

Name/Organization	Topic/Comments
Jeanne, Kevin and Ashley Mansfield Children’s Center	<p>We are very grateful to have been recipients of the C3 Stabilization Grants. While this money has been helpful to our Center in the recovery period of COVID it has not allowed us to give staff raises as these monies are not guaranteed going forward as part of our permanent funding. We have been able to attract and retain staff through our program of merit bonuses for improved teaching practices, however, if we were be able to offer higher wages we would be able to attract a higher caliber of early childhood educators. As an organization that has been serving our community for over 40 years and has experienced the ups and downs of the general economy, we have not seen a significant commitment by the state to increase their funding for not only the neediest of children but for all children in the early childhood sector. We are grateful for the grants we have received and strongly advocate that similar funds are granted to early childcare programs on a permanent basis going forward.</p>



Board of Directors:

Berna Mann, President
Unite Here Health

Mike Plansky
You're With Us!

Pierce Haley
Serlin-Haley

Bo Huang
Advent International

Dominic Slowey
Slowey-McManus
Communications

Board of Early Education and Care
50 Milk St 5th Floor
Boston MA 02109

1/10/2023

Re: Written testimony to Board of Early Education and Care

Dear Chairwoman Lesaux and members of the Early Education and Care Board,

Thank you for your continued support of the early education and out-of-school time field. As you begin your work in the new year, the Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership (MAP) urges you to focus on core challenges and opportunities for school aged programs across the Commonwealth.

Afterschool programs are a key piece of the education ecosystem here in Massachusetts and represent a significant portion of the total number of programs that benefit from EEC's voucher program. Thousands of families rely on these vouchers to ensure their kids have a safe place to engage in a high quality learning experience outside of traditional school hours. Research shows that students in these high quality afterschool programs do better academically and social-emotionally.

Like many other parts of the education ecosystem, school age afterschool programs are facing unique new challenges as the Commonwealth continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Board begins their work in the new year, I want to encourage you to focus on these unique challenges so school age youth and their families can access the best possible opportunities available to them.

Funding: Afterschool programs, especially those that serve high needs communities, have struggled financially because of the pandemic. Many are struggling to continue to provide voucher slots and keep tuition low. MAP urges the board to consider increasing reimbursements to programs to ensure they can maintain a high level of quality and access to their programs.

Workforce: The afterschool workforce is facing a challenging time. Consisting of a broad range of backgrounds and work experience, the workforce has been substantially impacted and has led to increased waitlists across the state. MAP urges the board to include more relevant school age professional development and seek out and incorporate workforce hiring and retention strategies being used by afterschool programs across the state.

Regulatory Reform: The core strength of afterschool, and why the research has shown it to be such an effective tool, is the ability to be flexible and meet the diverse needs of youth. The regulatory structure, as it stands now, was built for early education. Many licensed afterschool providers find this structure confusing, difficult to navigate, and limiting the ability to be flexible. EEC must create a new set of regulations, specifically for school age programs and their unique needs. EEC also must work more closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to align regulations and funding.



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MAP is excited to work with the Board to help build new systems and address the ongoing challenges of the afterschool field. By beginning to implement the changes stated above, EEC can help support school age programs and ensure children and youth have all opportunities to rebound from the pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Stanton'.

- Patrick Stanton, Executive Director