Board of Early Education and Care
November 12, 2025
1:00PM – 4:00PM

Department of Early Education and Care
50 Milk Street, 14th Floor
Boston, MA 02019
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
George Atanasov
Jennifer James Price
Cheryl Travers (via phone)
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh
Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
Jamella Lee

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present
Linda D. Sagor, M.D., M.P.H.

MINUTES

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito provided welcome comments and provided an overview of the agenda.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Tutwiler provided brief welcome comments. Secretary Tutwiler provided an update regarding federal funding for Head Start programs and the Head Start Supplemental Program launched by Governor Healy to assist programs on a short-term basis. Secretary Tutwiler shared his recent experience visiting Pathways for Children in Gloucester as part of the Commonwealth Pre-School Partnership Initiative (CPPI).

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw thanked Secretary Tutwiler for his comments and expressed appreciation for his partnership in CPPI. Commissioner Kershaw discussed Head Start Programs affected by the federal government shutdown. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the

Healey Administration's capital investment strategy and the impact on child care programs. Commissioner Kershaw provided updates regarding the capital grant programs for family child care and the center-based programs. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update related to the Child Care Employer Innovation Fund. Commissioner Kershaw shared information regarding the upcoming December Board meeting.

Statements from the Public
Suzanne Stillinger, lead teacher, accessibility coordinator and co-director at New Village in Northampton, facilitator of Defending the Early Years and early childhood education advisor, and Senior Writing Fellow for Teach Plus. Ms. Stillinger provided public comment in support of early literacy efforts and the Children's Literacy Initiative. She advocated for novel workforce development.

Routine Business:

- Approval of revised minutes from August 13, 2025 Meeting – VOTE
    - Approved with Board Members Kain and Travers abstaining
- Approval of minutes from October 15, 2025 Meeting – VOTE
    - Approved with Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga abstaining

Items for Discussion and Action:

- 2026-2030 Strategic Action Plan for Review

Commissioner Kershaw joined Emily Conner-Simons - Director of Special Projects to present a draft of the Strategic Action Plan for 2016-2030. Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the timeline for the development of the Strategic Action Plan. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted the strategic objectives that create the framework for the Strategic Action Plan. Ms. Conner-Simons highlighted the foundational components that informed the draft Strategic Action Plan, including stakeholder engagement, external and internal research, and IT modernization. Ms. Conner-Simons shared the structure of the Strategic Action Plan. Commissioner Kershaw clarified how data and metrics will be tracked. Ms. Conner-Simons shared goals related to Family Access and provided examples of tasks to achieve the goals. Chair Belsito commented on the importance of focusing on access. Board Member Lucas and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the impact of updated technology for family access and child care financial assistance.

Ms. Conner-Simons shared goals related to program stability and program quality and provided examples of tasks to achieve the goals. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted the impact of the revised regulations on program stability and quality. Board Member Lucas commented on current efforts for program quality and expressed interest in continued innovation and reliance on the field for input.

Ms. Conner-Simons shared goals related to workforce supports and agency infrastructure. She

provided examples of tasks to achieve the goals.

Chair Belsito expressed thanks to the Commissioner and the EEC team for their innovation and agile mindset. Board Member Lucas commented on the need for strategic partnerships to achieve the desired transformation for the early education field. Board Members Price and Ruiz de Luzuriaga, Chair Belsito, and Commissioner Kershaw discussed setting ambitious goals that engage external levers and that can be accomplished with available and projected resources. Commissioner Kershaw detailed the approval process and shared next steps.

- Standards for the Licensure of Residential Programs, Regulation Revisions –VOTE

Commissioner Kershaw invited Joe Rucker-EEC Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations, Tim Keane-EEC Director of Residential and Placement Services, Kelly Buckley-EEC Residential and Placement Supervisor, Miguel Ortega-EEC Residential and Placement Supervisor, and Susan Hachby-EEC Project Manager, to discuss revisions to regulations for residential and placement services. Deputy Commissioner Rucker provided an overview of residential, group care and temporary shelter programs. Deputy Commissioner Rucker detailed state agency involvement in EEC licensed residential and placement services and the needed alignment across agencies. Deputy Commissioner Rucker shared the primary goals of the revisions and the perspectives that frame the revisions and engagement goals. Deputy Commissioner Rucker shared the engagement methods used to inform the revisions and acknowledged internal and external partners. Commissioner Kershaw shared how input from internal and external partners positively influenced the process and resulting revisions to the regulations. Ms. Buckley detailed the key areas of focus, highlighted the three areas of reform, and provided examples of the reforms. Director Keane shared upcoming project milestones and explained the next steps leading to implementation. Commissioner Kershaw recognized the efforts of the EEC residential and placement team and the external stakeholders. Board Members Kain and Ruiz de Luzuriaga acknowledged the work undertaken to revise the regulations. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Director Keane discussed efforts to engage with youth in residential programs to receive input on the revisions. Chair Belsito and Eugenia Soiles-EEC Director of External Engagement discussed the public comment process. Director Keane acknowledged EEC's legal unit's participation in the revision process.

  - Proposal to Send Regulation and Revisions to Public Comment –VOTE
    - Approved with Secretary Tutwiler abstaining

- Family Access: Child Care Financial Assistance

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Tyreese Nicolas-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Family Access and Engagement, Eric Hansson-EEC Chief Financial Officer, and Ashely White-EEC Director of Research, to provide updates relating to Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) caseload. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas provided an overview of CCFA and explained how federal and state resources interact to support CCFA. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed the

CCFA programs and who they serve. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas explained the two forms of CCFA assistance and Commissioner Kershaw emphasized the importance of the mixed delivery system. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga, Commissioner Kershaw, and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas, discussed the current status of the waitlist and the process for families to access care. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas detailed the spending related to the different forms of CCFA assistance. Board Member Kain and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed special needs flex funding. Chair Belsito and Mr. Hansson discussed DCF and DTA caseloads and funding trends. Board Member Price, Deputy Commissioner Nicolas, and Commissioner Kershaw discussed access for income eligible families and DTA and DCF referrals. Vice-Chair Moeller commented on the need for increased communication with families to educate them about access.

- Caseload Trends: Overview, Dynamics, and Factors

Mr. Hansson shared data related to children receiving CCFA from FY20 to FY25. Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas clarified that young parents and families experiencing homelessness are included in the data for income eligible. Mr. Hansson detailed program participation in CCFA since October 2023 by region and the number of children on the income eligible waitlist between July 2024 and September 2025. Commissioner Kershaw and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed policy changes that influenced growth and how anticipated changes will affect waitlist numbers. Mr. Hansson shared a snapshot of the waitlist in September 2025 by region and age group. Director White discussed the factors and dynamics that impact caseload and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas highlighted how regulatory and policy changes affect caseload and access. Board Members Moeller and Lucas, Director White, and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas, discussed the availability of Pre-K in public schools and the financial impact on providers. Director White discussed contributing factors to the increased DCF and DTA caseloads. Director White detailed how seasonal shifts impact caseload trends. Director White shared how rate increases impact caseload and compared CCFA funding and caseload by fiscal year. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed current efforts to strengthen CCFA and shared next steps to continue to improve the system for children, parents and educators. Director White provided a reminder that the KPI Dashboards are a great resource for data related to CCFA.

Chair Belsito provided closing remarks.

Meeting Adjourned 3:45PM