



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

**Board of Early Education & Care – February Meeting**

February 14, 2023

# Agenda

## Routine Business

- Approval of Minutes from January 10, 2023 Meeting – VOTE

## Items for Discussion and Action

- Updates on Early Education and Care Workforce Efforts
  - Defining a Career Pathway and Credentialing System
    - Current State: Minimum Hiring Requirements
    - Credentialing System Development
    - Access to Higher Education
  - Innovations in Motion
    - **Partner Panel:** Family Child Care Capacity Building
    - **Partner Panel:** Recruitment & Retention

## Executive Session – Personnel Matters



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# Update on Workforce Development Efforts

# Building the Workforce System: Transitioning from Current to Future State

*EEC is working on two parallel and equally important tracks to address system needs.*

## Build robust professional opportunities and career pathways for educators



## Innovations in motion to address urgent workforce capacity challenges

- **Early Childhood Educator Pilot:**  
Child care financial assistance (subsidies) for staff working in early education and care
- **Supported and clear pathways into the field:**
  - Public information campaign and job board
  - Family Child Care capacity building
  - Center-Based staff recruitment and retention

# Minimum Hiring Requirements Currently in Effect December 2021 - Present

**Policy Goal:** Increased flexibility for programs to confirm qualifications and hire; broadened definitions for qualifying educator preparation; updated criteria to demonstrate competency.

Policy replaced 606 CMR 7.09 16(a-b), 7.09 18(a-c), 7.09 19(a). **BRC requirements and EEC Essentials training requirement remain in place.**

## Qualification Changes

- **Broadens the ways that programs can determine requirements** are met for new hires, including accepting DESE licenses; provisional acceptance of 'unofficial' transcripts due to college backlogs; out of state equivalencies; increased range of content and titles for coursework
- **Less restrictive, more responsive ways for educators to engage in preparation and coursework** such as allowing educators to complete most coursework prior to hire but to complete some coursework within a few months of hire
- **Expand the specific common courses** that qualify for 'rapid hire'
- **Increase flexibility** considering the ways that **work experience** qualifies an educator for providing unsupervised care for children:
  - For example: allowing programs to count all direct work with children and in programmatic leadership positions, in a variety of settings and roles, towards work experience requirements

## Operational Changes

- Process of sending teacher qualifications to EEC eliminated
- **Program leaders validate teacher qualifications at program level** to expedite hiring times, maintain documentation to demonstrate staff meet specified qualifications—documentation reviewed by licensors during monitoring visits

# Key Considerations for Minimum Hiring Requirements & Next Steps

## Continued Support for Quick Hiring

- Hiring challenges continue, as evidenced by C3 data. Minimum hiring requirements continue to provide necessary flexibility for the field\*.
- Added flexibility in hiring educators with a range of degrees is also appreciated
- Inclusion of expectations for ongoing training begin transition towards future expectations of continual professional learning

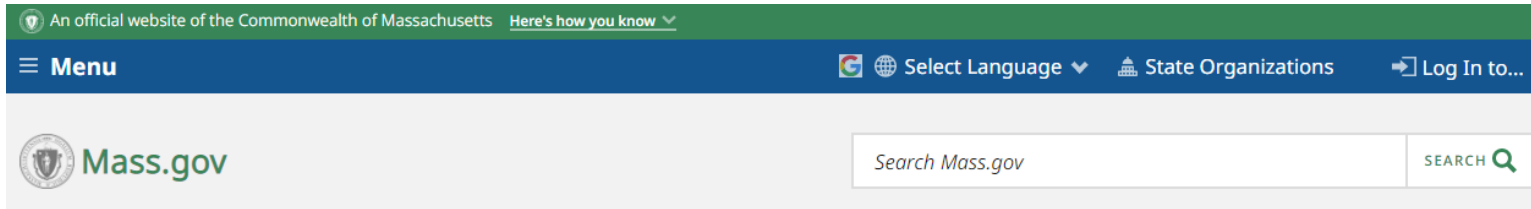
## Technical Assistance

- The Teacher Qualification Unit (TQ) is available for consultation and will begin offering regular office hours.
- Professional Pathways is available to connect educators with required coursework.
- EEC is directing funding to increase access to courses in highest demand.
- Information on professional learning opportunities that meet certification requirements to be posted over time on EEC's StrongStart Learning Management System (LMS)

## Pathway for Advancement

- EEC will stage optional certification, beginning with Director certification, ***in addition to minimum hiring requirements***
- StrongStart (EEC's Learning Management System) will provide information about how available courses and professional learning opportunities support both certification and advancement on the future credential.

# For More Information



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## Minimum Hiring Requirements for Educators

The Minimum Hiring Requirements outline the steps to progress in the early childhood field.

Educators and those hiring educators can use the minimum hiring requirements as a guide for the skills necessary for each level of classroom support and as a pathway to growth in skills and expertise.

Minimum Hiring Requirements website:  
[mass.gov/service-details/minimum-hiring-requirements-for-educators](https://mass.gov/service-details/minimum-hiring-requirements-for-educators)

### Includes:

- Educator guides for each level
- Requirement Checklists
- Technical assistance
  - Drop-in sessions
  - Contact information

TEACHER REQUIREMENTS 4 OPTIONS	FOUNDATION	OPTION 1	
<p>YOU MUST HAVE ALL OF THE ITEMS IN AN OPTION PLUS EVERYTHING IN FOUNDATION</p> 	<p>All educators must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Have a High School Diploma or be at least 21 Years of Age</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Have a suitable BRC</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete Staff Orientation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Complete EEC Essentials within 2 month of hire</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> 9 months supervised work experience or one practicum</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 credits in Child Growth and Development</li></ul>	
	OPTION 2	OPTION 3	OPTION 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 months supervised work experience</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> 3 credits in Child Growth and Development</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Within 6 months:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Aid &amp; CPR</li><li>• 3 additional credits or 4.5 CEUs or 45 PDPs in Categories 2, 7, 8, or 12</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> 6 months supervised work experience</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> 4.5 CEUs in Child Growth and Development</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Within 6 months:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Aid &amp; CPR</li><li>• 3 additional credits or 4.5 CEUs or 45 PDPs in Categories 2, 7, 8, or 12</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> 9 months supervised work experience</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> 45 hours of training in Child Growth and Development</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Within 6 months:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Aid &amp; CPR</li><li>• 3 additional credits or 4.5 CEUs or 45 PDPs in Categories 2, 7, 8, or 12</li></ul></li></ul>
	<p>Note: Completion of a Chapter 74 or EEC-approved voc-tech high school program in ECE automatically meets requirements.</p>		

# Defining a Career Pathway & Credentialing System: Next Steps

<b>Immediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain use of minimum hiring requirements for stability and flexibility</li><li>• Hire vendor to develop verification requirements for credential<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalize proposed pathways and credentials, building on existing work</li><li>• Prioritize two levels of educator credentialling and directors</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Short Term</b> (6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish strategy for 'staged relaunch' of certification<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assess feasibility of opening <b>optional</b> professional certification for professional validation and goal setting (<i>initially Directors only</i>)</li><li>• Design and incrementally deploy supportive IT systems for enhancing certification and new credentialling processes</li><li>• Establish data migration strategy to new IT solution</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Long Term</b> (12 -24 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Socialize the revised pathway and credentials<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Engage with stakeholders and partners</li><li>• Regulatory revision to match new credential</li></ul></li><li>• Staged launch of new pathways and credentials<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prioritizing levels that recognize skills of current field</li><li>• Educator registry available to support credentialling processes</li></ul></li></ul>

# Career Pathway & Credential Development

- Currently procuring a vendor to develop the specifics of verification processes for each level of the credential
  - Includes equivalency between currently certified educators and new credential levels
- Verification decisions will inform the following steps to support implementation:
  - Field communication
  - Regulation changes
  - IT development
- Launch of initial levels planned for second or third quarter of FY24, pending regulation changes
- Will communicate professional learning opportunities needed to support educators in advancing in the credential and make these available prior to launch

# Access to Higher Education

## Career Pathways

- Funding to 15 community colleges and Urban College of Boston to provide access to higher education coursework
- Coursework provided in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Mandarin
- Professional Pathways - Partnership with Neighborhood Villages to support educators finding available courses - over 700 educator inquiries
  - 71% of inquiries were requests for community college courses, with Child Growth and Development accounting for 53% of all course requests
- Over 7,000 educators benefited from funding since 2019
- Approximately 300 associate's degrees completed since 2019

## ECE Scholarship

- The Department of Higher Education (DHE) funds educators for associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees at public and private institutions
- Funding cycle opens in April for upcoming academic year
- Used to support educators continuing their academic career, towards advanced degrees, after Career Pathways programs
- From 2017 to date, more than 3,100 educators have been awarded the ECE Scholarship

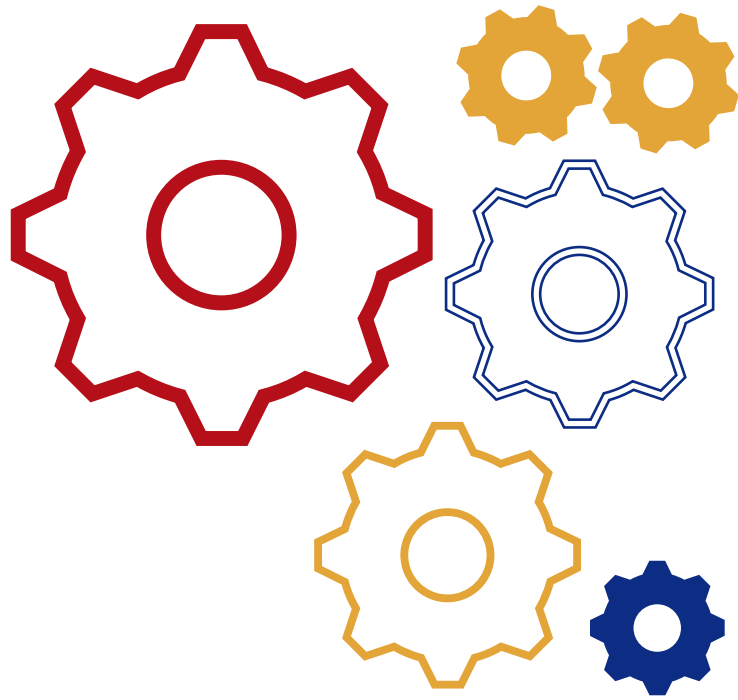
# Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC)

## Collaboration

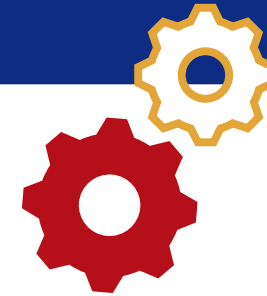
### EEC, MACC & DHE working in partnership with the MA community colleges to:

- Build a system-wide process to expand degree and certificate attainment for early childhood educators to earn college credit for knowledge and work experience in the field, via assessment and credit for prior learning
- Develop shared communication strategies to inspire new educators to pursue certificates and degrees in early childhood education
- Consider enhancements to articulation agreements among high schools, colleges, and professional development entities to facilitate interest and entrance to the field of early childhood education

*In the  
Meantime...*



# Innovations in Motion



# Early Childhood Educator Pilot: Overview

## Background

- On January 11, 2023 EEC launched the pilot through the existing child care financial assistance program to provide priority access to vouchers and contracted slots to income eligible staff working in programs licensed or funded by EEC.

## Goals

- To support access to affordable child care
- Assist with cost associated with personal child care
- Assist with recruitment and retention workforce challenges

## Who is Eligible?

- Current or newly employed staff at a licensed or funded early education or school age program and Massachusetts including out of school time program, family child care providers and assistants
- Residing in Massachusetts
- **Have an income at or below 85% State Median Income (SMI)**

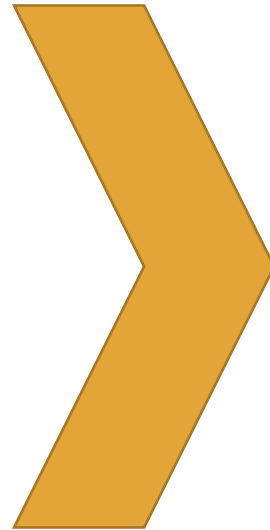
# Supported & Clear Pathways into the Field

- Current EEC Priority Projects focus on building supported pathways into the profession for FCCs and Center-based program staff
- Public information campaign and job board being developed to support new entries in learning about the field and identifying opportunities
- FCC Start Up supports to recruit new providers to the field and ensure success of in opening and sustaining operations
- Support for apprenticeships and other recruitment of staff new to the field to encourage the availability of paid entry level positions that include mentoring and coursework leading to qualified educator positions

# Public Information Campaign and Job Board

**Goal:** to support recruitment into the field, while uplifting our existing educators

**Story:** focus on the voice of educators on the joy of working in early education



## Guiding Principles

- Multi-lingual and multi-cultural
- Asset based
- In partnership
- Data driven
- Evolving

## Call to Action

- Job board
- Workforce supports

# Proposed FCC Start UP Pilot Supports

## Pre - licensing

- Self assessment
- Training on licensing requirements and EEC technology systems
- Foundational training: curriculum and planning, business (budget), initial program setup
- Matched with trained FCC educator as mentor
- Start - up grants

## Early licensure

- Licensing – home set up, health and safety requirements
- Business – technology, business management, marketing and enrollment, Infant/Toddler rate increase for subsidized FCC
- Program - curriculum and schedules, screening (Ages & Stages Questionnaire - ASQ), building relationships with families, quality improvement and professional development plans, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

## Ongoing support

- Access to one-on-one technical assistance and peer learning (licensing, business, program)
- Training in content areas of interest/need

## Support from EEC

- Efficiencies and tools to support the licensing process, including regional topic specific facilitated group technical assistance
- Leadership of co-design process and continuous improvement
- Coordination and increased access to EEC funded program supports (initial and ongoing) and ongoing coaching and technical assistance
- Evaluation

# FCC Start Up Pilot Strategy

- Target scale (in progress)
  - Our goal is to reach pre-pandemic number of educators and licensed capacity (a net gain of 467 FCCs and 3,060 FCC seats) over the next two years
- Proposed Supports for pre licensure and early licensure (in progress)
  - Analysis of existing resources to identify gaps and areas for further development
  - Mentor/coach training is a gap and immediate need for development
- Next steps
  - Interest in surveying FCC who recently entered or left the field
  - Finalize scope of services, timeline, targets of scale, partnerships and required coordination, recruitment strategy
  - Evaluation plan

# Partner Panel: Family Child Care Capacity Building



**Laura Perille**

*President and CEO*  
Nurtury Early  
Education



**Mayra Rosado**

*Senior Director of*  
Family Child Care  
Nurtury Early  
Education



**Melinda Weber**

*VP of Shared Services*  
United Way of  
Massachusetts Bay and  
Merrimack Valley



**Liz Sheehan Castro**

*MA Director of the SEIU*  
Education Support Fund  
SEIU

# Center-Based Recruitment and Retention

## Goals

1. Build the supply and retention rate of center-based educators and directors in targeted geographies
2. Support sustainable and scalable approaches to create supported pathways for entry to the early education and care field

## Apprenticeships and other workforce training/coursework programs create a structured pathway to support entry and ongoing professional advancement

- Variety of program structures and pathways
- Common elements of program design that are aligned to principles of adult learning and integrate features of future credential system
- Wide range of initiatives underway with participation of sector partners, including formal workforce development centers
- Limited capacity of support infrastructure (i.e. mentor teachers, directors)

# Partner Panel: Recruitment & Retention



**Binal Patel**

*Chief Program Officer  
Neighborhood Villages*



**Mandy Townsend**

*Senior VP of Employer  
Engagement  
JVS*



**Christine Trayner**

*Head of Recruitment  
Little Sprouts*



**Barbara Gallagher  
Katie Graham**

*Chief Operating Officer  
Chief Strategy Officer  
The Community Group*

# Discussion: Role for EEC

- Define the scope of the workforce crisis, define targets and outcomes
  - Fund gaps in service by geography or other targets
  - Catalyze investments to increase opportunities to meet targets
- Set industry standards
  - Provide professional recognition
  - Communicate clear expectations
- Provide support in sustainable design
- Leverage and coordinate existing EEC resources to accelerate current initiatives
  - Landscape analysis needed to understand program design of current initiatives
  - Develop coordinated efforts across partners