it is worth a conversation around an evaluation strategy to be sure we capture the spirit of a state engaging in a scaling initiative. What do we learn about how organizations learn and how can we do this work?

Chairperson Lesaux commented on distance the Commissioner has traveled and will travel. Looks forward to signing off on an action plan and an ECSO strategy in mid-March. The work has evolved nicely to be a real systems level strategy and, in many ways, a national trial which is exciting. Chairperson Lesaux thanked everyone for their work. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy congratulated the team. Ms. Volkenant commented that New Profit pushed them in ways that are important. Chairperson Lesaux commented that today's agenda has really come from the past couple of years, so this is an important and exciting moment.

Meeting adjourned at 3:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Samantha L. Aigner-Treworgy  
Commissioner of the Department and  
Secretary to the Board