

**Board of Early Education and Care
September 11, 2024
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care, Central Office
50 Milk Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA02109**

<https://www.youtube.com/c/EECMass>

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present

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

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present

Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh

MINUTES:

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito provided opening remarks and held a moment of silence in acknowledgement of the anniversary of the events of September 11, 2001. Chair Belsito welcomed new Board Members Lucas and Price.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Tutwiler welcomed the new Board Members. He thanked the Legislative partners for their work on the FY25 budget. Secretary Tutwiler provided an update regarding the Early Education and Care Taskforce. Secretary Tutwiler discussed upcoming events related to STEM Week, starting October 21, 2024.

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed the new Board Members and provided personnel updates. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the Early Education and Care Task Force listening sessions and expressed gratitude to all who participated. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the Early Education Scholarship program. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding upcoming Board meetings.

Statements from the Public*

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

Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director of Massachusetts Head Start Association. Ms. Haimowitz

provided an overview of the services provided by her organization. She provided comment regarding the recent Federal Head Start Final Rule and its anticipated affect on Head Start and families that receive Head Start services.

Routine Business:

- Approval of Minutes from June Meeting – VOTE
 - Approved with Board Members Lucas, Price and Travers abstaining
- Approval of Minutes from August Strategic Retreat – VOTE
 - Approved with Board Members Sagor and Travers abstaining

Items for Discussion and Action:

- Board Retreat – Summary, Reflections, and Takeaways

Chair Belsito provided an overview of the focus of the annual Board Retreat held in August. Commissioner Kershaw reviewed EEC’s Strategic Objectives. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted program and policy accomplishments in FY24. Commissioner Kershaw detailed FY24 accomplishments related to agency capacity and infrastructure. Commissioner Kershaw discussed proposed strategic initiatives, projects and priorities related to Family Access, Program Stability, Program Quality, Workforce Support and Agency Infrastructure. Commissioner Kershaw previewed the major topics for Board input and action that will be the focus of upcoming Board meeting agenda items in FY25.

Board Members Lee and Atanasov and Chair Belsito provided feedback on their experience at the Strategic Planning Retreat.

- Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Updates

Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the FY25 budget and highlighted new investments. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the line items and funding levels for Child Care Financial Assistance and Family Engagement, Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) and Workforce and Program Supports. Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the outside sections contained in the FY25 budget.

Chair Belsito expressed gratitude to the Governor, Administration and Legislature for a budget that prioritizes the early education sector.

- Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) Contracted Provider RFR Update

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Tyreese Nicolas-EEC Deputy Commissioner of Family Access to provide an update regarding the Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) contracted provider procurement. Commissioner Kershaw provided an overview of the procurement process and discussed the current status. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas provided an overview of the types of Child Care Financial Assistance programs and explained how the assistance is administered. Deputy Commissioner Kershaw detailed the eligibility rules for families. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas outlined the FY25 CCFA re-procurement goals and highlighted the outreach to programs and families executed during the re-procurement process. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed the timeline of the re-procurement process and stated that awards are intended to be executed October 1, 2024. Deputy Commissioner Nicholas provided a high-level overview of the bids received and discussed how EEC will support successful bidders. Commissioner Kershaw efforts to ensure continuity of care for families and stability for programs.

Board Member Price, Commissioner Kershaw discussed the mix of contract slots and vouchers and how funding is allocated. Board Member Price and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed efforts taken through the procurement process to improve the child care system. Secretary Tutwiler commented that policy and procedure is shaped by core beliefs and congratulated the EEC team. Deputy Commissioner Nicolas reflected on lessons learned through the re-procurement process and shared feedback received.

Board Member Lucas and Deputy Commissioner Nicolas discussed ongoing data collection efforts.

- Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Program Updates

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Jocelyn Bowne-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Research, Innovation, and Support, Amy Checkoway-EEC Senior Associate Commissioner for Policy, Research, & Data and Adrienne Murphy-EEC Director of Data. Senior Associate to provide an update regarding the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Program. Commissioner Kershaw discussed efforts to expand and stabilize C3 and discussed FY25 budget allocations. Commissioner Checkoway provided an update regarding the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) program and discussed how funding has supported the field. Deputy Commissioner Bowne outlined goals for the C3 program for FY25 and discussed a two-stage implementation plan for the goals. Deputy Commissioner Bowne detailed the FY25 budget requirements for the program. She outlined the proposed C3 formula for FY25 and highlighted the FY25 base rates for different program types.

Adrienne Murphy-EEC Director of Data explained the proposed C3 formula for FY25 and highlighted changes made to the current formula. Commissioner Kershaw clarified that the proposed formula recognizes programs that make efforts to subsidize costs themselves through scholarships and private fundraising and will require additional data collection. Co-Chair Moeller, Deputy Commissioner Bowne and Commissioner discussed how enrollment requirements in the formula may affect group and school age programs operating in school buildings because they are often licensed for a high number of students and the administrative review process. Board Member Lucas and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed verification for enrollment numbers and data related to FCC Certified Assistants. Deputy Commissioner Bowne, Commissioner Kershaw and Chair Belsito discussed the budget language included in the FY25 budget that requires a 1% cap on annual funding for for-profit providers that operate more than 10 center-based programs. Deputy Commissioner Bowne provided a summary of the proposed adjustments to C3 for FY25 and discussed the implementation timeline. Commissioner Kershaw highlighted efforts to continue new programs to open and participate in C3. Senior Associate Commissioner Checkoway discussed efforts to streamline data collection to reduce the burden on programs. Board Member Sagor, Commissioner Kershaw and Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the threshold for staffing and equity ratio adjustments for CEO compensation. Co-Chair Moeller, Deputy Commissioner Bowne and Ms. Murphy discussed how formulas will be calculated for new programs.

Chair Belsito provided closing comments.

Meeting Adjourned 3:48PM