

EEC October Board Meeting Public Comment

Name/Organization	Topic/Comment
Tasha McNabb, Next Generation Children's Centers	<p>My name is Tasha McNabb and I am a director of a childcare center. My center is corporate, but we hire many staff from independently owned schools. I am writing because I keep hearing the same thing over and over : “My past employer would edit my timecards so they didn’t have to pay over time , my past employer would add a break in even if I didn’t take it, I don’t get paid for staff meetings or CPR even though I’m required to be there etc”. I’ve heard so many labor law violations and these teachers never understand their rights until they get to us.</p> <p>I know it’s a labor law issue and I have urged them to file separate complaints, but I also think that EEC should make a statement as well about these types of labor violations.</p>
Jillian Butler, Child Care Provider	<p>Career Pathways: My name is Jillian Butler, and I am a childcare provider. As soon as I turned sixteen, I got a job at my grandmother’s daycare and worked among the same women that raised me. I worked there for many years, became licensed in 2009, and continued my education in the childcare field. I knew this was the career for me, and as soon as I graduated high school, I went on to take classes at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, MA. I ended up dropping out of college not too long after due to my assault, and years later met my now husband and father of our two children. I continued to work in the childcare field, and when our daughter was diagnosed with cancer in 2015, I had to take a break from working. In 2017, I thought I could handle taking classes at QCC again, and I applied for financial aid again and was approved. Taking more than one class and working a full-time job and being a full-time mom was just not possible at the time, and I ended up failing my classes and losing my financial aid. I always dreamt of running my own center, and being able to take only one class at a time through the career pathways grant has been sustainable for not only myself, but my entire family. Taking classes through the grant means I’m able to be with my family, support my daughter in cancer remission, continue being a family childcare provider, and continue my education. I have endured many trials in my life and have attempted courses before but wasn’t as successful as I hoped. With this funding and wrap around supports, however, I have been incredibly successful. Not having this grant anymore means my education will stop because not only can I not afford these classes, but I’ll be setting myself up for failure. This has been devastating not receiving this grant anymore, and even if I do receive financial aid there’s a two-course minimum requirement that I know I can’t uphold. Hopefully this grant comes back because it means so much to me, and so many other providers in a similar situation.</p>

	Thank you for your time
Rachel Wallace, Quinsigamond Community College	<p>Career Pathways: Career Pathways funding is an integral part of our Early Childhood programming at Quinsigamond Community College. With this funding, QCC is able to support over 500 Early Childhood Educators in the Worcester area, advancing their credentials, teacher qualifications, education, quality of care provided, and most of all confidence in being a lifelong learner.</p> <p>As advisors, faculty, staff, and everyone in between, we work to support students, and utilize funding to its greatest extent. Career Pathways students are always encouraged to complete financial aid and are supported and encouraged by Career Pathways staff to complete these steps. The wrap around services that Career Pathways funding is able to offer to students is crucial. At Quinsigamond Community College we offer tutors and online coaches as well as tutoring in our dual language cohorts.</p> <p>QCC offers a competency based, non-credit CDA (Child Development Associate Credential) course. This course is not supported by financial aid because it is not a “traditional” credit course. Upon completion of this course, students earn credit for prior learning, leading them on a pathway to an Early Childhood Birth-8 years old, College Certificate.</p> <p>Finally, funding cuts have led to the dissolution of our partnership with Worcester State University for Educators to earn their bachelor’s degree or master’s Degree. This is especially important because, I, myself utilized this grant (then it was called R3P) in 2012 to earn my master’s degree. Kathy Gallo from North Shore Community College supported me in my journey-- something I never would have been able to afford with the miniscule wages.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Rachel Wallace, Program Manager Early Education and Care Career Pathways Quinsigamond Community College</p>
Sarah Muil, Childcare Centers of Berkshire County	<p>Career Pathways: We are writing as representatives of EEC licensed programs of Berkshire County who support a YES vote for the reinstatement of the Career Pathways Program. Many of our</p>

educators, Directors, administrative and education staff members are recipients of funding from the EEC Career Pathways Grant at Berkshire Community College as well as graduates and alumni. In Berkshire County the EEC Career Pathways Program serves all new educators in the field. Unlike more urban areas, there is only one place for our staff to complete their coursework for credentialing.

The recent changes in Career Pathways funding have caused a strain to our centers. Many of our centers in Berkshire County are small and as a director of a small center, we need everyone certified to provide high quality care and continue to operate. Completing the FAFSA is a barrier for many of our new educators, particularly staff under 24 years-old and without financial aid, our centers or our staff are burdened with the cost. This is an added concern considering other recent funding changes to our centers. Many of our centers still struggle with staffing issues and this has created an added barrier for Directors and stress on our current educators.

Berkshire Community College Career Pathways Grant provides a direct personal touch with our new educators, removing barriers and hurdles. The EEC Career Pathways staff provide on-site visits to introduce the program and requirements, enabling them to break the systemic barriers to access the college. This warm hand off from us to the Career Pathways Program ensures that our staff feels connected to the program and committed to the successful completion of the ECE courses. The EEC Career Pathways Mentors provide personal structured support to our staff and guide them through many difficult situations. For any of our educators who have attempted college in the past and not been successful, the support in this program allows them to change their mindset and achieve success. A fully funded program helps our staff to balance all their responsibilities; working a full-time job, being a good parent and role model, taking college courses and most importantly, being an impactful teacher. The EEC Career Pathways Program is a pathway to success for our staff as shown in the attached data summary.

By providing our staff with the education needed to earn a certificate or degree, the EEC Career Pathways Program also supports our community at large. Our certified teachers provide a higher quality of care having mastered the understanding of the educational and developmental needs of our children, how to engage with our families, and how to provide our children with successful entrance into K-12 and beyond. This puts parents and guardians at ease to focus on their own goals and careers. The EEC Career Pathway Program is truly a foundation for childcare center

	<p>operations and our community. We implore you to consider what is at stake for smaller communities in Massachusetts.</p> <p>Sincerely, The Childcare Centers of Berkshire County</p>
<p>Donna Donnette, Children First of Granby</p>	<p>Center-based Director Survey Results: Thank you for the work that you do on behalf of the children, the families, and the dedicated early education and care workforce of the Commonwealth.</p> <p>When things are in crisis, you triage. We have all been in triage mode for several years. We have, appropriately, looked to make things better for children, families, and educators. I am writing today to share some data that indicates that our collective attention must widen to include deep concerns for the leadership who have been holding things together with their heartstrings (thank you, Eve Gilmore!) on a shoestring for far too many years. There are clear and concerning signs of burnout amongst the center-based directors who answered my survey. Here are the results (as presented on The 9:30 Call on 9/30/24):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">o RECORDING: https://youtu.be/6j-DjKC-m3c?si=Ke8xEmL64WYnfOt-o SLIDE DECK: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S834LhFZcifNcZxR5wrAbZKHuyN3YTyr/view?usp=sharing <p>Thank you in advance for taking the time to watch the recording or check out the slide deck. There is also access to the raw data (shared anonymously to protect the sensitive nature of these questions) included in the deck.</p> <p>Please let me know if you have any further questions. There will be a follow-up call today on this topic, and we hope to work further on proposed solutions and sharing existing supports.</p>