**Board of Early Education and Care**

**January 10, 2023**

**1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care, Central Office**

**50 Milk Street, 5th Floor**

**Boston, MA 02110**

[https://www.youtube.com/c/EECMass](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fwww.youtube.com*2Fc*2FEECMass__*3B!!CUhgQOZqV7M!mtJGkDA0V8yVgg2uKSG9uy90hzVOfMC6kxew8RLmPytYEKM5G63U2wNQX5lmit0oRma9LJJQvSy2Xg9khjIXdBkRMbjsJqM*24&data=05*7C01*7Cmike*40renvisioning.com*7Cfc2fcdfea44a4844760708da926316e2*7C804f5616b15149f0831435a91562ab97*7C0*7C0*7C637983251547746626*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C&sdata=GfmZaBZpVTD29gjgCI6wqLvtPwwz9k3Ct84ytJS62uk*3D&reserved=0__;JSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUl!!CUhgQOZqV7M!nAONvpYnuUFeIIGmPyWAYzixbXXP4opicM2oKiaL2PxTSq3vmDXa1fDb49UwAzr-myowXZhp4oTO75KqUO9_ZCMBwQ$)

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

Paul Belsito, Chair

Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education (via phone)

Amy Kershaw, Acting Commissioner

Jamella Lee

Maria Gonzalez Moeller

Mora Segal

Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

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

George Atanasov

Cheryl Travers

Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders (via phone)

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present**

Stephanie M. Curenton, Ph.D.

**AGENDA:**

**Welcome and New Board Member Introductions**

Chairperson Belsito welcomed the Board. Members of the Board provided introductions.

**Comments from the Chair**

Chair Belsito acknowledged the previous Chair of the Board, Nonie Lesaux, for her leadership during the transition and during Covid. Chairperson Belsito introduced Secretary Tutwiler.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Tutwiler provided opening remarks. Secretary Tutwiler expressed excitement about his new role and stated that he looks forward to learning from the Commissioner, the Board members, and the providers and families across the state. He provided an overview of his experience and stated that it is his belief and main driver that education is the key towards equity of opportunity, experience, and access. Secretary Tutwiler stated that he is looking forward to discussion regarding early education initiatives and priorities.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Acting Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Chairperson Belsito, Secretary Tutwiler, and the new members of the Board. She discussed the agenda for today’s meeting.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Federal Preschool grant, which is a three-year grant of $12M each year dedicated to system building, and thanked the team for their work on the grant and expressed excitement for the work ahead.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding $10M appropriated in the FY22 budget for a pilot program to provide financial assistance to staff working in early education and care programs with the goal of recruitment and retention. Acting Commissioner Kershaw stated that the pilot is launching January 10, 2023, and discussed the timeline for announcing the pilot. Acting Commissioner Kershaw confirmed that the pilot program is being run through the existing Financial Assistance system and is open to all staff, not just teaching staff. Acting Commissioner Kershaw stated that staff who earn 85% of medium income will be prioritized. Information is available on the EEC website and through calling Mass 211.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided information regarding upcoming Board meetings, highlighting that the next meeting will be held in Lawrence.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw also provided personnel updates.

**Statements from the Public\***

Chair Belsito stated that additional public comment was received from Mansfield Children’s Center regarding sustainable C3 funding and was provided to the Board.

Patrick Stanton, Executive Director Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP), provided public comment related to school age afterschool programs and highlighted the importance of high quality after school programs. Mr. Stanton encouraged the Board to focus on the unique challenges faced by school age afterschool programs. He requested that the Board to increase reimbursements to programs for voucher slots, include more relevant school-age professional development, and seek out and incorporate workforce hiring and retention strategies being used by early education programs and revise regulations to more closely align with the needs of afterschool care and DESE’s regulations.

**Items for Discussion and Action:**

* EEC Overview: Who We Are & What We Do

Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the scope of the agency and its role in early education and care. She discussed the vision and the mission of the agency. Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided insight into the history of the agency and highlighted that its founding was rooted in the educational foundation of the Commonwealth structure to sit on equal footing with the Department and Board of Secondary Education and Higher Education to form cradle to career educational attainment.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw discussed the staffing structure of EEC and discussed the regional structure throughout the Commonwealth. Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of EEC programs and services and discussed partnerships with other state agencies. She provided data related to licensed providers, capacity, and caseload by region. Acting Commissioner Kershaw outlined EEC appropriations, which totals $1.859B in FY23 and highlighted different funding sources.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the strategic action plan, and the overall pillars contained in the plan, and highlighted steps taken to operationalize the plan.

Board member Segal commented on the opportunity provided by an increased budget and asked for clarification regarding the funding from the Children’s Trust Fund. Acting Commissioner Kershaw stated that there continues to be discussions regarding one time and ongoing investments and how to deploy funding to have the largest impact. Board member Segal commented on the need for a cohesive path related to the priority outcome of getting children on track by 3rd grade. Acting Commissioner Kershaw affirmed that it is important for the Board and the agency to focus on the theory of action around quality and outcomes.

Board member Ruiz de Luzuriaga commented that it would be helpful to have an analysis on the aspects of quality and what would be the related investment.

Chair Belsito welcomed Board members Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Kain, who had joined the meeting, and they introduced themselves.

* Massachusetts Labor Market and Child Care
	+ Ashley White, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, Senior Policy Researcher

Chair Belsito welcomed Ashley White from the Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation and thanked her for her organization’s focus on the early education sector.

Ashely White thanked the Board for the opportunity to talk about workforce demographic trends in Massachusetts.

Ms. White highlighted that workforce demographic trends are troubling and show a serious shortage of workers that threaten the State’s economic future, heightened by the Covid pandemic, and reduced international migration. She discussed workforce constraints and stated that Massachusetts has two available jobs for every unemployed person, showing a growing labor shortage in Massachusetts. She discussed the drivers of the labor shortage.

Ms. White highlighted that the childcare workforce nationally and in Massachusetts has not recovered at the same rate as the workforce at large, with Massachusetts seeing a loss of approximately 3,000 childcare workers since 2020. Ms. White discussed the economic potential of inadequate childcare and the methods used to calculate the impact. Ms. White shared that Massachusetts loses approximately $2.3B a year due to inadequate childcare and broke down costs to families, businesses, and taxpayers.

Chair Belsito commented that the context and data provided shows the need for the right strategies and opportunities to meet the need of the workforce and the families.

Acting Commissioner Kershaw thanked Ms. White for her partnership and commented on the impact on childcare into the broader workforce. Ms. White affirmed that childcare plays a direct role with economic opportunity for childcare providers and the economy at large.

Board member Ruiz de Luzuriaga inquired if there was specific data related to mothers with young children under age 5 who have left the workforce. Ms. White affirmed that mothers do not reenter the workforce with the same numbers as men and will work to incorporate those trends going forward.

Board member Atanasov inquired about the reaction from the business community and Ms. White stated that the employer community has had positive engagement.

Board member Segal asked for clarification on the data related to immigration and if there is any indication that might change. Ms. White pointed to federal policy changes pre-pandemic and stated that the pandemic exacerbated trends. She stated that it is important to assess the Massachusetts demographics and identify trends annually.

* Early Education & Care Workforce: Key Challenges & Opportunities

Acting Commissioner Kershaw introduced Director of Data Analytics Adrienne Murphy, and Senior Associate Commissioner Amy Checkoway, to discuss key challenges and opportunities facing early education and care workforce.

Ms. Checkoway stated that today’s discussion will be a review of the data shared at the December Board meeting regarding system capacity, staffing and compensation and will provide a smaller number of relevant key data points. Ms. Checkoway provided a clarification of licensed capacity and staffed capacity and discussed overall systemwide licensed capacity trends, which continues to increase since the pandemic shutdown. She highlighted that center-based programs have returned to pre-pandemic levels and the monthly rate of new FCC providers now exceeds pre-pandemic levels. Acting Commissioner Kershaw provided a definition of group and school age programs (GSA) and family childcare (FCC) programs and stated that

Ms. Checkoway discussed the effect of staff openings on programs ability to meet their licensed capacity, highlighting that programs reported they would be able to serve an additional 15,000 children if they were fully staffed. Ms. Checkoway stated that survey data shows approximately 10% of all childcare positions statewide are open.

Ms. Murphy discussed data regarding educator turnover and education compensation by role, region, and subsidy acceptance, highlighting that the annual average compensation rate for educators is an FTE annual salary of $42,000/year which is below 50% SMI for a single-family parent of two. Ms. Murphy shared that providers report that educators are leaving their positions for roles outside of the licensed early education programs and the public school system. Ms. Murphy discussed strategies for recruitment and retention, with increased salaries being the most reported. Board member Atanasov asked if the data relating to one-time payments for employees includes tuition reimbursement or financial incentive tied to education and Ms. Checkoway clarified that those payments are for hiring or retention bonuses and there is a smaller category related to higher education supports. Acting Commissioner Kershaw stated there is a higher education scholarship program and that there needs to be a more intentional link between entrance to the field and supported incentives to stay in the field. Ms. Checkoway further clarified that there is a grant program that partners with community colleges. Chair Belsito commented that C3 funding continues to be important and there needs to be a sustainable funding structure. There was discussion regarding the need to

Board member Moeller provided an update from the workforce subgroup and discussed the strategic focus moving forward. She discussed the two parallel efforts to address system needs with long term and immediate strategies. She highlighted that there needs to be a clear, compelling pathway into the field with increased recruitment for family childcare providers. Acting Commissioner Kershaw highlighted that the new pipeline strategy is an effort to recruit people into the field and provide them with support to stay in the field and includes apprenticeship, mentorship, and scholarships to gain new skills. Board member Moeller discussed expected outcomes of building the workforce system. Board member Segal expressed appreciation for the expected outcome information and stated that it would be helpful to assign realistic benchmarks based on the data collected. Board member Ruiz de Luzuriaga added that equity needs to be centered in the workforce development work. Acting Commissioner Kershaw stated that regional, localized, and demographic data needs to be collected in order to target strategies towards communities with the greatest need. Board member Segal commented that an equity centered goal is needed. Acting Commissioner Kershaw affirmed that that there is an economic mobility strategy for families and the workforce, and the data should reflect that strategy.

**Routine Business:**

* Approval of Minutes from December 13, 2022 Meeting – VOTE **Approved**

Abstained

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

Cheryl Travers

George Atanasov

Secretary Patrick Tutwiler

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM