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**Board of Early Education and Care**

June 11, 2013

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

**Department of Early Education and Care**

51 Sleeper Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA, 02210

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**MINUTES**

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

J.D. Chesloff, Chairperson

Abby Weiss, designee of Matthew Malone, Ph.D., Secretary of Education

Kathleen Betts, designee of John Polanowicz, Secretary of EOHHS

Chi-Cheng Huang, M.D., Vice Chairperson

Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.

Elizabeth Childs, M.D.

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.

Joan Wasser Gish, Esq.

Cheryl A. Stanley, Ed.D

Mary Walachy

Joni Block

Thomas L. Weber, Acting Commissioner of the Department and Secretary to the Board

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

**Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chairperson J.D. Chesloff began by welcoming everyone to the board meeting and stated that he wished to dedicate today's meeting to his five year old daughter, Tessa Rose Chesloff, who graduated from preschool this week.

**Comments from the Acting Commissioner**

Acting Commissioner Tom Weber provided a brief update on the final FY14 Senate Ways and Means budget, noting that it is \$18 million more than the final House Ways and Means budget and approximately \$15 million more than the Department's maintenance request. The added funds set forth in the Senate's proposal would allow EEC to serve approximately 1,000 additional children next year. He noted that this upward trend for the next fiscal year is encouraging and confirmed that he would continue to meet with Conference Committee members to help achieve the best possible result for the children and families that the Department serves.

Acting Commissioner Weber announced that Carol Nolan has been appointed to lead the EEC Policy Unit. He thanked the EEC Policy Unit members for their dedication and patience during this reorganization process.

Acting Commissioner Weber then reported that the FY2013 Single State Audit, conducted by KPMG, is underway and is expected to wrap up by mid-August. He lauded staff from the Administration and Finance unit for their extraordinary preparation for this audit.

Acting Commissioner Weber also reported on his visits to the field, sharing some of the recurrent topics, including child care access, rates, QRIS goals, communication and supports. These dialogues and discussions have been informative and a great indicator of the field's commitment to the work.

Acting Commissioner Weber concluded by wishing his daughter, Leah, a happy 5<sup>th</sup> birthday and acknowledged that she will also be graduating from Pre-K in a few weeks. He asked to amend the record to show that the meeting is being dedicated to both Tessa Chesloff and Leah Weber.

#### **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 Chesloff or Acting Commissioner Weber.*

- **Cyndi Couto, Program Director, PACE Childcare Works**, expressed gratitude to ChildCare Aware of America (CCAA), which has provided extensive professional development and training opportunities to Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies over the past six months. Additionally, CCR&R staff have received one-on-one technical assistance which has led to improved services for families in Massachusetts. In closing, she thanked EEC for providing CCR&Rs with this opportunity.
- **Mav Pardee, Children's Investment Fund**, provided an update on the Early Education and Out-of-School Time Facilities Financing Bond Bill. She outlined several of the accomplishments that occurred since EEC's endorsement in January but acknowledged that there is still a long way to go. Ms. Pardee thanked the Board for providing support early on in this effort.
- **Amy O'Leary, Director, Early Education for All Campaign, Strategies for Children**, thanked Acting Commissioner Weber for attending the 8th Annual Community Dialogue at Wheelock College. She emphasized the importance of building a system that includes research-based, high program standards for the mixed delivery system coupled with meaningful supports for programs and educators to meet and maintain those standards. Ms. O'Leary then expressed her concern about language contained within a recent email that left a perception that QRIS was taking a step backwards.

Acting Commissioner Weber remarked that the Community Dialogue at Wheelock College was a terrific event and that he valued the opportunity to engage in the dialogue. He thanked Ms. O'Leary and Strategies for Children for their work to maintain a sharp focus on quality, which has been essential to helping Massachusetts achieve success in early childhood. Acting Commissioner Weber then replied that the language used was purposeful; the Department felt that it was critical to provide this communication at this time as it examines effective QRIS policies.

**End of Public Comment period.**

**Routine Business:**

- **Approval of May 14, 2013 Board Minutes – Vote – motion to approve:**

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

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the May 14, 2013 Board Minutes.** The motion passed unanimously.

- **Approval of Fiscal Year 2014 Board Meeting Schedule – Discussion and Vote**

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

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care, in accordance with M.G.L. c. 15D, § 3(b), shall meet in accordance with the schedule set forth in the Motion, and that all meetings will begin at 1:00 p.m. and will be held at the Department of Early Education and Care, which is located at 51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA, unless otherwise announced and duly posted.** The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Committee and Advisory Reports:**

**Fiscal Committee**

Board Member Beth Childs reported that the Fiscal Committee met on June 3rd, during which the Committee members were updated on the family child care union negotiations, the single state audit by KPMG, and the FY13 budget. Board Member Childs noted that the total projected surplus for all three caseloads has increased to approximately \$11.5 million. She shared that EEC has experienced challenges related to enrollment, including access restrictions to programs QRIS Level 2 and above and the accuracy of waitlist data. She acknowledged that EEC is working hard to address these challenges. Board Member Childs reported that the waitlist currently exceeds 57,000 children. She concluded her update by discussing the status of the FY14 budget.

**Policy and Research Committee**

Board Member Wasser Gish reported that the Policy and Research Committee also met on June 3rd. She reported that the Head Start State Advisory Council (SAC) funding has ended and thanked the SAC members for their participation. The Committee discussed possible revisions to the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELCG) performance measures, in an effort to look at progress in all sectors. Board Member Wasser Gish next provided an update on the Commissioner Search process. Semi-finalists have been identified and a Board vote to recommend a candidate is expected in July. Lastly, she reminded the Board that the understanding and implementation of QRIS is an on-going process. The Board had previously voted on the removal of some standards in February 2013 to create efficiencies and to simplify the process for providers. However, the Board will be asked today to reinstate those standards to allow EEC to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of the QRIS, in a manner that ensures consistency and alignment. The Policy and Research Committee requested a timeline for the proposed QRIS comprehensive review for its September meeting.

**Planning and Evaluation Committee**

Board Member Eleonora Villegas-Reimers reported that the Planning and Evaluation Committee has met twice, on May 23rd and June 11th. During these meetings, the Committee discussed the strategic

planning process in preparation for the Board Retreat. In addition, Committee members received a presentation on the 2014-2015 State CCDF Plan and had the opportunity to provide feedback. She stated that the Committee had been asked to provide feedback on an early literacy development presentation that utilized an on-line model. The Committee questioned whether an additional model was needed, as five early literacy models are already implemented. Board Member Villegas-Reimers added that the Committee reviewed and discussed the CCDF Market Rate study, which was presented to the Board in May, in the context of the potential implications for legislation, funding, and how it may impact access. Other topics discussed by the Committee included updates on the English Language Learners (ELL) early learning standards alignment project through the World-class Instructional Assessment and Design (WIDA) consortium and a review of the QRIS Standards.

### **Advisory Council**

Board Member Joni Block reported that the full Advisory Council met a few weeks ago to garner feedback for the Commissioner's Search. She stated that the Advisory Council members appreciated the opportunity to assist in the search process and looked forward to continued collaboration. Board Member Block highlighted some of the common themes/key qualities that the Council recommended for the next commissioner. The Advisory Council will have an opportunity later this month to engage with the candidates for the Commissioner's position.

- **Disclosures:**

Board Member Villegas-Reimers submitted a written disclosure that she works for Wheelock College, a recipient of EEC funding. Board Member Sharon Scott-Chandler submitted a written disclosure that she is employed by ABCD, a recipient of EEC funding. Board Member Block submitted a written disclosure that her position, as the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) Coordinator with Brockton Public Schools, is funded by EEC.

### **New Business:**

No new business was raised.

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

1. **Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan: Approval and Submission – Vote**

*Relevant resources included in Board Materials:*

- *Child Care Development Fund - Massachusetts State Plan, Federal Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015, PowerPoint, dated June 11, 2013*
- *DRAFT Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan*
- *Summary of Public Comments*

EEC Assistant General Counsel Thomas Weierman began by stating that he would be remiss, if he did not share that his son, Jack, was graduating pre-school on Friday and asked to add Jack to the list of pre-school graduates. He began the discussion by acknowledging that the development of the CCDF Plan is an agency effort, and thanked Bill Concannon and his staff, Dave McGrath and his team, and Carol Nolan and her team, who all worked to pull this information together on behalf of the Department.

Mr. Weierman stated that the CCDF regulations require the submission of a State Plan every two years as a condition for receiving this federal block grant. The Commonwealth anticipates that over \$450 million in federal and state funds will be available to EEC to support child care services in FY2014.

Although the CCDF regulations promote flexibility in the administration of the block grant, Mr. Weierman highlighted a few of the mandates and spending caps imposed by the grant, such as quality expenditure requirements and spending limits on administrative expenses. He also emphasized a few of the restrictions CCDF imposes on fund use for direct child care access, including age restrictions, income limitations, and work, education and training requirements. He noted that Massachusetts tries to maximize the flexibility of the grant to provide a broad range of options for families.

Following a brief outline of the State Plan structure, Mr. Weierman explained the efforts to date that EEC has taken to solicit public comment, including three public hearings held at EEC's Regional Offices in Lawrence, Worcester and Quincy conducted during the week of May 20th. EEC also accepted comments via e-mail and regular mail. The initial draft of the CCDF Plan was also presented to the Planning and Evaluation Committee for comment and feedback on May 23rd. Mr. Weierman then highlighted some of the common themes received from public comment, including requests to:

- increase access to child care subsidies for general low income, working families;
- align and integrate with after-school and out-of-school time programs;
- increase rates;
- improve support and communication related to QRIS standards, initiatives and funding opportunities; and
- expand and enhance professional development opportunities.

Mr. Weierman reminded the Board that the 2014-2015 State Plan is a living document that allows for amendments to be submitted to the federal government within 60 days of any substantive policy changes that impact the delivery of CCDF related services or expenditures. He outlined the submission timeline, noting that the last two action items require a Board vote to approve submission and the actual submission of the CCDF Plan to the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) by July 1, 2013.

Board Member Childs asked if there were any changes that resulted from public comment. Mr. Weierman responded that no substantive changes came to light; however, EEC expects to make some minor, technical changes as the Plan is reviewed and prepared for final submission. Board Member Scott-Chandler asked if the revised child care subsidy regulations required substantial changes to the CCDF Plan responses. Mr. Weierman replied that the Plan is written broadly, so that the Department can make changes to the regulations or policies without seeking ACF approval. Board Member Wasser Gish asked whether the new CCDF Plan incorporates the Department's increased emphasis to improve program quality. Mr. Weierman directed the Board to the program quality expenditures responses and reiterated that the responses are intentionally broad to allow the Department flexibility to address a variety of quality initiatives through CCDF funds, without seeking approval from ACF. He reminded the Board that CCDF requires at least 4% of the funds to be spent on quality and confirmed that EEC spends between 10-12% of the CCDF block grant on program quality initiatives. Mr. Weierman also noted that the existing CCDF regulations are being revised and quality is a large part of that discussion. EEC General Counsel Carmel Sullivan added that ACF now requires states to submit annual Quality Performance Reports (QPR). Mr. Weierman elaborated that the QPR submitted in December 2012, included several new data elements related to licensing, early learning guidelines, QRIS, workforce development, as well as the establishment of biennial goals.

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

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care hereby approves the Department's process to finalize the Commonwealth's Child Care Development Fund Plan for federal fiscal years 2014-2015,**

**and authorizes the Department to submit the Plan to the Administration for Children and Families on or before July 1, 2013 on its behalf.** The motion passed unanimously.

Acting Commissioner Weber commented that Mr. Weierman did a great job acknowledging his colleagues' contributions and commended Mr. Weierman for his extraordinary work on this very substantive plan.

## **2. Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): Reinstating Standards – Vote**

*Relevant resource included in Board Materials:*

- *“Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS): Removal of Standards” PowerPoint dated June 6, 2013*

EEC Director of Policy Carol Nolan began by expressing the appreciation of EEC staff for the Board's receptiveness to concerns surrounding QRIS. She reported that Acting Commissioner Weber has provided the EEC Policy Unit with an opportunity to pause and reflect on future developments for QRIS and to develop a detailed plan on how to best move QRIS forward statewide. Ms. Nolan explained that her presentation proposes a plan and timeline that will be used to strengthen QRIS. The plan will seek input from the field to ensure that programs across the mixed delivery system are all successful in their implementation of QRIS.

EEC Program Quality Specialist Gwen Alexander presented an overview of the evolution of the Massachusetts QRIS that included its initial development, approval in December, 2010 by the Board, and a pilot study. These events were followed by a research and standards alignment study and a literature review. Ms. Alexander reported that EEC is continually engaging and gathering feedback from stakeholders, the Board and others in the evaluation and revision of the QRIS Standards. She communicated several QRIS successes and provided an update of the activities conducted between October 2012 and May 2013 by EEC Program Quality Specialists and EEC Educator Provider Support Specialists. Ms. Alexander noted that as of May 3, 2013, 5,149 programs and family child care educators have created a total of 6,704 entries, of which 5,571 have been granted a QRIS rating.

She then briefly reviewed the Board's February 12, 2013 vote to remove some of the QRIS Standards because some standards were already measured by another evidence-based tool used in QRIS; some standards were not linked to child outcomes; and/or some standards were not measurable as written.

Ms. Alexander requested that the Board reinstate the QRIS standards that were removed. She explained that the removal of the QRIS Standards was not implemented consistently across related documentation and resources, including the QRIS Program Manager. In addition, the standards define what is expected of programs/educators and without particular standards, expectations are unclear. Lastly, while some QRIS Standards may not presently be linked to child outcomes or have a sound method for measuring their implementation, these standards may still have value as part of the overall system. Ms. Alexander recommended a process to support revisions to the QRIS standards, based upon data and results obtained from the QRIS Validation Study, the QRIS Reliable Rater visits and feedback from the field, stakeholders, EEC Board and the community. She provided a proposed timeline for moving QRIS forward through the summer months.

Board Member Scott-Chandler noted that QRIS was discussed during last year's Board Retreat and the theme of the discussion was similar to today's recommendations. She remarked that this is a good time to revisit QRIS and analyze where the system currently stands. She acknowledged that it is not a step

back, but a step forward in efforts to effectively evaluate QRIS as a whole. Board Member Block commented that she is glad that EEC is recognizing, acknowledging, and building on all of the work shared by stakeholders and those that have contributed to the previous QRIS work.

Abby Weiss asked for clarification regarding the intent of rescinding the prior Board vote, and whether the request was a means to broadly look at the standards and provide comprehensive future recommendations. Ms. Nolan responded that EEC would now have the benefit of the completed QRIS validation study, input from the field and the Board, along with research regarding other states' practices to make a well-informed decision.

Board Member Childs commented that this discussion was incredibly encouraging and shared that this is one of the most exciting days with respect to QRIS -- to hear that EEC has decided to take a step back and reflect on the system as a whole -- is a sign that real implementation has started. Board Member Wasser Gish added that this is a tremendous opportunity to move this key piece of work forward in a way that will allow the Department to provide clarity and consistency as to its expectations. She added that there was strong consensus by the Policy and Research Committee.

Vice Chairperson Chi-Cheng Huang requested clarification as to whether changing a few process measures would impact high quality programs for children and families. He was interested to know whether changes in the specific standards would increase the adoption rate of QRIS. Ms. Nolan replied that quality is preferred over quantity. Information that indicates that a smaller number of programs have been confirmed and verified properly is preferred to having an increased number programs participate that have not accurately self-assessed their own quality. EEC wants to be confident that the information and data provided on program quality is accurate and meaningful to families.

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

**VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care, in accordance with its authority and purpose established in M.G.L. c. 15D, §3, hereby rescinds its February 12, 2013, vote to exclude particular quality standards. These standards, as outlined in the Board presentation of June 11, 2013 will again be included within the MA Quality Rating and Improvement System.** The motion passed unanimously.

Acting Commissioner Weber acknowledged the pioneering work of the Program Quality Specialists and noted that all were in attendance.

### **3. Child Care Resource and Referral Service Delivery Update – Discussion**

*Relevant resource included in Board Materials:*

- *“The Massachusetts Transition Project Overview of Child Care Resource and Referral Accomplishments and Opportunities” Presentation, dated June 11, 2013.*

EEC Director of Contracts and Procurement Sandra Sherriff provided an overview of the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Services procurement that began in January 2013. She explained that the primary goals were to create a CCC&R model to better support and provide enhanced family and provider engagement; improve the efficiency of the voucher management system; and ensure statewide access to support EEC's continued progress to build a thriving system of early education and care. EEC is working with ChildCare Aware of America (formerly known as NACCRA) to provide technical assistance to the CCR&R agencies. Ms. Sherriff noted that the technical assistance provided by ChildCare Aware of America included IT system trainings and an overview of subsidy management procedures. She

introduced the panel members: Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., Executive Director of ChildCare Aware of America; Anne Corbin, Child Care Choices of Boston; and Kim Dion, Child Care Resources (Central MA).

Dr. Fraga provided an overview of the activities that ChildCare Aware and the CCR&Rs have completed. One of the primary objectives was to engage program directors from each of the seven CCR&Rs to create a statewide system with one statewide CCR&R voice that provides consistent service delivery for families. She summarized the key outcomes of the work, including a statewide database consistently used across all CCR&Rs. ChildCare Aware is recommending a 12-month project that will support CCR&Rs in the implementation of additional data system development and quality services to families and providers.

Ms. Corbin summarized the accomplishments of the Massachusetts CCR&Rs between June 2012 and May 2013 and reported on referrals, active providers enrolled in the database, and the voucher management statistics. She reported that CCR&Rs' caseloads range from 550 to 1205 families per parent service staff person and 4,812 providers are currently serving families with vouchers. Ms. Corbin discussed the transition to the new CCR&R service delivery model and the value of statewide sessions that addressed the specific needs of CCR&R staff. Content specific information was delivered and discussed in these sessions in order to develop one implementation approach.

Ms. Dion explained the changing landscape for CCR&Rs. She reminded the Board that in 2009 there were fourteen CCR&Rs, each of whom managed its own specific database for its particular service area. In July 2010, there was a consolidation to eleven CCR&Rs but data systems were maintained independently. As part of the FY2013 transition, the CCR&Rs with ChildCare Aware established a single statewide database. Ms. Dion reported that, in addition to the new consolidated database, the CCR&Rs and ChildCare Aware have improved data collection, enhanced data quality, improved efficiency across agencies and regions to access information, and improved consistent protocols and procedures, consumer service and education. Ms. Dion also shared how additional community service referrals and community engagement activities can be captured within the new system and provided a preview of forthcoming data management enhancements. In closing, Ms. Dion acknowledged the CCR&Rs' benefits from their collaborative work with ChildCare Aware and the CCR&R staff investment in the new system.

Chairperson Chesloff thanked the panel and asked each to share their perceptions on the differences between five years ago and now, while also taking into consideration funding cuts and changes in the CCR&R organizational structure. Ms. Corbin responded that the CCR&Rs continue to be underfunded and understaffed but are committed to one common goal. She attributes successes to the supports received from the umbrella agencies and the hard work of staff.

Vice Chairperson Huang praised the group for one statewide data system and posed two questions about database ownership rights and content-sharing capability with other agencies to further reduce redundancies. Acting Commissioner Weber responded that interagency data sharing is part of a larger discussion that is occurring with federal resources and the Executive Office of Education (EOE) to support data quality, integration, and data sharing within and among the education departments as part of a P – 20 database. Centralizing and streamlining information among these departments is the present focus. However additional discussions are occurring with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) for future expansion.

Board Member Block asked whether Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees have access to the database system. Ms. Sherriff responded that due to the number of CFCE grantees

and cost, database licenses were not purchased. Board Member Block indicated that access to the database may allow CFCE grantees to conduct outreach to families that are still on the waitlist for other opportunities. She then asked what the new CCR&R services looked like for families. Ms. Corbin replied that in her service area there is improved customer service, additional out-postings, and staffing is better aligned to match communities' needs.

Board Member Childs asked the panel to elaborate on caseload assignments, specifically what is the optimal number that should be assigned per staff person. Ms. Dion stated that there is always a need to balance efficient service versus quality. For the majority of CCR&Rs, the range is 500-600 families per staff person. Ms. Dion and Ms. Corbin concurred that 350-400 would be a more manageable number per staff member. Ms. Corbin added that this number may vary based upon areas where there is high mobility resulting in frequent changes in address and/or changes in care. She noted that in those situations, interactions with families are more extensive.

Kathleen Betts commented that EOHHS is working very hard to develop a "one-stop shop" concept for family support services, and inquired whether the CCR&Rs have the capacity to accept electronic referrals to reduce redundancies. She explained that EOHHS agencies have received feedback from families regarding the burden of having to continually share the same information with multiple state agencies. EOHHS is embarking on an integrated eligibility system and suggested that there was overlap and potential alignment. In addition, Ms. Betts noted that EOHSS has family resources centers and that these may be an out-posting opportunities to consider.

Chairperson Chesloff thanked the panel again for their presentation, and Ms. Sherriff thanked ChildCare Aware of America, noting that without their support this work would not have been possible.

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

On behalf of Secretary Malone, Ms. Weiss offered greetings and apologies. She shared that Secretary Malone wished to express his appreciation for the Board's hard work this past year, especially during this time of transition. In addition, Ms. Weiss reported that Secretary Malone continues to work on EEC's behalf during the budget conference process and that he supports the direction that the Department is taking with respect to QRIS, as it mirrors the feedback that he has received. Lastly, Ms. Weiss indicated that Secretary Malone is looking forward to participating in an event in Holyoke to discuss family and community engagement with EEC Western Regional Director, Erin Craft.

#### **4. Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge Grant Update – Discussion**

##### Relevant resource included in Board Materials:

- *Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELCG) Presentation, dated June 11, 2013*

EEC Program Manager for State Wide and Community Supports Chau Ly, accompanied by Ms. Nolan, provided an overview of the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge Grant, summarizing the 12 RTTT-ELCG Projects and fifty-one activities. EEC has prioritized funding for Program Quality (\$14,968,578); Educator Quality (\$10,449,375); Screening & Assessments (\$5,743,068); Family and Community Engagement (\$7,870,004); and Infrastructure (\$10,968,974) and Ms. Ly offered examples of activities occurring in each of these priority areas. She also reminded the Board that there are performance measures associated with each of the activities. These performance measures seek to increase the number and percentage of programs participating in QRIS and reaching the top tiers of QRIS along with increasing the number and percentage of high needs children enrolled in top-tier programs. Workforce

development performance measures include the number of early childhood educators receiving credentials from post-secondary institutions and the number and percentage of early childhood educators progressing to higher levels of credentialing that align with workforce knowledge and the Competency Framework.

Board members requested clarification on some of the performance measures, particularly the number and percentage of programs participating in QRIS including license-exempt programs. Vice Chairperson Huang asked if the targets are federal reporting targets or EEC targets. Ms. Ly responded that the reporting requirements were established by the federal government; however, the projections through 2015 were submitted by EEC as part of its application proposal. Acting Commissioner Weber added that EEC is working in conjunction with the federal Department of Education. Regular meetings and continuing discussions address the need to reset projections based upon the Department's experience and available data, so that there are achievable expectations. Ms. Ly added that other states awarded RTTT-ELCG funding have experienced similar challenges. Many of the benchmarks were set ambitiously, without clear and solid baseline information.

Board Member Block encouraged the Department to continue to include the license-exempt programs in the RTTT- ELCG reporting, as a significant number of children and families are served by these programs. Ms. Nolan responded that it is a challenge to measure participation when there is no clear baseline data on the number of license-exempt programs within this category, and added that she is open to further discussions to address this challenge. Board Member Block responded that even if we do not have a way to report this information, there is still value in the information. Board Member Scott-Chandler asked about the 75 license-exempt programs and what do they represent. Ms. Nolan replied that she does not presently have clear information on how the baseline numbers were calculated. Acting Commission Weber added that a focused discussion and presentation will be conducted to present this information to the Board prior to recommending any changes to our federal partners.

Ms. Ly continued with the remaining performance measures. Additional data is currently available because of enhanced capacity developed by IT. EEC continues to assess its RTTT-ELCG implementation and is beginning to examine its ability to sustain activities beyond 2015. Ms. Ly informed the Board that there will be additional opportunities to discuss this work at the 2013 State Leadership Retreat in September. Ms. Nolan commented that RTTT-ELCG is part of the Policy Unit's activities and that the Department is moving forward to determine sustainability and infrastructure support for this work.

Board Member Mary Wallachy thanked Ms. Ly and Ms. Nolan and commented that this is really a tremendous amount of work, almost too much work. Board Member Block commented that each time the RTTT-ELCG information is presented she learns something new. She encouraged the department to consider framing the discussion to develop "strategies for sustainability" as opposed to ending activities. Ms. Nolan replied that information gathered from the forthcoming Board retreat and EEC strategic plan will also inform the sustainability of RTTT-ELCG projects.

Board Member Scott-Chandler offered two suggestions for consideration, including gathering field perceptions about the value the RTTT-ELCG activities to inform the Department's decisions. She also suggested revisiting infrastructure versus direct service activities. Board Member Scott-Chandler questioned how to realign changes in QRIS to RTTT- ELCG so that amendments can be directed to support identified needs for QRIS support and implementation. Ms. Ly replied that the Department of Education has confidence in Massachusetts' work and QRIS is a part of the discussion. Ms. Nolan further

elaborated that Massachusetts has been mentioned in several venues as being ahead of the curve, including QRIS.

Vice Chairperson Huang inquired about the number of programs EEC would need in approximately five to ten years, given the total number of children in the state and current birth rate projections. Ms. Nolan responded that presently 50% of all EEC licensed programs are participating in QRIS, and ideally EEC would like to see at least a 75% participation rate. She added that the priority is quality programs. Acting Commissioner Weber commented that defining the number of needed programs is difficult because there is no specific mandate. He noted that there are approximately 450,000 children that could be served by the licensed system and present capacity can serve about half of those children. EEC provides subsidy assistance to approximately 55,000 of those children and there is a substantial waitlist. He added that EEC presently has subsidy demands that are unmet; whether adding care for another 200,000 children would get Massachusetts to universal access remains unclear.

Acting Commissioner Weber explained that the Department is one and one half years into this four year grant and now has data available to make some informed decisions. There are really two types of efforts funded through RTTT- ELCG, namely, on-going initiatives that were being implemented but did not have dedicated resources, such as QRIS, and others that may be considered as “pilots.” The current task is to look at projects in both categories to determine what is working. This exercise is timely as EEC presently has federal approval to identify strong programs and position them towards success and sustainability. Furthermore, Acting Commissioner Weber noted that there will also be a change in administration while RTTT-ELCG is ongoing, so it will be important to start the work needed to make determinations and lay the foundation. EEC is working with Administration and Finance and the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means in efforts to get clear direction that can be implemented over the course of the next year.

Board Member Childs commented that EEC has a tendency to dilute the power of its work and used the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) as such an example. The KEA data available may not have enough statistical significance to develop a common metric; however, it can change perceptions about how formative assessments are used across the mixed delivery system and can further support children’s educational outcomes in later grades. She remarked that as we look for the big RTTT–ELCG successes, there may be value in uncovering and supporting the unintended positive outcomes that also merit sustainability.

Chairperson Chesloff noted that this was the last Board meeting for FY2013. He thanked the Department and noted that the professionalism of staff is nothing, short of remarkable. He also thanked the Board, stating that each member has stepped in to provide great leadership during this time and that it is his honor to serve with these individuals.

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

**VOTED that the meeting adjourn at 3:50 p.m., subject to the call of the Chairperson.** The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas L. Weber  
Acting Commissioner of the Department and  
Secretary to the Board