

**Board of Early Education and Care
Strategic Planning Retreat
September 10, 2025
9:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care,
Central Office 50 Milk Street, 14th Floor
Boston, MA 02109**

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present

Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education
Amy Kershaw, Commissioner
Paul Belsito, Chair
Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Co-Chair
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh
Jamella Lee
Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas
Jennifer James Price
Dr. Linda Sagor
George Atanasov

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present
Cheryl Travers

Attendees:

Erica Morin, EEC General Counsel
Eugenia Soiles, EEC Director of External Engagement
Christine McGrath, EEC Paralegal
Jocelyn Bowne, EEC Deputy Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Supports
Tyreese Nicolas, EEC Deputy Commissioner of Family Access and Engagement
Joe Rucker, Jr., EEC Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations
Chris Power, EEC Chief of Staff
Ian Cutler, EEC Director of Project Management & Strategy
Jesenia Burke, EEC Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Jessi Murray, EEC Chief Product Officer
Mark Reilly, EOE Undersecretary and Chief Operating Officer
Meaghan Blanton, EEC Deputy Commissioner for Internal Operations
Amy Checkoway, EEC Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Research, & Data
Kim Le, EEC Director of Communications
Caitlin Schaeffer, EEC Director of Investigations
Stephanie Keiter, EOE Acting General Counsel
Katherine Harvell, EEC Chief Operating Officer
Faith Ambrose, EOE Policy Manager
Emily Conner-Simons, EEC Director of Special Projects
Eric Hansson, EEC Chief Financial Officer

MINUTES:

Welcome, Introductions & Meeting Overview

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed the Board and attendees. She provided an overview of the agenda and shared personnel updates. Commissioner Kershaw expressed gratitude to the Board for their support and commitment to the Agency's work.

Chair Comments

Chair Belsito welcomed the Board and attendees. Chair Belsito reflected on goals achieved in the past year and expressed excitement for the upcoming strategic planning.

Secretary Comments

Secretary Tutwiler echoed Chair Belsito's comments.

- **Review of Key Fiscal Year 2025 Accomplishments & Fiscal Year 2026 Priority Projects and Initiatives**

Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the accomplishments achieved in FY25 related to family access, program stability, program quality, workforce support, and agency infrastructure. Commissioner Kershaw shared the five key areas of focus for FY26: Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA), Background Record Checks (BRC), regulation revisions, workforce, and Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3). Ian Cutler-EEC Director of Project Management & Strategy detailed the current project prioritization to support the FY26 areas of focus. Director Cutler shared the anticipated outcomes of FY26 priorities and areas of focus. Board Member Price expressed appreciation for the level of detail provided related to the FY26 areas of focus and how that will impact priorities for the Board in FY26. Board Member Lucas, Ms. Harvell, and Commissioner Kershaw discussed opportunities for partnership with higher education and external stakeholders and EEC's leadership and ownership. Co-Chair Moeller and Director Cutler discussed strategy to communicate with the field.

- **5-Year Strategic Action Plan Development**

Emily Conner-Simons-EEC Director of Special Projects, provided an overview of the Strategic Action Plan timeline, shared the current status, and discussed next steps. Ms. Conner-Simons highlighted the foundational components to inform the next Strategic Action Plan, including stakeholder engagement, external and internal research, IT modernization, and strategic objectives.

Board Members participated in a strategic planning activity to provide feedback on the 5-year goals and priorities. Board Member Price shared feedback regarding the need for transparency for the definition for an EEC credential. Chair Belsito and Commissioner Kershaw discussed challenges related to access and system-building. Board Member Kain and Commissioner

Kershaw commented on the continued progress towards the focus areas. Board Member Lucas and Jessi Murray-EEC Chief Product Officer, discussed the importance of technology support for providers in conjunction with IT modernization. Board Members continued the strategic planning activity and identified their most urgent priorities in order to inform the strategic action plan and a related memo that will be presented to the Board at a later Board meeting.

- **Preview of Fiscal Year 2026 Board Topics & Meeting Dates**

Commissioner Kershaw shared the major topics for Board input and actions for FY26 related to family access, program stability, workforce, program quality, and other topics. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted the continued need for partnership to achieve goals set for FY26. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga provided feedback that integrating information about KPIs would be helpful for the Board. Board Member Sagor and Commissioner Kershaw discussed increasing opportunities for engagement with external stakeholders. Commissioner Kershaw shared the FY26 Board meeting schedule. Board Member Lucas and Commissioner Kershaw discussed internal EEC culture shifts related to inclusion and onboarding. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Commissioner Kershaw discussed increased Board involvement with priorities.

Secretary Tutwiler shared positive feedback on the Strategic Planning meeting. Chair Belsito, Board Members Price and Atanasov discussed ongoing and increased strategic planning opportunities. Chair Belsito provided closing remarks.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00PM