

Board of Early Education and Care
June 10, 2026
1:30PM – 4:30PM
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. Stephen Zrike Secretary of Education

Amy Kershaw, Commissioner

Paul Belsito, Chair

Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Vice-Chair

Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas

Jennifer James Price

Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

George Atanasov

Jamella Lee

Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Dr. Kiame Mahaniah

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

MINUTES

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito provided opening remarks and Chair Belsito provided an overview of the agenda.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Zrike provided opening comments and shared his experience visiting a group and school age child care program. Secretary Zrike discussed recent IT modernization efforts.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw provided opening comments and provided an update related to EEC's modernized IT systems. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update related to statewide guidance for interactions with federal immigration officers. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update about the Family Child Care Capacity Pilot Program. Commissioner Kershaw provided an updated related to funding for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) program. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update related to the student loan repayment program for early educators, the Early Educator Scholarship program, and the Child Care Innovation Fund. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Family Advisory Committee.

Chair Belsito acknowledged State Senator Jason Lewis and thanked him for his service to the Commonwealth, as well his partnership and leadership during his time as the Chair of the Joint Committee on Education.

Senator Lewis thanked the Board and reflected on his time serving in the Legislature and his efforts to support high-quality and affordable early education.

Commissioner Kershaw reflected on Senator Lewis' legacy and the impact of his leadership.

Secretary Zrike expressed appreciation for Senator Lewis' support, leadership, and commitment to all children in the Commonwealth.

Statements from the Public

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

Dr. Natalicia Tracy-Executive Director of Community Labor United provided public comment in support of increased rates for Family Friend and Neighbor ("FFN") care and encouraged the Board to approve the increase in front of the Board for vote.

Ann Osula, family child care provider from Mattapan provided public comment in support of increased funding for child care financial assistance (CCFA) in order to increase access for children and families.

Routine Business:

- Approval of minutes from May 13, 2026 Meeting – VOTE
 - Approved with Vice Chair Moeller abstaining
- Approval of Board Meeting Dates for FY27 – VOTE
 - Approved unanimously
- FY27 Human Resources Division Management Salary Adjustments – VOTE
 - Approved unanimously

Items for Discussion and Action:

- FY27 Budget Updates

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Eric Hansson-EEC Chief Financial Officer and Acting Chief Operating Officer to provide an update related to the FY27 budget. Mr. Hansson shared highlights and watch areas included in the Senate budget proposal and compared it with the H.2 budget. Mr. Hansson shared a summary of the general line items included in the FY27 Budget. Mr. Hansson discussed EEC's priorities as the budget moves into Conference Committee.

Mr. Hansson and Commissioner Kershaw discussed the status of the FY26 Fair Share Supplemental Budget. Commissioner Kershaw shared feedback from the Advisory Committee related to funding for CCFA. Vice Chair Moeller, Mr. Hansson, and Commissioner Kershaw discussed language related to expenditure of the funds allocated by the FY26 Fair Share Supplemental Budget. Board Members Price and Lucas and Commissioner Kershaw discussed funding in the FY26 Supplemental Budget related to funding for the Career Pathways Program. Board Member Lucas and Commissioner Kershaw discussed potential impacts of the proposed EEC operational line item funding.

- Informal Child Care (ICC) Rate Increase – VOTE

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Ashley White-EEC Director of Research, Erica Morin-EEC General Counsel, and Mr. Hansson to discuss proposed increases for ICC rates and provided background information related to ICC rates. Ms. White provided an overview of the current ICC rates and shared the considerations for the proposal. Ms. White shared the proposal rates and Mr. Hansson highlighted that the changes are intended to simplify and align rates to increase rates across informal care settings. Vice Chair Moeller and Ms. White discussed potential changes to the types of care families prefer.

- Approval of ICC Rate Increase Proposal
 - Approved unanimously

- IT Modernization: Professional Portal

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Jessi Murray-EEC Chief Product Officer to discuss EEC's efforts to modernize its IT systems. Ms. Murray shared the challenges of the current systems and future goals to address the challenges. Ms. Murray provided an overview of EEC's Professional Portal and shared progress to date. Ms. Murray explained efforts to streamline EEC operations through improved administrative experiences and detailed key workflows. Ms. Murray and Commissioner Kershaw discussed how the StrongStart system will integrate with the Professional Portal. Ms. Murray shared next steps and highlighted the agile approach for updates and improvements for the Professional Portal. Commissioner Kershaw recognized the partnership with the Executive Office of Education's IT team and the Executive Office Technology Services and Security. Chair Belsito expressed appreciation for the agile, user-centric approach. Board Member Lucas and Ms. Murray discussed the process to receive feedback and how that feedback is utilized during the design process. Board Member Lucas and Ms. Murray discussed efforts to share the process of the IT modernization efforts.

- FY26 Year in Review

Commissioner Kershaw shared an overview of EEC's key areas of focus and priority project in FY26. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the status of the major topics for Board input and action from FY26. Chair Belsito provided positive feedback related to the review. Secretary Zrike expressed appreciation for the review and shared an update related to the Executive Office of Education's strategic plan. Vice Chair Moeller and Board Members Sagor, Atanasov, and Lucas shared potential topics for input and action for FY27. Board Members Ruiz de Luzuriaga, Sagor,

Atanasov, and Lucas reflected on EEC's accomplishments in FY26. Board Member Lucas discussed how FY27 proposed funding for the operational line item could potentially impact future accomplishments. Board Member Kain expressed appreciation to the administration, to EEC, and to early child care providers for the accomplishments. Commissioner Kershaw thanked the Board for their guidance and partnership.

Chair Belsito provided closing comments.

Meeting ended at 2:45PM