Board of Early Education and Care
November 13, 2024
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

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
Mark Reilly, Undersecretary and Chief Operating Officer, Executive Office of Education (EOE) as Designee for Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education
Amy Kershaw, Commissioner
Paul Belsito, Chair
Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Vice-Chair
Jamella Lee
George Atanasov
Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas
Jennifer James Price
Cheryl Travers
Linda D. Sagor, M.D., M.P.H.
Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh

MINUTES:

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

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

Comments from the Secretary

Mark Reilly-Executive Office of Education (EOE) Undersecretary and Chief Operating Officer thanked Chair Belsito and the Board and commented on the meeting agenda items.
Undersecretary Reilly provided background information and an update on the Inter-Agency Task Force.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw providing opening remarks and commented on the meeting agenda. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding recently completed provider orientations for Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) contracts. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted increased volume calls to the Community Cares for Children (C3) Call Center due to recent changes. Commissioner Kershaw provided updates to the application deadlines for the Early Education Scholarship and for Center Based Capital Grants. Commissioner Kershaw provided scheduling information regarding December's Board meeting. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Inter-Agency Task Force and shared about her experience participating

in the Task Force.

Items for Discussion and Action:

- "An Economic Analysis of the Child Care and Early Education Market in Massachusetts"
    - Dr. Jeffrey Liebman, Director of the Rappaport Institute and Robert W. Scrivner Professor of Social Policy, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

Chair Belsito welcomed Dr. Jeffrey Liebman, attending via Zoom. Chair Belsito and Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of Dr. Liebman's work and research history and involvement with EEC.
Dr. Liebman shared how he became involved with EEC. He thanked his research assistants and research partners for their work.
Dr. Liebman discussed the motivating questions that drove the analysis of the child care and early education market in Massachusetts and provided an outline of the topics to be discussed as part of the analysis. Dr. Liebman expounded on why society doesn't invest equally in early education and K-12 education and discussed the market failures and equity objectives that result in the differences in investment. Dr. Liebman discussed the benefits of expanding the early child care system. Dr. Liebman provided examples of other jurisdictions that aggressively increased child care access without addressing quality and the resulting outcomes.
Dr. Liebman shared data related to enrollment in formal child care and discussed research that was analyzed to determine target enrollment rates. Dr. Liebman discussed cost and price for center-based care by age groups and potential options to reduce the risk of destabilizing the system. Dr. Liebman briefly discussed government expenditures related to formal care. Dr. Liebman discussed data related to wages for the early child care workforce and the growth rate of wages for competing occupations. Dr. Liebman discussed the policy implications of his research and outlined how to address the related policy objectives. He discussed the rationale for increasing wages and discussed options for wage parity. Dr. Liebman shared that the research paper includes additional information related to increasing slots and trade-offs in income-based subsidies.
Board Member Ruiz, Dr. Liebman and Commissioner Kershaw discussed data contained in the cited Harvard study related to utilization of subsidies by low-income children. Board Member Ruiz and Dr. Liebman discussed options for expanding the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to offset costs of care for infants. Board Member Ruiz and Dr. Liebman discussed mechanisms to avoid inflated market rates and increased costs to families. Board Member Sagor and Dr. Liebman discussed the results of child care expansion in Quebec. Board Member Lucas and Dr. Liebman discussed how investments in raising wages increase quality of care and other investments that are needed to contribute to increased quality. Commissioner Kershaw and Chair Belsito thanked Dr. Liebman for his work and presentation.

Statements from the Public*

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

Robin Meyerowitz from the Maimonides School provided public comment to advocate for increased access for CCFA and shared the experiences of several families navigating the

financial assistance system.

Rabbi Benjamin Binyomin Memelstein, Executive Director of Torah Academy provided public comment advocating for increased CCFA for child care educators and shared his programs efforts to expand access to their community.

Donna Dennette, Executive Director of Children First Center in Granby provided public comment to share challenges and struggles faced by educators and providers.

Patty Sinclair, past President of the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children "MAAEYC" provided public comment regarding the challenges faced by educators and providers and advocated for additional resources to support children affected by trauma.

Kat Horion, Executive Director of The Children's Center of Brookline provided public comment to advocate for increased funding and support for nature-based programs.

Shavon Drayton, Senior Director at Horizons for Homeless Children provided public comment regarding financial challenges faced by parents with children in child care and urged the Board to deeply consider the research presented by Dr. Liebman to bring economic stability to the early education field.

Routine Business:

- Approval of Minutes from the October 9, 2024 Meeting – VOTE
    - Approved unanimously with Undersecretary Mark Reilly abstaining.

- Fiscal Year 2026 EEC Board Budget Priorities – VOTE

Chair Belsito thanked the public commenters. Chair Belsito provided an overview of the draft Priorities Memo and asked the Board to assess the priorities that will be presented.
Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the State budget process and shared the current status of the FY25 budget. Chair Belsito shared how the FY26 Budget Priorities were developed.
Co-Chair Moeller provided feedback in support of expanding and improving access to CCFA and the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI), inquired about additional information regarding Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Care and advocated for increasing infrastructure and internal capacity at EEC. Commissioner Kershaw and Chair Belsito stated that FFN and internal EEC capacity would be addressed at upcoming Board meetings. Co-Chair Moeller and Commissioner Kershaw discussed increased workforce supports for directors and leaders in programs. Board Member Lucas echoed Co-Chair Moeller's comments and advocated for the prioritization of investments to FFN. Board Member Lucas advocated for increased business supports within the workforce priorities.
Board Member Ruiz, Commissioner Kershaw and Chair Belsito discussed including a target for increasing CCFA in the memo. They further discussed the impacts of prioritizing access and increasing capacity on both families and the workforce and priorities to reduce capacity constraints.
Board Member Lee and Commissioner Kershaw discussed how the KPIs discussed at the previous Board meeting relate to the budget priorities. Board Member Lee advocated for the prioritization of funding for families experiencing homelessness. Board Member Price recommended that the Memo highlight the Board's prioritization of increasing access and the

wage and professional development recommendations.
Chair Belsito recommended an amendment to the draft Memo to reflect the Board's comments. Board Member Kain commented on the challenge of decreasing the waitlist while increasing workforce supports to ensure quality.
Board Member Kain moved to approve the Memo as amended by Chair Belsito to reflect the comments of the Board at today's meeting.

- Vote
  Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Priorities Memo approved with amendments by Chair Belsito to reflect the Board's comments

- Literacy Launch & Early Literacy Priorities

Undersecretary Reilly provided an overview of Literacy Launch, a multi-year initiative proposed by the Healy Administration to improve early literacy across the Commonwealth. Undersecretary Reilly and Commissioner Kershaw expressed appreciation for the teams at DESE and EEC for their work and partnership. Deputy Commissioner Joceyln Bowne introduced Jennifer Crandell-EEC Early Literacy Specialist and Katherine Tarca-DESE Literacy & Humanities Director. Deputy Commissioner Bowne outlined EEC's Early Literacy Priorities. Ms. Tarca provided an overview of program investments for statewide professional development for early literacy. Ms. Tarca provided information regarding the PRISM I Grants that will provide funding and support from EEC and DESE to enhance and transform early literacy programs and shared the competitive priorities. Ms. Crandell shared how the PRISM I grants will support community-based preschool programs. Chair Belsito provided comments in support of the partnership with DESE. Board Member Lucas, Ms. Crandell and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed relationships with community-based partners and opportunities for consortium for both center-based and family child care programs.

- 2024–25 Cost Research and Cost Modeling: Phase 1 Findings and Implications

Chair Belsito welcomed Amy Checkoway-EEC Senior Associate Commissioner for Policy, Research, & Data, and Ashley White-EEC Director of Research to share an update on the latest work on the cost of care.

Senior Commissioner Checkoway introduced Dr. Maya Escueta, Cost Model Lead, American Institutes for Research and Dr. Amanda Danks, Principal Investigator and Project Director, American Institutes for Research. Senior Commissioner Checkoway provided background information regarding work undertaken at EEC regarding cost research and cost modeling since 2022.

Dr. Danks detailed the two cost study models that are being developed and outlined the goals of the cost studies. She provided an overview of a cost model, defined key terms and provided examples of cost model inputs. Dr. Dank detailed the tasks for two phases of the cost study. Dr. Escueta explained the methodology for the cost model updates and detailed the data sources used for Phase 1 of the cost model updates. Dr. Danks detailed notable cost increases for both family child care programs and center-based programs from 2022 to 2024 by age and region and

explained the drivers for the increases. Dr. Danks compared the estimated costs of care for FY24 to CCFA rates by age group and program type. Dr. Danks provided recommendations for using the updated cost models to inform future rate increases. She highlighted next steps for Phase 2 Cost Model updates and expansion. Commissioner Kershaw commented on the impact of this research on CCFA rates and highlighted that rate increases will be discussed at the December Board meeting. Board Member Kain reflected on the work done to date on the cost model and thanked Dr. Danks and Dr. Escueta for their work. Board Member Astanasov and Dr. Danks discussed increases in facilities costs and the impact of those increases. Board Member Lucas and Dr. Danks discussed the sample cost model related to roles and salaries for family child care programs. Commissioner Kershaw acknowledged that family child care programs have blended roles and expressed commitment to maintaining a separate cost model for those programs and stated that Dr. Danks and Dr. Escuelo will present information regarding Phase 2 to the Board at a later meeting.

Chair Belsito provided closing comments.

Meeting Adjourned 4:05PM