

Board of Early Education and Care

June 11, 2025

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs

1968 Central Avenue

Needham, MA 02492

<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

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

Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Vice-Chair

Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas

Cheryl Travers

Jamella Lee

George Atanasov

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

Jennifer James Price

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present

Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

MINUTES

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito provided welcoming comments and thanked Walker Therapeutic and Education Program for their hospitality. Chair Belsito provided an overview of the agenda. Chair Belsito welcomed Jake Murray-Chief External Affairs Officer, Walker Therapeutic & Educational Program and Amber Kule, Senior Director of Early Childhood Mental Health Services, Walker Therapeutic & Educational Program. Mr. Murray thanked the Board and EEC for their partnership. He provided an overview of the services provided by Walker Therapeutic & Educational Program. Ms. Kule discussed the support and services provided by the Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Network (EMHC) grant. She highlighted the challenges faced by educators related to early childhood mental health and detailed how EMHC supports educators, children and families. She shared feedback from providers. Chair Belsito thanked Mr. Murray and Ms. Kule for their comments and commitment.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Tutwiler thanked Walker Therapeutic & Education Program for hosting the meeting and for their services to the community. Secretary Tutwiler shared his experience attending a visit to a Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) program in Sandwich. Secretary Tutwiler provided an update regarding high school graduation requirements and a related survey.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw echoed Chair Belsito and Secretary Tutwiler's thanks to Walker Therapeutic & Education Program and thanked Mr. Murray and Ms. Kule for their expertise in the field. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding funding for Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) in the FY25 Supplemental Budget. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the application for the Early Education & Care Scholarship Program for Higher Education. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Family Child Care Capital Grant program. Commissioner Kershaw shared her experience visiting CPPI programs and feedback received from families receiving CPPI services. Commissioner Kershaw discussed her participation in graduation ceremony for the apprentice program at For Kids Only.

Statements from the Public

Chair Belsito acknowledged that public comment prior to the start of the Board meeting that were distributed to the Board Members. Chair Belsito confirmed that there was no one present for public comment.

Routine Business:

- Approval of minutes from May 14, 2025 Meeting – VOTE
 - Approved unanimously
- Approval of Board Meeting Dates for FY26 – VOTE
 - Approved unanimously with amendment

Items for Discussion and Action:

- FY26 State Budget Development Updates

Commissioner Kershaw invited Eric Hansson-EEC Chief Financial Officer to provide development updates regarding the FY26 budget. Commissioner Kershaw gave an overview of the budget process and the status of the FY25 budget. Mr. Hansson discussed the state budget process and highlighted key investments in early education in care included in the Governor's H.1 budget. Mr. Hansson compared the H.1 budget and the final Senate and House budget proposals and highlighted the variances in line item funding between the Senate and House versions. Commissioner Kershaw clarified the funding sources for EEC budget line items. Mr. Hansson

detailed next steps in the budget approval process. Mr. Hansson detailed funding included in the H.1, Senate, and House FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the variations in the different budget versions.

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed State Representative Joshua Tarsky, who welcomed the Board to his district and shared his background in education. Chair Belsito and Commissioner Kershaw thanked Representative Tarsky for his partnership and support.

- Approval of Child Care Financial Assistance Regulations for Promulgation – VOTE

Commissioner Kershaw invited Erica Morin-EEC General Counsel, Tyreese Nicolas-EEC Deputy Commissioner of Family Access and Engagement, and Robert Orthman-EEC Deputy General Counsel. Commissioner Kershaw provided background information related to proposed revisions to the Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) regulations and discussed the actions requested of the Board. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas provided a summary of the proposed CCFA regulatory changes. Deputy General Orthman provided an overview of the public comments and outlined changes to the proposed revisions that were implemented because of the public comments. General Counsel Morin sought authority from the Board to revise the CCFA regulations and promulgate the revisions to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Chair Belsito moved to a vote on the proposed regulations.

- Approval of FY25 Motion for Publication CCFA Regulation Amendments - VOTE

- Approved unanimously

- Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Update

Commissioner Kershaw gave a brief overview of the funding for Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) and welcomed Jose Mendez-EEC Director of Child Care Business Operations & Facilities, Jocelyn Bowne-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Workforce, Program Support & Innovation, and Ellen Song-EEC Child Care Operations & Financing Strategy Specialist. Deputy Commissioner Bowne outlined the planning and proposed approach to the C3 program for FY25. Deputy Commissioner Bowne provided a reminder of the levers for C3. Deputy Commissioner and Ms. Song provided an update on the approach to each of the levers and related data. Commissioner Kershaw and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed feedback received from programs and families related to formula adjustments. Director Mendez detailed updates for data collection. Commissioner Kershaw thanked programs and providers for their participation in data collection. Deputy Commissioner Bowne outlined the timeline for FY26. Board Member Price commented that it would be helpful to have detailed information for programs that spend below 50% on workforce. Co-Chair Moeller requested information on how the revised formula incorporates the requirements from the FY26 budget. Commissioner Kershaw, Co-Chair Moeller, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed eligibility requirements and program participation in C3. Board Member Kain, Ms. Song, Commissioner Kershaw, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed workforce investments. Board Member Lucas and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed allowed fund use and how specific data points were calculated. Chair Belsito thanked the team for their leadership.

- Residential Regulations Update

Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of services provided by residential programs and discussed efforts to modernize and update the regulations. Commissioner Kershaw introduced Tim Keane-EEC Director of Residential and Placement Services, Kelly Buckley-EEC Residential and Placement Supervisor, Joe Rucker-EEC Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations, and Susan Habchy-EEC Contracted Project Manager. Deputy Commissioner Rucker explained the primary goals of the regulation revisions and discussed the collaborative approach undertaken to draft the revisions. Director Keane provided a brief project history and discussed current and historical work to update the regulations. Director Keane explained how other state agency partners collaborate with EEC within residential programs. Director Keane detailed the process for stakeholder and partner engagement. Commissioner Kershaw emphasized the importance of alignment for stakeholders and partners. Ms. Buckley explained the key areas of focus for the revisions. Commissioner Kershaw and Ms. Buckley discussed information transparency and workforce supports. Ms. Buckley defined regulations and policies. Deputy Commissioner Rucker detailed upcoming engagements and the timeline for project milestones. Chair Belsito and Commissioner Kershaw discussed next steps. Board Member Sagor, Deputy Commissioner Rucker, and Ms. Habchy discussed minimum and ongoing training requirement revisions. Board Member Kain commented in support of revisions to requirements for cameras in residential programs. Board Member Price and Director Keane discussed the number of licensed residential programs and children enrolled in the programs. Board Member Price and Director Keane discussed collaboration between other state agencies and EEC. Board Member Price, Director Keane, and Ms. Buckley discussed workforce challenges and how unfunded mandates in regulations affect programs. Co-Chair Moeller acknowledged the importance of helping families, as well as children and programs.

Commissioner Kershaw and Chair Belsito provided closing comments.

Meeting Adjourned 3:15PM