



March 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Board of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care:

On behalf of Strategies for Children, we want to thank Commissioner Sam Aigner-Treworgy for leadership and commitment to young children, families and educators over the last two and half years – especially during the last two during a global pandemic.

We have had a commissioner who is bold and willing to make transformational changes for a field that has been historically under-invested and overlooked. Her incredible outreach and engagement with the field – directors, educators, family childcare providers, school age staff, families - was critical.

As the pandemic started, Sam's problem-solving skills were immediately put to the test. Along with the staff at EEC and in partnership with the legislature, the Commissioner developed policies that were models for the rest of the country including:

- Setting up emergency childcare for essential workers;
- Supporting parent fees for subsidized families – until February 2022 – much longer compared to other states;
- Distribution of PPE to providers across the Commonwealth; and
- And a system of COVID testing for children and educators – in partnership with Neighborhood Villages

One of the most innovative supports has been the design and implementation of the Commonwealth Cares for Children formula for all licensed programs in Massachusetts. With a two-pronged prong approach - - allocating operational funding to programs based on licensed capacity along with equity adjustment to reflect services to families living in areas with greater vulnerability – we have seen the impact as programs were able to stay open.

Since the launch of C3 Operational Grants in July 2021, 453 total programs have closed. Only 7 of these programs were participating in the grant opportunity, while 446 were not. This is significant.

We are grateful to see \$450 million in Governor Baker's supplemental budget proposal released last month to continue these grants through FY23. We are hopeful that the Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission will also include support in the recommendations.

As we watch the continued recovery from the pandemic with the future of work unknown and rolling out each day before our eyes – we need to consider the consequences for the early education and care programs.

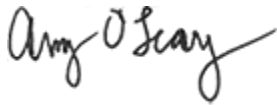
We have seen a renewed recognition of how critical the early education and care system is to our short- and long-term economy and fiscal health while we also hear from exhausted early educators and administrators who are hoping to get through each day.

We need to continue to be bold and insist that the long-standing challenges that we continue to overcome are addressed with the funding and policy needed.

We must build on the incredible progress that Commissioner Sam has led and we will continue to advocate to our leaders on the local, state and federal level for innovative change and increased investments now.

We wish the Commissioner well on her next chapter and thank her for incredible leadership during these incredible times.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amy O'Leary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Amy O'Leary  
Executive Director



March 7, 2022

To: Members of the Board of Early Education and Care

Re: Note of Appreciation for the Outgoing Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy

Members of the Board,

On behalf of Neighborhood Villages, a systems-change non-profit working to realize a future in which all families have access to affordable, high-quality early education and care, we wish to express our deep gratitude to Commissioner Samantha Aigner-Treworgy for her incredible commitment to the field of early education and care and her dedication to building a higher-quality, more equitable early education and care sector for families, providers, and early educators.

We greatly appreciate the Commissioner's commitment to the field of early education and care and admire the tenacity, creativity, and resoluteness she brought to the Department, especially during the incredibly challenging circumstances caused by the onset of the pandemic and its lasting wake. The Commissioner's steadfast leadership and dedication to families in the Commonwealth during these unprecedented times has made an enduring mark. We are grateful for her innovative approaches to stabilizing the early education and care field while simultaneously laying the groundwork for long-term transformation.

We look forward to continuing to partner closely with the Department of Early Education and Care in the work ahead and to working together to build a strong foundation for a transformed early education and care system in Massachusetts. We offer our sincere thanks to the Commissioner, as well as our best wishes.

Sincerely,

Lauren Kennedy & Sarah Muncey  
Co-Presidents, Neighborhood Villages

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## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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**John A. Provost, Ed.D.**

Superintendent

**Nick Bernier, M.Ed.**

Business Administrator

February 8, 2022

To: Commissioners Aigner-Treworgy and Riley, Senior Associate Commissioner Johnston

CC: Jocelyn Bowne, Donna Traynham, Kathie Lange, John Swanson

I am writing in support of continued collaboration between DESE and EEC, particularly in the form of partnership grants. Over the years, our public school and community-based early education and care programs have strived to work together and coordinate efforts. Though we've worked hard to be coordinated it has occurred in fits and starts. The work of sustained community coordination just kept falling behind the immediate programmatic, business, and educational needs inside each institution. With the support of the CPPI grant, we have been able to make significant strides toward increasing equitable access to high-quality, inclusive early education and care in our district. Though progress has been made both programmatically and fiscally, even through the pandemic, we still need support. Please consider maintenance grants to allow us to continue building a sustainable partnership.

Key successes:

**Inclusion:** We now have a full public school itinerant special education team working in 13 EEC licensed programs in our city serving 50% of our preschoolers with disabilities. EEC teachers have regular consults and support from the NPS itinerant special education team and professional development in differentiated instruction

**Coordination:** Our CPPI Leadership Team has strong participation from EEC licensed program, CFCE and Public School leaders. Regular meetings occur with the NPS Preschool Coordinator and EEC Program Directors on the benefits and responsibilities of receiving itinerant special education services and regularly surfacing barriers to delivery.

**Alignment:** The partnerships we have fostered with our community preschools have strengthened the district's commitment to supporting students at the very earliest and most important stages. Providing quality professional development, coaching and consultation for various providers in our area allows us to build more consistency between programs, and gives our students a stronger foundation.

Public and Community-Based Program Partnership in the Massachusetts mixed delivery early education and care system works. We welcome your support and are available to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

  
John A. Provost, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

*"The Partnership grant has been a much-needed enrichment to my child care program...importantly creates a community of educators and special needs specialists where we can learn and grow together, and provide the best support for the children in our care."*

- Zilla Lamour, Bilingual Family Child Care Provider