

**Board of Early Education and Care
February 11, 2026
1:00PM – 4:00PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care, Central Office
50 Milk Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02109**

<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
Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas (via phone)
Linda D. Sagor, M.D., M.P.H.
Jennifer James Price (via phone)
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Dr. Kiame Mahaniah
Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
George Atanasov
Jamella Lee

MINUTES

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito shared welcome comments and provided updates related to the transitions for the Board. He acknowledged the resignation of Board Member Travers and her commitment to the Board and thanked her for her service. Chair Belsito expressed gratitude to Secretary Tutwiler for his service as the Secretary of Education. Board Members Sagor, Atanasov, Lee, Kain, Ruiz de Luzuriaga, Lucas, and Vice Chair Moeller thanked Secretary Tutwiler for his positivity, collaboration, partnership, and dedication to early education and wished him good luck in his future endeavors.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Tutwiler provided welcoming comments. Secretary Tutwiler acknowledged Black History Month and shared a personal anecdote. He reflected on his time serving as the Secretary of Education and expressed gratitude to Commissioner Kershaw and the Board, as well as all the early educators in the Commonwealth.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw thanked Secretary Tutwiler for his leadership and reflected on his impact on the field of early education and care. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update related to immigration enforcement actions in Massachusetts. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update related to the Family Advisory Council. Commissioner Kershaw discussed upcoming updates to the state accounting system. She shared information related to the March Board meeting.

Statements from the Public

Amy O’Leary-Executive Director for Strategies for Children. She shared an overview of the services provided by her program. Ms. O’Leary expressed thanks and appreciation for Secretary Tutwiler’s leadership.

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

Routine Business:

- Approval of minutes from January 14, 2026 Meeting – VOTE
 - Approved with Board Member Lee abstaining

Items for Discussion and Action:

- Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Updates

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Eric Hansson-EEC Chief Operating Officer and Acting Chief Operating Officer and Christel Lantin-EEC Budget Director to provide updates related to the FY27 budget. Mr. Hansson provided a brief overview of the FY27 budget and acknowledged internal and external stakeholders for their work. Ms. Lantin provided an overview of the state budget process. Ms. Lantin shared highlights from the Governor’s proposed budget (H.2) and provided a comparison of funding in the FY26 final budget. Commissioner Kershaw discussed funding levels for Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA), Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI), quality improvements, and Career Pathways. Commissioner Kershaw, Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga, and Mr. Hansson discussed funding sources for the FY26 final budget, the H.2 budget, and potential supplemental budgets. Chair Belsito highlighted funding needs for mental health resources. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Commissioner Kershaw discussed potential impacts on accessibility.

- Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) FY26 Reimbursement Rate Increase

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Mr. Hansson, Tyrese Nicolas-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Family Access and Engagement, Ashley White-EEC Director of Research, and Erica Morin-EEC General Counsel to discuss proposed rate increases for CCFA. Mr. Hansson provided a recap of the proposed rate increases. Ms. White detailed the across-the-board increases and focused cost-of-care adjustments. Attorney Morin provided an update related to union ratification for the

proposed rates. Commissioner Kershaw discussed strategies for workforce stability. Attorney Morin detailed the proposed CCFA rate increases and offered the proposal for a vote. Board Member Kain and Chair Belsito expressed thanks for the data driven work reflected in the proposal.

- VOTE
 - Approved unanimously
- Education-to-Career (E2C) Research and Data Hub Overview

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Amy Checkoway-EEC Deputy Commissioner of Policy, Strategy and Research, Adrienne Murphy-EEC Senior Director of Data Analytics, and Sam Ribnick-Executive Director, Education-to-Career Data Hub. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway provided an introduction to the E2C Data Hub and explained how EEC collaborates with the Data Hub team. Mr. Ribnick provided an overview of the E2C Hub and shared its vision and strategic priorities. He discussed available datasets related to early education. Mr. Ribnick discussed E2C's partnership with EEC and Ms. Murphy detailed how the E2C Hub provides infrastructure and support to assist EEC in achieving its research goals. Mr. Ribnick discussed the Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS). Mr. Ribnick provided additional background information about E2C and how capital funding has supported the work. Mr. Ribnick shared how to learn more about the Hub. Chair Belsito and Mr. Ribnick discussed integrating data sources from other statewide agencies. Vice Chair Moeller and Ms. Murphy discussed data sharing with the Department of Secondary Education. Board Member Lucas and Mr. Ribnick discussed accessible entry points for different audiences. Board Member Atanasov and Mr. Ribnick discussed how to leverage data to benefit workforce supports. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Ms. Murphy discussed plans to utilize the E2C Hub to support EEC's KPI dashboards. Secretary Tutwiler acknowledged the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security for their financial support of the E2C Hub.

- Research Agenda and Data Update

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Deputy Commissioner Checkoway, Ms. Murphy, and Ms. White to provide an update on EEC's research agenda, data accessibility, and data quality. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway reflected on the impact of data driven decision making. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway detailed the current research agenda. She explained the research and data strategy. Ms. White discussed EEC's research accomplishments and highlighted recent research projects. Ms. Murphy detailed recent accomplishments of the data analytics team. Ms. Murphy provided an update related to the Data Advisory Commission. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway and Ms. White shared updated research priorities by strategic area. Ms. White acknowledged input from internal stakeholders used to develop the updated research priorities.

Board Member Lucas recognized the effort to create the infrastructure for the research agenda. Board Member Lucas, Deputy Commissioner Checkoway, and Ms. White discussed avenues to contact EEC's research and data teams. Chair Belsito, Commissioner Kershaw, and Ms. White discussed efforts to increase transparency and access to data. Board Members Kain and Ruiz de

Luzuriaga commented on the importance of data driven decision making and transparency. Commissioner Kershaw thanked the Board and Secretary Tutwiler for prioritizing research and data efforts. Deputy Commissioner Checkoway shared next steps in the research agenda.

Chair Belsito provided closing remarks.

Meeting Adjourned 3:30PM