

**Board of Early Education and Care
September 10, 2025
1:00PM – 4:00PM**

**Department of Early Education and Care,
Central Office 50 Milk Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02109**

<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
Dr. Kimberly D. Lucas
George Atanasov k
Linda D. Sagor, M.D., M.P.H.
Nikki Ruiz de Luzuriaga
Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Kate Walsh
Jennifer James Price
Jamella Lee

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Not Present

Cheryl Travers

MINUTES

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chair Belsito provided welcoming comments and provided an overview of the agenda.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Tutwiler provided welcoming comments and reflected on the morning's Strategic Planning meeting. Secretary Tutwiler expressed appreciation for afterschool and out-of-school time early educators and shared a recent experience visiting an out-of-school time program. Secretary Tutwiler commented on the ongoing work of the Inter-Agency Taskforce

Comments from the Commissioner

Commissioner Kershaw provided brief welcoming comments. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the apprenticeship program and recent grant funding. Commissioner Kershaw expressed appreciation for the partnerships across state government. Commissioner Kershaw shared her experience at an event announcing the release of the first round of Family Child Care

Capital Grant program. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the August Board meeting and provided an update regarding the public comment period for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) formula. Commissioner Kershaw provided information regarding EEC's participation in the new Early Childhood Policy Fellowship funded by the Commonwealth Children's Fund. Commissioner Kershaw provided personnel updates. Commissioner Kershaw provided an update regarding the upcoming October Board meeting.

Statements from the Public

Danielo Bernard provided public comment in support of the Career Pathways Program. He shared his experience navigating the education system to pursue higher education and how the Career Pathways Program contributed to his success.

Routine Business:

- Approval of minutes from August 13, 2025 Meeting – VOTE
 - Approved unanimously with Board Members Price and Kain abstaining.

Items for Discussion and Action:

- Board Strategic Planning Session – Summary, Reflections, and Takeaways

Chair Belsito provided an overview of the strategic action plan timeline and thanked stakeholders for their participation and input. He reflected on the strategic objectives for the Strategic Plan. Commissioner Kershaw thanked the Board for their participation in the strategic planning session and provided a summary of the topics discussed at the strategic planning session. She highlighted the key areas of focus for the Board and detailed priority outcomes for FY26. Commissioner Kershaw shared the major topics for Board input and actions for FY26 related to family access, program stability, workforce, program quality, and other topics. Board Members Sagor, Kain, and Atanasov commented on the energy and engagement from the Board and attendees during the Strategic Planning session. Chair Belsito expressed anticipation for the upcoming year and thanked the partners in the field for their commitment and hard work. Commissioner Kershaw reflected on the ambitious agenda and the need to leverage and engage partnerships. Commissioner Kershaw commented on the pace of change and the importance of communication. She thanked the Board for their participation.

- Fiscal Year 2026 State Budget Overview

Commissioner Kershaw welcomed Eric Hansson-EEC Chief Financial Officer to discuss the FY26 final state budget. Mr. Hansson provided an overview of the state budget process. Mr. Hansson shared highlights from Governor Healey's H.1 Budget related to funding for the Gateway to Pre-K Initiative. Commissioner Kershaw and Mr. Hansson discussed funding allocated for EEC included in the final FY26 budget and highlighted key watch areas. Mr. Hansson compared

funding included in the FY25 budget, FY26 H.1 budget, and FY26 final budget. Mr. Hansson and Commissioner Kershaw discussed funding allocated in the FY25 Fair Share Supplemental Budget. Commissioner Kershaw thanked the Legislature for their partnership.

- Fiscal Year 2026 Support for Career Pathways & ECE Scholarships - VOTE

Commissioner Kershaw invited Jocelyn Bowne-EEC Deputy Commissioner for Workforce, Program Support & Innovation, Erica Morin-EEC General Counsel, and Sarah Sian-EEC Workforce Development Specialist, to discuss strategies to support higher education pathways and how to fund them in FY26. Ms. Sian provided an overview of the Career Pathways Program. Deputy Commissioner Bowne discussed the Early Education Scholarship Program. Commissioner Kershaw and Deputy Commissioner Bowne detailed the proposal for use of scholarship funding. General Counsel Morin moved for the Board to approve the proposal to submit to the Board of Higher Education for the use of scholarship funding toward the existing Career Pathways Program for FY26. Chair Belsito, Commissioner Kershaw, and Deputy Commissioner Bowne clarified the details of the proposal.

Vote - Approved unanimously with Board Member Price abstaining

- Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force Update

Secretary Tutwiler gave a brief history of the Inter-Agency Early Education and Child Care Task Force. Secretary Tutwiler introduced the Task Force Project Management Team - Faith Ambrose-EOE Policy Manager, Dana Sullivan-ANF Chief of Strategy & Operations, Gaby Santana Goldstein-EEC Employer Partnership Manager, Emily Conner-Simons-EEC Director of Special Projects, and Allison Pinto-EOE Contracted Project Management Support. Ms. Pinto provided an overview of the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force and highlighted the priorities of the Task Force. Ms. Pinto detailed the structure of the Task Force and project management team. Ms. Pinto provided an overview of the recommendations included in the Year One Report. Ms. Sullivan, Ms. Pinto, and Ms. Santana Goldstein shared highlights of key progress related to benefits, public spaces, and sustainable business conditions recommendations. Commissioner Kershaw discussed the specific ways the progress in the public spaces recommendation has affected the early childcare program at Holyoke Community College. Ms. Ambrose, Ms. Conner-Simons, and Ms. Santana Goldstein discussed highlights of key progress related to higher education pathways, expanding access to nature and the outdoors, and expanding family-friendly policies. Chair Belsito expressed appreciation for the work accomplished by the Inter-Agency Taskforce. Chair Belsito and Ms. Santana Goldstein discussed the Business Front Door portal and how to increase visibility of available opportunities. Chair Member Lucas recognized the amount of work accomplished to date and thanked Governor Healey and Secretary Tutwiler for their leadership. Board Member Lucas and Ms. Santana Goldstein discussed opportunities for involvement and support of local government. Board Member Lucas and Ms. Sullivan discussed feedback from providers related to the Health Connector for Business (HCB). Chair Belsito and Ms. Sullivan discussed efforts to track and measure success. Commissioner Kershaw thanked the project management team and partners in all the Secretariats for their work and commitment. Ms. Sullivan discussed next steps and the upcoming Year Three report. Secretary Tutwiler provided

closing remarks.

Meeting Adjourned 2:43PM