**Board of Early Education and Care**

**October 11, 2023**

**1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care, Central Office**

**50 Milk Street, 5th Floor**

**Boston, MA 02110**

[https://www.youtube.com/c/EECMass](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https*3A*2F*2Furldefense.com*2Fv3*2F__https*3A*2Fwww.youtube.com*2Fc*2FEECMass__*3B!!CUhgQOZqV7M!mtJGkDA0V8yVgg2uKSG9uy90hzVOfMC6kxew8RLmPytYEKM5G63U2wNQX5lmit0oRma9LJJQvSy2Xg9khjIXdBkRMbjsJqM*24&data=05*7C01*7Cmike*40renvisioning.com*7Cfc2fcdfea44a4844760708da926316e2*7C804f5616b15149f0831435a91562ab97*7C0*7C0*7C637983251547746626*7CUnknown*7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0*3D*7C3000*7C*7C*7C&sdata=GfmZaBZpVTD29gjgCI6wqLvtPwwz9k3Ct84ytJS62uk*3D&reserved=0__;JSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUlJSUl!!CUhgQOZqV7M!nAONvpYnuUFeIIGmPyWAYzixbXXP4opicM2oKiaL2PxTSq3vmDXa1fDb49UwAzr-myowXZhp4oTO75KqUO9_ZCMBwQ$)

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present**

Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Secretary of Education

Amy Kershaw, Commissioner

Paul Belsito, Chairperson

Maria Gonzalez Moeller, Vice-Chairperson

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

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

Jamella Lee

Mora Segal

Stephanie Curenton, Ph.D. via phone

Nicki Ruiz de Luzuriaga

Cheryl Travers

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present**

George Atanasov

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chairperson Belsito welcomed the Board of Early Education and Care (the Board), discussed recent initiatives and provided an overview of the agenda. He acknowledged World Teacher Day and thanked teachers for their commitment to the children and families of the Commonwealth.

**Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Tutwiler thanked Commissioner Kershaw and her team for the successful rollout of the Child Care Financial Assistance regulation and policy changes. Secretary Tutwiler expressed anticipation for upcoming discussions regarding regulatory changes, particularly to residential and placement program regulations. He discussed ongoing cross-agency partnerships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to bridge the gap between early education and early elementary grades. Secretary Tutwiler highlighted the Department of Early Education and Care’s (EEC’s) efforts to meet the needs of families receiving emergency assistance and shelter. Secretary Tutwiler shared that next week is STEM week and discussed ways children, parents, caregivers, and educators can participate and directed anyone interested to visit mass.gov/stemweek.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Kershaw provided agency staff updates. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the phased implementation of the changes to Child Care Financial Assistance regulation and policies. Commissioner Kershaw also provided an update regarding the cost-study analysis, which was recently completed and is now posted on EEC’s research and data webpage. Commissioner Kershaw mentioned the alternative methodology proposal to set rates for childcare, as well as the anticipated topics of discussion for November’s Board meeting.

**Statements from the Public**

Chairperson Belsito acknowledged that the Board received additional public comment prior to the meeting that will be distributed.

Michelle Haimowitz Executive Director of Massachusetts Head Start, provided public comment regarding the upcoming Child Care Licensing regulatory changes. She provided an overview of the services provided by Head Start and discussed current funding and regulation of Head Start programs. Ms. Haimowitz provided insight into current state and federal licensing regulations for Head Start and asked the Board and EEC to consider how changes to current regulations would affect Head Start.

Darling Ortiz and Rosalina Pinto from Clarendon Early Education Services provided public comment focused on how current regulations are unclear to providers and recommended revisions to increase access to care.

Theresa Lynn, Senior Vice President, United Way of Central Massachusetts, provided public comment regarding the Summer Step Up grant funding and discussed how her organization has benefited from the grant funds.

**Routine Business:**

* Approval of Minutes from September 13, 2023 Meeting – VOTE
  + Approved unanimously
* FY24 Human Resources Division Management Salary Adjustments – VOTE
  + Approved unanimously

**Items for Discussion and Action:**

* Child Care Licensing – Current Regulations Overview and Proposed Regulations Revision Process

Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of Child Care Licensing and previewed the discussion.

She welcomed Andrew Rome-Deputy Commissioner of Field Operations, Lorelei Chandler-Family Child Care Licensor, Maria Martinez-Northeast Regional Director, Michelle Ruxton-Group and School Age Licensor, and Joy Cohen-Director of Policy Development. Deputy Commissioner Rome provided an overview of EEC licensing, staffing, and structure. He discussed the current Child Care Licensing regulations and goals for the upcoming revisions. Regional Director Maria Martinez provided an overview of the current types of licensed programs, how EEC’s licensing team supports the different types of programs, and information about the types of licensing visits. Ms. Martinez also discussed investigation visits conducted by licensors. Family Childcare Licensor Lorelei Chandler provided an overview of the licensing process for family child care providers, and Group and School Age Licensor Michelle Ruxton provided an overview of the licensing process for center-based providers. Ms. Martinez then discussed the additional oversight that is required for programs to operate a childcare business. Deputy Commissioner Rome and Ms. Martinez together discussed data related to number of providers, enrollment capacity, and newly licensed programs over time. Chairperson Belsito and Deputy Commissioner Rome discussed data related to timelines for licensing approval for family child care providers and factors that can affect approval. There was discussion about how licensors provide technical assistance to providers and how they work with providers during licensing visits to deliver high-quality care. Commissioner Kershaw recognized the efforts of the licensing team to partner with programs and support them. She discussed opportunities to update the regulations to increase access for family child care, out-of-school time care, and extended learning programs. Vice Chairperson Moeller and Ms. Martinez discussed how licensors partner with childcare systems to support programs. Board Member Segal, Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga, and Deputy Commissioner Rome discussed current performance measures and continuous quality improvement. Deputy Commissioner Rome explained the purpose and goals for the upcoming Child Care Licensing regulation revisions, and Director of Policy Joy Cohen outlined specific areas of anticipated reform. Deputy Commissioner Rome provided an overview of the planned stakeholder engagement that will begin in October 2023 and outlined the timeline for the revision process. Board Member Segal and Deputy Commissioner Rome discussed how the regulation revisions will affect affordability and accessibility and plans to consider ways to reduce costs to families. Commissioner Kershaw shared how the current cost of care study will provide insight into how regulation changes will affect costs to families, providers, and the Commonwealth. Chairperson Belsito highlighted that supports will be needed for the EEC licensing team during and after the revision process and emphasized that a holistic approach to reforms is important.

* + Child Care and Out-of-School Time Educator Credentialing System Update

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Deputy Commissioner Jocelyn Bowne and Senior Associate Commissioner for Workforce Development Ellen Grondine to provide an update on the Child Care and Out-of-School Time Educator Credentialing System. Commissioner Kershaw discussed how updates to the licensing revisions interact with educator credentialing. Deputy Commissioner Bowne provided an overview of the current credentialing system for licensed child care and out-of-school time programs currently detailed in regulations and highlighted pain points and challenges with the current credentialing system. Deputy Commissioner Bowne conveyed the current teacher certification levels for family childcare and center-based afterschool. Commissioner Kershaw stated that the goal is to support opportunities for professional growth, and the current regulations do not provide support for professional growth and advancement in a meaningful way. Commissioner Kershaw, Board Member Sagor, Board Member Curenton, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed flexibility for credentialing across program types and ages served. Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed current licensing requirements for teachers and proposed future credentialing levels. She highlighted key areas for stakeholder input. Board Member Segal and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed how to measure quality and determine competency within the proposed credentialing levels. Ms. Grondine provided an overview of the credentialing system development. She shared that EEC is currently working with a consulting group, American Institutes for Research (AIR), to identify next steps and discussed efforts taken to compile research and previous feedback and to work with stakeholders. Commissioner Kershaw, Deputy Commissioner Bowne, and Board Member Segal discussed how regulation revisions will allow for changes to the credentialing system and how the regulation revisions will inform policy.

Chairperson Belsito and Vice Chairperson Moeller commented that these changes are important to the field and stressed the importance of integrating with DESE and Higher Education.

* Early Education and Out-of-School Time (EEOST) Proposed Regulation Revisions

Commissioner Kershaw provided background information on the EEOST Capital Grant Fund, previous regulation revisions, and current funding levels. She invited Director of Child Care Business Operations Jose Mendez, Deputy General Counsel Neil J. Flynn, and Deputy Commissioner Jocelyn Bowne to discuss proposed regulation revisions. Deputy Commissioner Bowne provided additional background information regarding the EEOST Capital Fund Grant program. Mr. Mendez outlined changes to the EEOST Capital Fund Grant program over the last three years and provided an overview of proposed changes to the grant program, which will require regulation revision. Deputy General Counsel Neil J. Flynn explained the actual proposed regulatory revisions and provided the timeline for Board action items. Commissioner Kershaw stated that the revisions will allow EEC to provide more flexible support to programs and highlighted that the smaller grant amounts will focus on increased safety and security at smaller programs. Board Member Segal and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the grant process and requirements of structuring costs, and Commissioner Kershaw stated that there will be an opportunity for public comment to evaluate the burden placed on programs. Commissioner Kershaw and Board Member Ruiz de Luzuriaga discussed how additional EEOST funding will leverage support for family childcare programs to encourage economic mobility and build capacity. Commissioner Kershaw, Mr. Mendez, and Board Member Sagor discussed initiatives to increase outreach to providers.

Chairperson Belsito provided closing comments.

Meeting concluded at 3:15 PM.