**Board of Early Education and Care**

**February 14, 2024**

**1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Bentley Academy Innovation School/ Early Childhood Center Complex**

**25 Memorial Drive Salem, MA**

**Salem MA**

<https://www.youtube.com/c/EECMass>

**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, Vice-Chair

Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh

Jamella Lee

Nicki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

George K. Atanasov

Mora Segal

Linda D. Sagor, M.D., M.P.H.

Stephanie M. Curenton, Ph.D.

Cheryl Travers

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chair Belsito provided opening remarks and thanked Bently Academy Innovation School for hosting the meeting. Chair Belsito welcomed Dominick Pangallo-Mayor of Salem and Stephen Zrike-Salem Superintendent, who provided welcoming remarks. Chair Belsito provided an overview of the agenda.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Tutwiler thanked Bentley Academy Innovation School for hosting the Board meeting and provided an overview of the agenda. Secretary Tutwiler discussed the language included in the FY25 budget that illustrates the Department’s commitment to its core values.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Kershaw thanked Mayor Pangallo and Superintendent Zrike for welcoming the Board and for sharing their early education model. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding new registered apprenticeship programs in the Commonwealth and acknowledged Board Member Moeller’s contribution to the effort. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Governor’s Future Tech bill and shared information regarding her testimony before the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets in support of the bill. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Early Education and Out of School Time (EEOST) Capital Fund Grant Program regulations. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the revised timeline for the procurement of the Child Care Financial Assistance contracts. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update on the Child Care Financial Assistance caseload, efforts to maintain the full caseload and funding to increase the caseload in FY25. Commissioner Kershaw provided personnel updates. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the availability of Child Care Financial Assistance due to the full caseload.

Chair Belsito welcomed Representative Manny Cruz and thanked him for hosting the Board meeting in his district.

**Statements from the Public**

Chair Belsito acknowledged that public comments were received by email prior to the Board meeting and were distributed to the Board.

Gillian Budine from Community Network for Children provided public comment regarding the role of Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) programs and encouraged the Board to continue funding for the CFCE grant. Ms. Budine shared comments from families who participate in programs provided by Ms. Budine’s organization.

Nathalia Hernandez, Donna Connelly, Tiffany Stanichua and Jennifer Downing from CFCE North Shore provided public comment regarding the services provided at their program and the populations they serve. Ms. Hernandez discussed how increased funding through expansion grants benefits their program.

Amy O’Leary, Executive Director for Strategies for Children, provided public comment regarding preschool expansion. She discussed her program’s historic involvement in the effort to expand access to high quality early education through support of Universal Pre-K and emphasized the need for community involvement to support children and families. Ms. O’Leary expressed support for expanding preschool opportunities through the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI).

**Routine Business:**

* Approval of Minutes from January 10, 2024 Meeting – VOTE
  + Approved unanimously.

**Items for Discussion and Action:**

* FY25 Budget Updates
  + Gateway to Pre-K Initiative

Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of Governor Healy’s Gateway to Pre-K Initiative and highlighted four initiatives to make early education more accessible and affordable for families across the Commonwealth. Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Katherine Harvell, EEC Chief Operating Officer, to outline the FY25 budget highlights related to the Gateway to Pre-K initiative. Ms. Harvell noted the different funding sources that contribute to the highlighted initiatives. Secretary Tutwiler discussed additional budget highlights, including the Literacy Launch. Commissioner Kershaw shared that in addition to the highlighted initiatives, core funding remains available for ongoing services. Ms. Harvell provided an overview of the FY25 line items. Vice-Chair Moeller, Commissioner Kershaw and Ms. Harvell discussed the steps of the budget process and ways individuals can support the budget initiatives. Vice-Chair Moeller and Commissioner Kershaw discussed participation in CPPI for non-gateway communities. Chair Belsito and Secretary Tutwiler discussed how EEC and the Department of Secondary Education (DESE) will partner for new initiatives including the Literacy Launch and CPPI. Vice-Chair Moeller, Secretary Tutwiler and Commissioner Kershaw discussed how partnerships on the state and local levels will allow for increased data collection.

* Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI)

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Jocelyn Bowne-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Research, Innovation, and Supports, and Kathy Lang to provide an overview of the history of the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant (PEG) and discussed the areas of success from the grant. Deputy Commissioner Bowne detailed the steps taken to transition to the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI). Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the objectives and priorities of CPPI. Board Member Segal and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed available data and current data collection processes to set goals. Deputy Commissioner Bowne outlined the CPPI grant structure and shared data related to FY24 Implementation Awardees. Board Member Segal and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed coordination between partners and school districts. Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed expansion opportunities in FY24 for current and new CPPI communities. Chair Belsito and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed possible incentives for gateway cities to participate to meet the goal of expansion. Vice-Chair Moeller and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the importance of partnership between community providers and school districts. Deputy Commissioner Bowne provided an overview of the grant selection process and implementation. Deputy Commissioner Bowne and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the steps being taken to move towards the goal of universal preschool access. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed how the CPPI grant can be allocated to increase capacity and access.

* + Panel Discussion with Salem CPPI Partners

Superintendent Zrike introduced State Representative Manny Cruz who discussed the importance of equitable universal access for all learners. Representative Cruz recognized Salem School Committee member Veronica Miranda, who was also attending the Board meeting. Representative Cruz provided feedback regarding budget priorities and initiatives that he encouraged the Board to continue to support including increasing rates, investing in high-quality, evidence-based literacy programs and other equity levers.

Superintendent Zrike discussed Salem’s approach to a mixed delivery model for Pre-K. Superintendent Zrike introduced the members of the panel present to discuss the Salem Pre-K Partnership. Kate Carbone, Deputy Superintendent of Salem Public Schools, provided an overview of the history of Salem’s attempts at receiving CPPI grant funding and detailed the ways the funding has been allocated in recent years. Deputy Superintendent Carbone provided an overview of the partnerships within Salem Public Schools. Superintendent Zrike discussed the leadership and governance organizational structure and outlined the challenges faced by the partner programs. Deputy Superintendent Carbone provided an overview of the priorities Salem Pre-K focuses on to increase quality. Shawna Erps, Early Learning Coach and CPPI Grant Administrator, shared data related to early literacy. She discussed how the data is collected and utilized to drive professional development and to assist the partners to align their curriculums and goals.

Leanne Smith, Principal of Salem Early Education Center, Tabitha Williams, Owner of Ashley’s Preschool, Charity Lezama, Executive Director for Salem YMCA and Celeste Hamilton, Site Director for Salem Community Childcare shared how CPPI funding has contributed to success in their programs. Superintendent Zrike thanked the Board for their support and reiterated the panel’s commitment to providing quality Pre-K education in their community. Chair Belsito and Board Member Kane thanked the panel for their presentation and their leadership.

Board Member Travers, Commissioner Kershaw, Deputy Commissioner Bowne, and Deputy Superintendent Carbone discussed how EEC can support efforts to share information and technical assistance with other communities to support Pre-K initiatives.

Vice-Chair Moeller, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Superintendent Zrike discussed how the Salem CPPI partners available utilize different funding sources to support a mixed delivery universal Pre-K system. Superintendent Zrike shared challenges faced by the Salem CPPI partnership, including transportation, limited hours and availability and stressed the need to be nimble and to have systemic coordination. Chair Belsito, Superintendent Zrike, Deputy Superintendent Carbone and Ms. Smith discussed the drivers behind Salem’s focus on community partnership. Board Member Segal commended the Salem CPPI panel for their inspirational commitment and hard work.

* State Plan Notification

Tyreese Nichols, EEC Deputy Commissioner of Family Access and Engagement, notified the Board regarding the scope and timeline for the FY25-27 Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan. Deputy Commissioner Nichols provided an overview of CCDF and discussed the State Plan process that is required by the Federal Office of Child Care to comply with federal rules and statutes and is required to be submitted to our Federal partners by July 1, 2024, with an effective date of October 1, 2024.

Chair Belsito provided closing remarks.

Meeting concluded at 4:02PM.