



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

## **Workforce Council**

December 12, 2024

# Agenda

## Welcome, Introductions & Agency Updates

### 1. “Early Education Workforce Supports at Scale”

- Pia Caronongan, Research Associate Professor at Boston University’s Wheelock College of Education and Human Development

### 2. Educator Portal Overview

### 3. Credential Development Update



1 “Early Education Workforce Supports at Scale”



# Early Education Workforce Supports at Scale

How state-level data and research could  
improve innovations and investments  
in Massachusetts



**Boston University** Wheelock College of Education  
& Human Development



# Taking stock

## NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

### CHALLENGING ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR EARLY EDUCATORS

- Early educators are among the lowest-paid workers in the United States
- Wage growth in the ECE sector has been slower since 2020 compared to other occupations that attract similar types of workers

### TURNOVER ISSUES REMAIN AND ARE PERVASIVE

- About 25% of educators leave each year, many leave the field entirely
- About 1/3 of centers have high turnover rates

## IN MASSACHUSETTS

- Wages have grown some since 2019
- Median hourly wage for lead teachers as of Spring 2024 is still \$21.50

- In 2019, 30% of center educators and 15% of FCC educators indicated they were “very or somewhat likely” to leave their job
- As of 2023, average turnover rate for centers was 27%; 21% of centers unable to serve at full capacity

# POLICY LEVERS TO IMPROVE THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE ECE WORKFORCE

Given the complex challenges, strategies must focus on multiple dimensions of educators' experiences

## ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Through compensation and other income supports



## PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Through paid sick leave, health insurance, and supports for mental health



## COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Through scholarships, apprenticeships, certification and credentialing systems



## WORK ENVIRONMENT

Through job-embedded staffing support, professional development, and paid planning time



# POLICY LEVERS TO IMPROVE THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE ECE WORKFORCE

Massachusetts has made significant investments across areas, for example:

<p><b>Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grants</b> Grants provided to ECE programs to facilitate new investments in the workforce including increased compensation, benefits, and professional development</p>	<p><b>Registered apprenticeships</b> Compensated on-the-job training and mentorship towards earning a credential</p>	<p><b>Career pathways program</b> Funding higher education institutions to provide coursework and wraparound supports</p>	<p><b>Early Childhood Support Organization</b> Coaching and training to program leaders to strengthen organizational climate, use of curriculum and child assessments, and continuous quality improvement</p>
<p><b>Early Education and Care Staff Pilot Program</b> Child care financial assistance for income eligible staff working in licensed and funded ECE programs</p>	<p><b>ECE scholarships</b> Funding for educators to pursue associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees</p>	<p><b>Certification and credentialing system</b> Supports professionalization of the field through state-endorsed competencies, a clear career ladder for educators, and aligned salary scale</p>	<p><b>Family Child Care pre-licensing support</b> Provides resources and supports to become a licensed FCC provider</p>

# What we need to know



## WHAT IS WORKING RIGHT NOW?

- Who is in the workforce and what are their competencies and skills?
- Who is accessing the different workforce supports that are available?
- How are workforce supports affecting the recruitment, retention, and career progression of early educators?



## HOW CAN WE MAKE IT BETTER?

- Are there barriers to accessing available supports?
- How do outcomes differ for educators with different qualifications and backgrounds?
- How do staffing levels and turnover patterns differ by program characteristics such as geographic region, capacity and enrollment, and funding received?



## WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED?

- Is there a robust pipeline to ensure the supply of educators aligns with demand?
- How can new entrants to the workforce be supported to ensure their development and advancement?



# Existing data sources

## EDUCATOR-LEVEL DATA

- Teacher Qualifications (TQ) database
- Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR) data
- StrongStart Learning Management System data
- Data pertaining to participation and take-up of other workforce supports

## PROGRAM-LEVEL DATA

- Licensing Educational Analytic Database (LEAD)
- Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) System data
- Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) data
- Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) grant data

## DATA FROM OTHER STATE AGENCIES

- Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- Department of Revenue
- Department of Higher Education

# Moving from the data we have to the data we need

- **Reduce educator burden and increase buy-in**
  - Understand challenges and pain points in using data systems
  - Show how data can be used to improve educator experiences
- **Comprehensive**
  - Include as many educators as possible
  - Up-to-date but also capture change over time
- **Supports ongoing, real-time analysis**
  - Consider value of administrative data collection relative to one-time surveys
- **Capitalize on existing data systems**
  - Explore and facilitate linkages and data sharing where possible
- **Continue building capacity for measurement, data management and analysis**
  - Partnerships can help build and extend capacity

# EEC – WEPC partnership

- Focused on building data and research capacity to support the early educator workforce in Massachusetts
- Key tasks
  - Assess existing data
  - Identify gaps in workforce information
  - Examine how existing data systems and data collection approaches can be improved to better answer questions
  - Develop ways to measure and analyze workforce outcomes or activities that are not currently being captured
- Supported by a grant from the Administration for Children and Families Administration for Children and Families of the United States Department of Health and Human Services



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## 2 Educator Portal Overview

# Overall EEC Tech Modernization Efforts

- EEC currently has a lot of old systems that don't talk to each other
  - Hard for users to navigate
  - Hard for EEC to get good data
- EEC is taking a broad look at how to make a better user experience
  - **Reduce administrative burden** – focus on what is easy and what fits into how people already perform their tasks
  - **Meet people where they are** – recognize that people have different levels of comfort with and access to technology
  - **Reduce siloed workflows** – users shouldn't have to think about which system to use, and EEC can gain operational efficiency

# Educator Portal Goals

- **Initial version:**

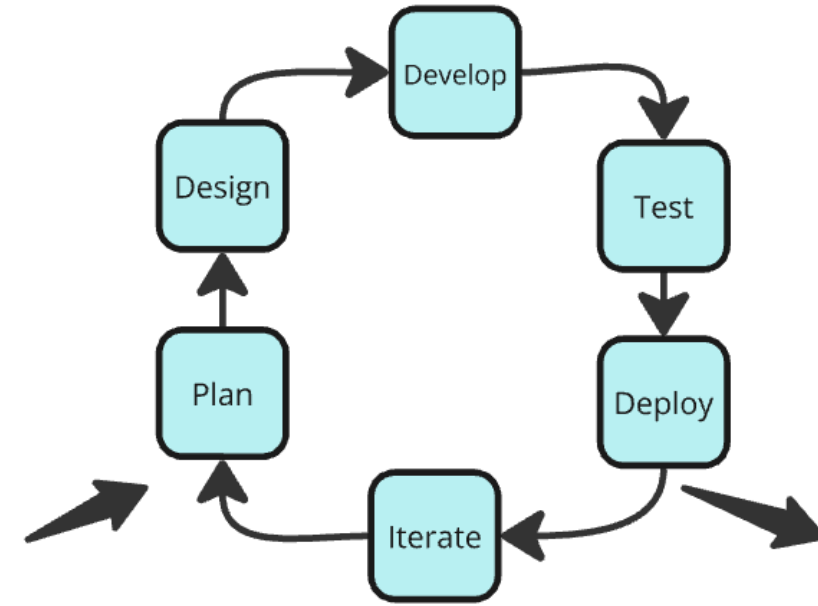
- Current and aspiring educators can apply for credentials via portal
- Educators can convert existing certifications into credential
- Educators can keep track of proof of credential(s) online

- **Subsequent versions:**

- Educators can access their StrongStart coursework from Portal
- Other system integrations
  - LEAD: Link educators to their work
  - Navigator: Remind educators when their background checks need renewal, support licensors' easy review of credentials
  - Integration of new LMS
- More functionality depending on user feedback

# Educator Portal Development

- **Lightweight initial version**
  - Usability testing functionality with educators
- **Iterative design and development**
  - Utilize human-centered design approach
  - Base roadmap on real needs
- **Build into the EEC/Commonwealth ecosystem**
  - Shared login/identity





3

# Credential Development Update



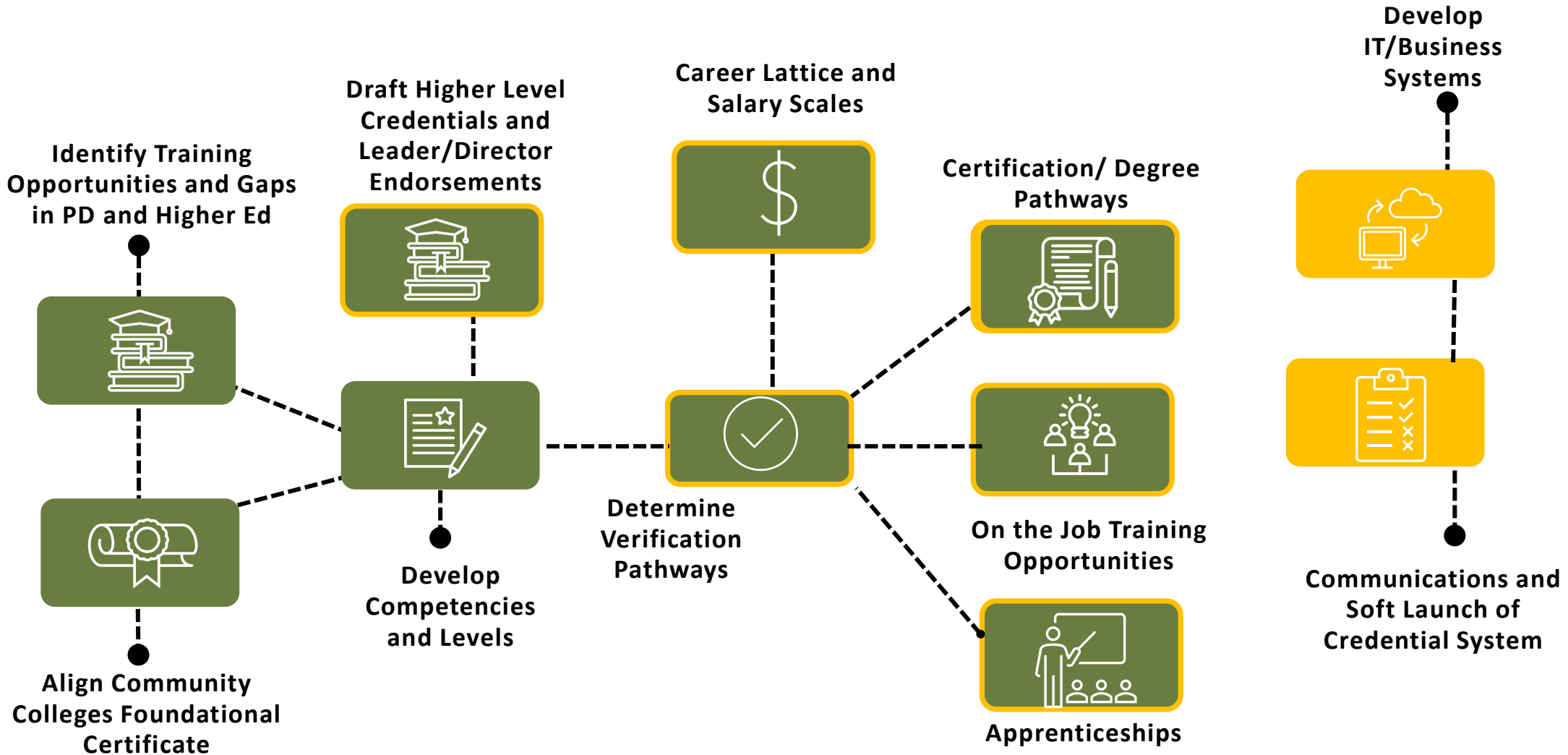


# Goals of EEC Educator Credential System

To develop an educator credential system that...

- Does not create barriers to entering the profession
- Encourages ongoing education and professional development
- Is integrated with and aligned to other systems
- Is appropriate and useful for all age ranges and settings

# Key Tasks for the Credentialing System Development in 2024-25



# Pathways to Earning a Credential

Higher Education  
Pathway

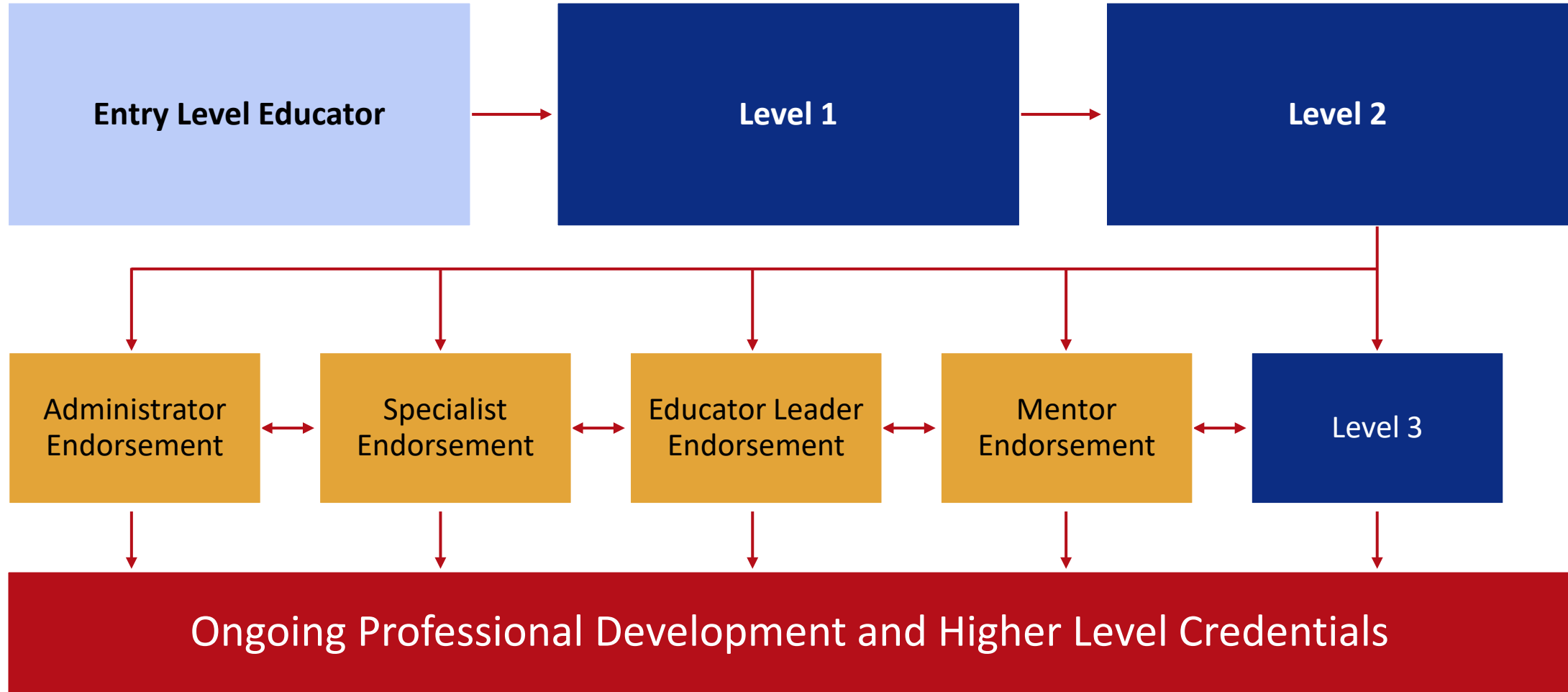
- Degrees
  - Higher Education courses
  - Practicum
- Apprenticeships

Professional  
Development  
Pathway

- Approved Packages
  - Training
  - Job Embedded Practice
- Apprenticeships

+ Years of Experience

# What are the Proposed EEC Pathways levels?



# Stakeholder Feedback & Engagement

## EEC Team & State Partner Collaboration

- EEC Regional Directors, Supervisors, & Licensors
- Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
- Department of Apprenticeship Standards

## Higher Ed & Workforce Supports

- Professional Development Centers & ECSO's
- Higher Education Partners
- MA Association for Community Colleges (MACC)

## Early Childhood Programs & Community Organizations

- MA Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)
- Family Child Care Systems
- Early Childhood Director Groups



### EEC Credentialing Working Group

Cross-agency membership  
weekly meeting



### Focused Small Group Conversations

To dive deep on particular  
needs and collaboration



### Workforce Working Group

Cross sector membership  
monthly meeting