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**Board of Early Education and Care**

April 12, 2011  
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Department of Early Education and Care  
51 Sleeper Street  
Boston, MA 02210

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**MINUTES**

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present**

J.D. Chesloff, Chairperson  
Paul Reville, Secretary of EOE  
Chi-Cheng Huang, M.D.  
Elizabeth Childs, M.D.  
Carol Craig O'Brien  
Mary Pat Messmer  
Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.  
Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.  
Joan Wasser Gish, Esq.

Sherri Killins, Ed.D, Commissioner of the Department and Secretary to the Board

**Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Absent**

JudyAnn Bigby, M.D., Secretary of EOHHS

**The meeting was called to order at 1:07 p.m.**

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chairperson J.D. Chesloff called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. He began the meeting by recognizing that this week celebrates the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Week of Young Child.

**Comments from the Commissioner**

Relevant document included in Board materials:

- *Commissioner's Report, dated April 12, 2011*

Commissioner Killins noted some of the events related to the NAEYC Week of the Young Child, including her recent site visit to a pre-school program with the Co-Chair of the Joint Committee on Education, Representative Alice Peisch. She also submitted her monthly report to the Board and highlighted the following topics, which are detailed in the Commissioner's Report dated April 12, 2011:

- **Staffing:** Commissioner Killins recognized that Ms. Celeste Polonia was promoted to the bi-lingual family child care licenser position in Northeast Regional Office. She reported that Ms. Mary Mendoza joined the HelpDesk group to assist with responding to users of the Professional Qualification Registry and Quality Rating and Improvement System, and to provide support for our other applications. Commissioner Killins also acknowledged that Ms. Marla Chiknas joined the IT development group to analyze the voucher reassessment project . While we have not been able to expand staff we have been using short term consultants to fill gaps, such as business analysis and the Help Desk.
- **All Staff Meeting:** Commissioner Killins reported that an all staff meeting was held on March 14<sup>th</sup> at Worcester State University, which provided an overview of the agency initiatives and offered staff an opportunity to participate in various workshop opportunities.
- **Presentation at Young Child Without Homes National Conference:** The Commissioner noted that EEC's efforts to serve homeless families was recognized on a national level, as EEC was selected to present at the Young Children Without Homes National Conference in DC.
- **Massachusetts Ranked Fifth by NACCRRRA in Program Regulation and Oversight:** Commissioner Killins stated that the National Child Care Resource and Referral Association recently released a report of state performance on child care program regulations and oversight, which ranked Massachusetts as 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation, up from 11<sup>th</sup> in 2009. She highlighted the fact that EEC was rated highly in the area of teacher education requirements, teacher-child ratios and the number of developmental domains.
- **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS):** The Commissioner reported that 1,045 programs had completed their online QRIS applications and another 712 were in draft. She noted that the deadline for QRIS grant applications is April 4<sup>th</sup> and that EEC anticipates that nearly all programs that submitted completed QRIS applications would also be seeking grant funding, while the draft applications were from programs that were participating in the process but not expected to be seeking funds. Commissioner Killins highlighted the fact that over 1,100 individuals had been trained in QRIS and she encouraged all programs to participate as the tool remains open and will be linked to other funding opportunities.
- **Head Start State Collaboration Office Renewal Grant Application:** Commissioner Killins stated that the Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) submitted the HSSCO Five Year Grant Application on April 1<sup>st</sup>, which included support letters from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), the UMass Donahue Institute, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF).
- **Head Start and Public Schools Regional Meetings:** EEC and ESE in collaboration with the HSSCO, and the Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network will be conducting five regional community meetings covering topics included in the required MOU with school districts such as professional development, the pre-school learning guidelines and the common core standards.
- **State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (SAC) Needs Assessment:** Commissioner Killins stated that researchers have begun developing the SAC needs assessment research questions focused on parents, caregivers, and front line educators. She confirmed that these

will be presented at the next Planning and Evaluation Committee meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

- **Assessment Grant**: The Commissioner anticipated that a total of 900 educators will benefit from assessment training sessions which will be offered statewide, with attention to Western Massachusetts since they had limited participation in last year's activities. She noted that these trainings were critical to QRIS.
- **Davis Foundation**: Commissioner Killins highlighted that 16 teachers will be trained on the PPVT, EVT and the Woodcock Johnson, as well as three social emotional tools. EEC is providing this training to assist teachers in looking at growth in children, determine if teachers can become reliable and to assess alignment with the common core standards for literacy and numeracy.
- **Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE)**: Commissioner Killins noted that 2 more mergers have occurred in the CFCE grants resulting in a total of 107 CFCE grantees.
- **Affordable Care Act for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grants**: The Commissioner stated that the home visiting workgroup held a full day community forum on April 7<sup>th</sup>, wherein Jack Shonkoff was the keynote speaker. The agenda included a detailed description of the evidence-based models that will be supported in the Commonwealth through federal funds. Those invited to the forum were individuals and organizations that work in the 17 communities identified by the needs assessment as most at risk.
- **Early Education and Out of School Time Career Ladder**: Commissioner Killins reported that EEC staff, in collaboration with the Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children, have been working to develop a single, basic career ladder for the early education and out of school time workforce and confirmed that the proposed career ladder will be on the agenda for discussion at the Board meeting in May.
- **Birth to 8 Leadership Institute (ARRA)**: The Commissioner stated that the first meeting of the Leadership Institute was held on March 26<sup>th</sup>, and focused on child growth and development. She reported that this meeting was facilitated by nationally renowned expert Dr. Lilian Katz.
- **Assessment Training: Strategies for Working with Second Language Learners**: The Commissioner reported that the UMass Donohue Institute is conducting an interactive training on assessment strategies for oral language and pre-literacy assessment for four, five, and six year olds, as well as strategies to use in the classroom and with families to support second language acquisition. The Commissioner stated there was a huge response for the trainings.
- **Information session with Joint Committee on Education**: Commissioner Killins stated that she presented at an information session held by the Joint Committee on Education to discuss the work of the Department and to answer any questions from the Committee co-chairs and members.
- **Waitlist Parent Survey**: The Commissioner noted that EEC recently conducted a survey of families on the EEC Central Wait List to get feedback on their experiences with the EEC Waitlist process. The Department received useful feedback, which will help guide the development of the new wait list system.

### **Statements from the Public**

*The Board of Early Education and Care makes up to 30 minutes available for persons in the audience to address the Board on specific agenda items. In order to hear as many speakers as possible, the Board limits individuals to three minutes, although written material of any length can be submitted to Chairperson JD Chesloff or Commissioner Killins.*

- **Manuela Su, Director of Bilingual Education, Child Care Circuit**, updated the Board on the progress of the Limited English Proficiency grant, which Child Care Circuit has used to provide two college courses. Ms. Su stated that 27 educators have completed the course, 30 educators are currently participating in the course and over 60 educators remain on the waitlist. She also highlighted that Child Care Circuit offers 5 CEU courses with an average of 26 participants. At the end of her testimony, she presented the Board with letters from participants.
- **Theresa Lynn, Executive Director, ReadBoston**, noted that today is “Talk, Read & Play Day” in Boston, a collaborative event between Read Boston and Countdown to Kindergarten to increase public awareness of the importance of talk and early literacy. She expected that today’s events will reach over 10,000 people.

**End of public comment period.**

### **Routine Business**

#### **Disclosures:**

Chairperson Scott-Chandler disclosed in writing that her employer receives EEC funding and has or may have a financial interest in today’s Subsidy Regulations and Market Rate Study agenda items. Board Member Mary Pat Messmer disclosed in writing that her employer receives EEC funding and has or may have a financial interest in today’s Subsidy Regulations, Access and Quality and Market Rate Study agenda items. Board Member Carol Craig O’Brien verbally disclosed that her employer, Westwood Public Schools, currently receives EEC funding and has a potential interest in receiving additional funding. Board Member Joan Wasser Gish submitted a general disclosure in writing that she is advising, without compensation, on Aspire Institute’ Higher Education and Early Education Initiative, and its Coaching Evaluation Project under the TQ4 QRIS grant, and that she is also advising, without compensation, Associated Early Care and Education regarding its Bromley- Heath Early Childhood Center and Quality Institute.

#### **Approval of March 8, 2011 Board Minutes – Vote**

Chairperson Chesloff asked Board Members to review and approve the minutes.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the March 8, 2011 Board meeting, as presented by the Commissioner.** The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Comments from the Secretary**

Secretary Reville thanked Chairperson Chesloff and provided the Board with a brief report. The House budget will be announced tomorrow and he is hoping that the funding the Governor proposed in House 1 will be sustained. Secretary Reville encouraged advocacy for the Governor’s budget. He also highlighted the Governor’s priorities for FY12, including job creation, closing the achievement gap,

decreasing teen violence and containing health care costs. Secretary Reville noted that the Governor will focus mostly on containment of health care costs, as this singular issue impacts all of the Governor's priorities.

## **Board Committee Reports**

- **Policy and Fiscal Committee Update**

Board Member Beth Childs stated that the Policy and Fiscal Committee met last week, during which the Department provided an update on ARRA spending and the FY11 budget. She highlighted that EEC has spent 47% of its ARRA award. Board Member Childs then discussed the projected deficits and surpluses for FY11. She acknowledged that the Legislature approved the Department's request for transferability language to help address the deficit in the income eligible account. However, she cautioned that even with this approval the income eligible account is projected to have a \$3 million deficit. She noted that the Committee will meet again on Thursday to discuss the Department's proposed options to resolve the deficiency. Board Member Childs reported that the Committee discussed the status of QRIS and highlighted the fact that the Department has received over 1,000 applications, with most coming in at a Level 1 and with a handful at Levels 3 and 4, which would require a site visit. Lastly, Board Member Childs noted that she will provide the Committee's feedback about the subsidy regulations during the presentation, but reported that the Committee recommends the Board to approve the Department moving forward with public comment on the Department's proposed changes.

- **Planning and Evaluation Committee Update**

Board Member Carol Craig O'Brien reported that the Planning and Evaluation Committee met on March 17th with various topics on the agenda including: QRIS, the Professional Qualifications Registry, and a conversation with the Wellesley Center for Women regarding the Head Start State Advisory Council needs assessment design. She noted that the Committee discussed defining and clarifying the questions to providers and families, in a broad sense, not just parents. Board Member Craig O'Brien stated that EEC knows what we do, but needs to know what providers and families need/want. Board Member Craig O'Brien noted that the next Committee meeting will be held April 21 from 10-12 and on the agenda is the QRIS, CCDF plan, Part II of IHE mapping, Career ladder and the SAC Needs Assessment.

- **Research and Communications Committee Update**

Board Member Wasser Gish reported that the Research and Communications Committee saw a presentation of the WEAVE system at its last meeting. She noted that this is the first time that the Department has had a powerful data integration tool, which will allow for more meaningful data analysis to help target the Department's limited resources. Board Member Wasser Gish also noted that the Committee discussed the Department's collaboration with the United Way and Frameworks regarding the Department's messaging for the early education field, rate reform, and the current scope of EEC's involvement in special education integration. She stated that the next meeting is scheduled for the first Thursday in June.

- **Advisory Council Report**

Board Member Villegas-Reimers reported that both sub-groups of the Advisory Council met on April 1<sup>st</sup>. She noted that the Advisory Council discussed the proposed changes to the EEC subsidy regulations and agreed that independently the changes make sense, but expressed some concern about the collective impact on education. Board Member Villegas-Reimers

confirmed that there was no additional feedback on QRIS or the consolidation of the Department's access funding. With respect to the WEAVE system, Board Member Villegas-Reimers noted that the Council thought it might be useful if Boston was taken out of the overall picture and looked at separately based on neighborhoods, as to reduce the issue of the data presentation getting skewed. Council members also stated that it would be helpful to see the data over time. She reported that Council began the conversation on the state plan, which will be available for feedback in the coming months.

#### **Items for Discussion and Action:**

##### **I. Subsidy Regulations: Public Comment Period - Vote**

###### Relevant documents included in Board materials:

- *EEC Regulation Reform – Subsidy Revisions – PowerPoint presentation, April 12, 2011*
- *Board of Early Education and Care Draft Motion FY2011-16: Authorization to Solicit Public Comment on Restructured and Revised Child Care Financial Assistance Regulations*

EEC General Counsel, Dena Papanikolaou, began her presentation by explaining that she would be asking the Board for authorization today to put the revised subsidy regulations out for public comment. She referred Board Members to the PowerPoint presentation and related materials included in their Board binders. General Counsel Papanikolaou summarized the factors that contributed to the need to review and amend the regulations, including federal and state oversight concerns in light of the fact that 94% of EEC's budget is federally funded or is state matched.

General Counsel Papanikolaou briefly explained the proposed technical changes to the regulations that will ensure compliance with current laws/policies and will aid in interpretation and enforcement. She then reviewed the substantive regulatory changes which were presented in greater detail at the March 8, 2011 Board meeting, and she summarized the proposals for each. These substantive regulatory changes address identity, residency and citizenship status; child support enforcement requirements; child attendance requirements; limitations on self-employment; and targeting funding for children and families with special needs (i.e., families in need of protective services).

Over the past several months, EEC has engaged internal and external stakeholders to carefully consider how the proposed changes will impact parents, providers and subsidy administrators. General Counsel Papanikolaou reported that EEC received general support for most of the regulation changes, accompanied by requests for EEC to work closely with CCR&Rs and providers to implement the proposed policy changes and to ensure that the necessary IT infrastructure exists before the regulations are rolled out. Although stakeholders recognized that some substantive changes were necessitated by federal funding requirements, there were strong concerns about the proposed changes to citizenship, child support enforcement, and special needs. General Counsel Papanikolaou acknowledged the Board's concerns about how the proposed changes impact its commitment to support all children in the Commonwealth. To that end, she reported that the Policy and Fiscal Committee proposed that a policy statement be adopted by the Board to address this tension. Board Member Child's confirmed the Policy and Fiscal Committee's request that the Board pass the motion today subject to a policy statement, which Board Member read into the record as follows:

The Board of Early Education and Care acknowledges that federal funding supporting the Commonwealth's child care financial assistance program is subject to several conditions. These conditions impose certain limitations related to the evaluation of children and families seeking early education and care subsidies in Massachusetts, including, but not limited to, financial thresholds, work, education or training requirements and verification of residency, citizenship and immigration status. In light of the Department's mission to support all children in their development as lifelong learners, and in acknowledgement of the limitations of the federal funding, the Board will continue to advocate for a system of early education and care assistance that is accessible for all children, irrespective of the federal funding limitations. The Board acknowledges that this effort is subject to the Commonwealth appropriating additional state-funding to support this endeavor.

General Counsel Papanikolaou concluded her presentation by describing the next steps in the process. If the Board votes to authorize the Department to seek public comment on the proposed regulations, a public comment period would take place this summer, with a subsequent Board vote to promulgate regulations and begin the rollout process (i.e., implementation and trainings) in September, 2011.

Board Member Childs reported that the Policy and Fiscal Committee felt that EEC's policy should not be driven by fiscal constraints. The Committee understands that the Department must rely on federal funding and comply with federal requirements, but that it still needs to find a way to meet the needs of all children. Board Member Wasser Gish added that although EEC needs to be in compliance with federal regulations, it must also remember the mission of the agency, opining that the dictates of federal restrictions cannot dictate EEC's mandates.

Board Member Childs conveyed the Committee's appreciation that their comments and feedback were incorporated into this presentation and thanked General Counsel Papanikolaou for her hard work. Board Member Childs reminded the Board that all that is being asked to be voted on today is for the regulations to go out for public comment and that the Committee was in favor, as public comment may further inform the proposed changes.

**On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care authorizes the Department of Early Education and Care solicit public comment, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A and 15D, on the restructured and revised child care subsidy regulations, consistent with the Department's proposed policy directions and subject to the approval of the final regulations by the Board. In authorizing the Department to solicit public comment, the Board acknowledges that federal funding supporting the Commonwealth's child care financial assistance program is subject to several conditions. These conditions impose certain limitations related to the evaluation of children and families seeking early education and care subsidies in Massachusetts, including, but not limited to, financial thresholds, work, education or training requirements and verification of residency, citizenship and immigration status. In light of the Department's mission to support all children in their development as lifelong learners, and in acknowledgement of the limitations of the federal funding, the Board will continue to advocate for a system of early education and care assistance that is accessible for all children, irrespective of the federal funding limitations. The Board acknowledges that this effort is subject to the Commonwealth appropriating additional state-funding to support this endeavor. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **II. Access and Quality in the Early Childhood System - Discussion**

Relevant documents included in Board materials:

- *Accessing Early Education and Care – PowerPoint presentation*
- *Appendix C: Data Indicator Definitions and Sources Used in Community Risk Ranking – Board binder*
- *Massachusetts Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Initiative; Indicator Selection and Community Scoring Methodology – Board binder*

Anita Moeller, EEC's Director of Interagency Partnerships, presented on access in the early childhood system. She referred Board Members to the PowerPoint presentation and related materials included in their Board binders. Ms. Moeller began by reviewing EEC's mission and Strategic Plan, focusing on the Department's goal to increase and promote access and affordability. She noted that of the one million children aged birth to thirteen in the Commonwealth, EEC has the current physical capacity to serve 27% of this population in licensed or license-exempt programs, and the financial capacity to support 7% of the same population through subsidies. Ms. Moeller then described the key questions regarding access, (i.e. who gets in and to what end, for how long and to what end), and explained that evidence-based answers to these questions are only beginning to emerge. Ms. Moeller discussed the federally funded quality dosages and thresholds project, known as Q-DOT, and its findings regarding current participation and cumulative participation in early care and education and the impact of quality. She then presented data specific to Massachusetts that addressed income, risk factors, and level of education. This data was accumulated from a 2006 statewide survey of primary caregivers of children under age seven. Ms. Moeller explained that EEC must now focus on examining relationships between licensed capacity, subsidy availability, and early education and care needs in terms of amount, location, and duration along with analyzing the relationship between availability of care and the number of threats to children's success in school and life. Future focus should be to further build upon the relationship between access and quality as QRIS develops and on allowing developing fields of research to inform design.

Ms. Moeller and Lorenzo Mateo, EEC Data Researcher, with assistance from Safi Shams of University of Massachusetts/Lowell, utilized WEAVE (Web-based Analysis and Visualization Environment) to depict EEC access data. Ms. Moeller presented the Board with several maps and graphs to demonstrate WEAVE's capabilities and how EEC can now analyze risk factors on children and families, such as poverty, child maltreatment, teen pregnancy, unemployment, absenteeism, capacity population and children with disabilities. Commissioner Killins added that WEAVE is an open source software product that is preparing to go full scale; EEC will utilize the software to allow communities to access public data via a web-based tool. Ms. Moeller reminded the Board that EEC should continue to embrace its core belief of parent involvement. She concluded by noting that access is integral to EEC's understanding of a system of care and its outcomes.

There were several questions from Board members regarding the outcomes learned from Q-DOT and whether EEC had sufficient data to determine dosage in light of quality. Ms. Moeller explained that the Q-DOT study was a review of existing research and that each study reviewed used similar, yet somewhat different tools. The next step in the research should provide more concrete information on outcomes. She stated that EEC does not have concrete responses to dosage and quality but is looking at the relationships between each right now.

Board Member Childs asked the Board to consider access policy implications and to recognize the incremental benefit that can happen with a small change. She stressed that it is important to look at the types of available programs because quality programs will differ between children, with some aligned to quality assessment and developmentally differentiating instruction. Ms. Moeller explained

that this is what the Q-DOT study is reviewing and that she would bring proposed policy to the subcommittee for review.

Board Member Craig O'Brien requested that the Board keep a wide lens. The Planning and Evaluation Committee has cautioned about labeling care when we are really talking about early childhood services and programs. Board Member Craig O'Brien recommended that the Board continue to look at decoupling access from work requirements and family requirements, in order to support the full potential of all children.

### **III. Market Rate Study: Final Report - Discussion**

#### Relevant document included in Board materials:

- *Massachusetts Child Care Market -Price Survey – PowerPoint presentation, April 12, 2011*

Kenley Branscome of Applied Policy Analytics was joined by Kate Giapponi and Emma Cohen from Public Consulting Group, Inc., to provide an update on the recently conducted Massachusetts Child Care Market Price Survey. Mr. Branscome began by explaining that the federal Office of Child Care requires all states to conduct a market price survey every two years as part of the Child Care and Development Fund requirements and that it encourages states to set child care reimbursement rates at or above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of prices in the private market. He noted that this is a benchmark and not a requirement; only six states met this benchmark in 2010.

The project goal was to conduct a credible study of market prices in each region of the state and across all program types to assist EEC in evaluating the adequacy of rates for the purpose of demonstrating equal access to child care for low-income families. A random sample of 4,800 licensed child care programs, stratified by EEC region and type of care, was asked to complete an on-line survey. Mr. Branscome stated that 90% of the participating center and out-of-school-time programs, and 78% of participating family child care providers responded to the survey. He then summarized the results of the survey and discussed median price increases observed across infant/toddler, pre-school, and after school care. Mr. Branscome concluded by noting that the team will continue to analyze the data and will conduct analyses of local price (zip code) variations and practitioner wages which he expected to be completed by June.

Board Member Scott Chandler asked if the providers who participated in the survey also take children without subsidies. Mr. Branscome replied that participation in the survey required that a program must have provided care to at least one private paying child within the last 3 months.

Board Member Huang asked about the range of prices in regions. Mr. Branscome used Metro Boston as an example and reported that the lower end of the market for infant care is \$68, and the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile is \$88. He added that there is less of a range in the Southeast region. Ms. Cohen added that this was a substantial age group as defined by family child care consisting of children under 2 years of age and over 2 years. Board Member Huang then asked what EEC will do with the data now that we have it. Commissioner Killins replied that the data is required every two years for the State Plan and it will be included in rate reform discussions.

Secretary Reville asked Mr. Branscome if he had an opinion as to how limited money should be invested to close gaps in the rates. Mr. Branscome responded that most research indicates that investment in infants and toddlers can make the most difference. He added that the price data will indicate where EEC

is unable to meet the federal benchmark and decisions can be based upon this information. Board Member Scott Chandler observed that how to invest limited funding is a very complicated decision since there are many different aspects that affect rates.

Board Member Wasser Gish commented that this level of data will be useful, particularly with the WEAVE capacity. She noted that the market rate information can be used to inform policy decision making. However, the data will not dictate choices but will provide us with some statistical bases when weighing imperatives.

Secretary Reville asked if there was a connection between access and price and if any assumptions were made. Mr. Branscome responded that EEC can look at data to diagnose problems in those two areas. For instance, there are places where prices are so high that EEC has no capacity to provide care in that community. However, there are also communities where EEC's rates are at the top of the market but programs do not support structural features of quality.

Board Member Craig O'Brien noted that EEC wants programs to be in the Professional Registry and in QRIS but we may still be missing programs because they are not engaged with EEC or do not provide access to low-income children. In many metro Boston communities, families are unable to find care within a few miles of where they live because EEC's rates are so much lower than the provider's private pay rates. Mr. Branscome commented that it would be interesting to use WEAVE to analyze clusters of children in the Commonwealth with an overlay of regional prices.

Board Member Scott Chandler pointed out that this response begs the question of what is the minimum rate to support structural quality. Even if EEC cannot afford rate reform, it is important that we determine the minimum rate that supports quality.

#### **IV. Inclusive Early Education and Care - Panel Discussion**

##### Relevant document included in Board materials:

- *Supporting Diverse Learners Across the Commonwealth's Mixed Delivery System – PowerPoint presentation, April 12, 2011*
- *Springfield Public Schools Pre-Kindergarten Program – PowerPoint presentation*
- *Education Law Center, Pre-K Policy Brief Series; Including Children with Disabilities in State Pre-K Programs, February 2010 – Board binder*
- *Fact Sheet: Vulnerable Young Children, May 2008 – Board binder*

Evelyn Nellum, EEC Special Education Policy Analyst, began the discussion by directing Board members to the packet of information contained in their Board binders. In the interest of time, she then turned the presentation over to EEC Staff to share stories from the field. The EEC panel included Erin Murphy Craft, Western Regional Director. the EEC regional Family/Community Quality Specialists Donna Marshall, Cheryl Marks and Flo Semb, who provided a brief overview of how EEC supports diverse learners and early childhood special education. They described the role and responsibilities of the Family/Community Quality Specialists and summarized the activities of the Regional Consultative Programs (RCPs) and the Communities of Practice meetings.

Ms. Nellum reported on upcoming EEC activities to support diverse learners including the summer institute offered by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, as well as interagency agreements with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education, and the Office of Head Start for data sharing. She also explained that there are three federally funded early childhood special education grants administered by EEC through an interagency agreement with ESE. EEC administers these grants to Lead Education Agencies and charter schools to support public preschools serving children 3, 4, and 5 years old with disabilities.

Ms. Nellum then introduced panelists Zulmira Allcock from Associates for Human Services - Taunton Early Intervention Program and Taunton Public Schools and Judy Goodwin, Special Education Early Childhood Coordinator from the Springfield Public Schools.

Ms. Allcock described what early childhood special education has been provided to families through the grants her agency received from EEC. This included quarterly meetings to talk about different special education issues, outreach through Memoranda of Understanding with surrounding towns, toddler groups, and Early Head Start screenings. Ms. Allcock noted that many children do not go directly into special education from early intervention due to fiscal restraints. If additional budget cuts should occur, there will be a long waitlist of children who will not be served. She acknowledged that there is a proposal for a bifurcated system whereby a child who has at least a 50% deficit in at least 2 areas of delay would be covered by IDEA and placed in an early intervention program. But, if a child has less than a 50% delay, state funds will have to be used. Commissioner Killins stated that early education and care will continue to serve children, but that it might be without the support of Early Intervention.

Ms. Goodwin discussed the Springfield Public Schools' Pre-Kindergarten program. She noted that best practices used in Springfield have branched into community programs, including implementation of curriculum and assessment tools, a pre-K pilot, as well as programmatic inclusive speech, language and occupational therapy. Additionally, ARRA funds have helped Springfield to fund transitional specialists to work as liaisons between community programs and public schools serving children with IEPs.

Board Member Craig O'Brien thanked all of the panelists, noting that the Board does not always see this area and it is great to hear what is going on in the field. Ms. Nellum added that this is hopefully the beginning of an on-going conversation.

**On motion duly made and seconded, it was:**

**VOTED that the meeting adjourn at 4:08 pm, subject to the call of the Chairperson.** The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sherri Killins, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of the Department and  
Secretary to the Board