



Board of Early Education and Care

October 8, 2013
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Department of Early Education and Care

51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor
Boston, MA, 02210

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 Weber, Commissioner of the Department and Secretary to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m.

Welcome and Comments from the Chair:

Chairperson J.D. Chesloff began by recognizing Governor Patrick's recent announcement that the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has released child care vouchers for over 3,200 children to access high-quality early education. The new vouchers will assist high-need families whose children are currently on the waitlist.

Comments from the Secretary:

Abby Weiss, designee of Secretary Malone, added that Secretary Malone is very pleased about the voucher release. She expressed that the Executive Office of Education is concerned that recent MCAS scores reflect a four point decline in third grade English Language Arts, accompanied by increasing achievement gaps between minority and white students. To address these issues, Secretary Malone has been appointed the co-chairman of an Early Literacy Expert Panel that will begin meeting in late October.

Comments from the Commissioner:

Commissioner Tom Weber provided the Board with updates on the following activities:

- **EEC Waitlist Management:** Commissioner Weber thanked the governor's office for its dedication to early education programs in Massachusetts. He observed that the release of the new vouchers is the first opening of child care access in three years. Commissioner Weber reiterated his on-going concern with the overall growth of the waitlist and stated that the Department will continue to track the waitlist numbers. To ensure a smooth and timely release of vouchers, EEC has developed performance measures and established weekly phone conferences with the child care resource and referral agencies.
- **Federal Shutdown:** Commissioner Weber commented on the congressional budget impasse and the resulting federal shutdown. Initially, there was a minimal impact on EEC programs, but the shutdown could affect EEC if it should continue for a significant period of time. EEC programs, including those funded with Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTTT-ELCG) funding and the Head Start State Collaboration Office, were not affected, but one Head Start program was advanced funds to maintain operations.
- **Revised Fingerprinting and Background Check Policies and Procedures:** The new background record check legislation requires fingerprinting and sex offender checks for those in the early education and care field. The law imposes enormous oversight responsibility on EEC because the Department will now be responsible for ensuring that over 88,000 people per year are reviewed and approved. To manage this important work, EEC has requested funding to hire ten additional Background Record Check staff and one IT developer.
- **New Hiring:** Commissioner Weber reported that EEC will hire three more licensors. There is a need for additional licensors because EEC's licensing caseloads exceed the national averages. EEC is also hiring a RTTT-ELCG Project Director and a Caseload Budget Manager.
- **October and November Highlights:** Commissioner Weber provided a preview of topics that will be presented to the Board over the next couple of months: emergency Background Record Check regulations; the prospective FY2015 Budget; Early English Language Development Standards; expenditure of an additional \$500K in UPK Grant funds; demonstration of the Child Care Financial Assistance System; voucher management; and an update on the status of differential licensing.
- **Family Child Care Union Negotiations:** Commissioner Weber reported that some progress has been made in the collective bargaining negotiations. EEC will continue to negotiate in good faith with the family child care union.

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 Commissioner Weber.

Melanie L'Etoile, Family Child Care Provider located in Gardner, MA and union representative, encouraged continued investment in high quality early education because child care educators have the dual responsibility for educating children and their parents.

Celina Reyes, Family Child Care Provider located in Lawrence, MA and union representative, requested better benefits and pay for family child care providers. She detailed the many business expenses family child care providers incur.

Ysabel Mata, Family Child Care Provider located in Lawrence, MA and union representative, expressed her concern around the lack of available vouchers. She highlighted some of the financial difficulties she has encountered with administering her family child care program without additional subsidized children.

Pam Kuechler, Executive Director for Massachusetts Head Start Association (MHSA), thanked Commissioner Weber and Governor Patrick for advancing funds to keep the Head Start program of Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire and North Quabbin Regions open during the federal shutdown.

Bill Eddy, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of Early Education and Care (MADCA), thanked Commissioner Weber for EEC's work to reduce the waitlist numbers, although he wished that the reduction had occurred through additional contracted slots. He expressed concern about the costs that will be incurred by providers to comply with the fingerprint legislation requirements and requested that EEC seek additional funds to pay for these expenses.

End of Public Comment period.

Routine Business:

- **Approval of September 10, 2013 Board Minutes – Vote**

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approve the minutes of the September 10, 2013 Board Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Committee and Advisory Reports:

- Board Committee Reports:

Fiscal Committee:

Board Member Elizabeth Childs reported that the Fiscal Committee met on October 2, 2013 to review the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and its impact on the Department, the FY2014 budget and caseload, and the FY2015 spending plan. She highlighted some additional topics discussed by the Committee, including the ongoing negotiations with SEIU, the audits conducted by KPMG and the State Auditor's Office, and the Market Rate Study. Board Member Childs recognized Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance William Concannon and his fiscal team for simplifying EEC's budget reporting.

Policy and Research Committee:

Board Member Joan Wasser Gish reported that the Policy and Research Committee also met on October 2nd to review the proposed License Plate Funding Grant Eligibility, the After School and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) Working Group, and the upcoming RTTT-ELCG Leadership Summit. She added that the Committee also discussed QRIS related topics, the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) Conference held on October 7, 2013, and State Advisory Council funding.

Planning and Evaluation Committee:

Board Member Eleonora Villegas-Reimers reported that the Planning and Evaluation Committee met on October 3, 2013. She stated that the Committee reviewed the standards developed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) for the Early English Language Development Standards. The Committee will conduct a teleconference with WIDA representatives in November with the expectation that WIDA will present the Standards at the November Board meeting. Board Member Villegas-Reimers also reported that the Committee continues to revisit the Strategic Plan to ensure alignment between EEC and the Executive Office of Education.

Advisory Council:

Board Member Joni Block reported that the Advisory Council met on September 20, 2013. She stated that the Council discussed initiatives surrounding RTTT-ELCG and the need to share the WIDA standards across the three education departments. The Council also discussed QRIS and how it interrelates with other forms of accreditation. Board Member Block stated that the Council received introductions to the ASOST Working Group and the new background record check requirements.

- **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 and may have a financial interest in the agenda items related to Child Care Quality Fund Use and the FY2015 Budget. Board Member Joni 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:

I. Pre-K STE Standards – Discussion and Vote

Relevant resources included in Board Materials:

- *Examples of Pre-K Standards for Earth and Space Sciences, Life Science and Physical Science*
- *Pre-K Science, Technology, and Engineering Standards, PowerPoint presentation created by Aspire Institute and Wheelock College*

EEC Director of Policy Carol Nolan, accompanied by Karen Worth, Chair of Elementary Education at Wheelock College, presented the Board with an overview of the proposed Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) Standards. Ms. Worth discussed how the Pre-K STE standards build on the existing standards within the K-12 framework and address three domains: (1) best practices in science and technology, (2) cross-cutting concepts, and (3) disciplinary core ideas. She explained how the structure of a Pre-K STE Standard will identify STE learning outcomes, highlight the content in the context of practice and cross-cutting ideas, and will identify connections with the math and English Language, arts and literacy frameworks. The standards adopt the same format as the K-12 framework. Ms. Worth noted that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education had collaborated on this project and that the K-12 STE standards are expected to be implemented early next year. Ms. Nolan added that EEC will develop information sessions and webinars along with a Train the Trainer

component to disseminate the Pre-K STE Standards to the early education and care field. Several Board members expressed their enthusiasm and support for the proposed standards, and offered recommendations on how the standards should be integrated into the mixed delivery system. Board Member Villegas-Reimers disclosed that although she works for Wheelock College, she did not participate in the development of the Pre-K STE standards.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care hereby approves the draft *Pre-Kindergarten Science, Technology, and Engineering Standards* as presented in the October 8, 2013 Board presentation and authorizes EEC to solicit public comment on the draft standards. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Worth expressed her thanks to EEC staff for their assistance on this project, in particular thanking Chris Pond, EEC Educator/Provider Support Specialist.

II. Child Care Quality Fund Use ("Invest in Children" License Plate Grants) – Discussion and Vote
Relevant resource included in Board Materials:

- *"Invest in Children" Child Care Quality Fund, FY 14, PowerPoint presentation*

Ms. Nolan, along with EEC Educator/Provider Support Specialist Gail Perry and EEC Intern Emma Swift, presented the proposed "Invest in Children" Child Care Quality Fund Use grant. Ms. Nolan explained the history of the Fund and summarized some of the barriers in funding prior initiatives, particularly the requirement that the funding must be awarded to not-for-profit child care organizations. Ms. Nolan and Ms. Perry discussed how the Child Care Quality funds may be used and highlighted the types of proposals the Fund has previously supported. The Fund currently has a balance of approximately \$1,000,000.

Ms. Nolan discussed the proposed grant process for FY2014, with funding of \$50,000 to support program quality in not-for-profit programs. EEC intends to issue the grants in two rounds of funding in January 2014 and Spring 2014. She also noted that successful proposals must demonstrate how the grant will support program quality as reflected in the Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Some Board members questioned whether the limitations on not-for-profit organizations can and should be changed. Commissioner Weber responded that the Department will consider presenting a case to the legislature for changing the restrictive language. Board members also raised concerns that the \$50,000 per grantee will limit funding to 20 organizations and asked that other entities, such as museums, also be considered for funding. Board Member Childs requested that the motion be amended to reflect that the funding was for "early education" and care organizations.

On a motion duly amended and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care authorizes the Commissioner of the Department of Early Education and Care to expend up to \$1,000,000 from the Child Care Quality Fund for grants to not-for-profit early education and care organizations to support and enhance program quality as presented in the October 8, 2013 Board presentation. The motion, as amended, passed unanimously.

III. FY2015 State Budget – Discussion

Relevant resource included in Board Materials:

- *FY15 Maintenance Plan, PowerPoint presentation dated October 8, 2013*

EEC Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance William Concannon presented the Board with EEC's FY2015 Maintenance Plan. He reviewed the timeline to submit the request the Executive Office of Administration and Finance, the purposes of the maintenance plan and then addressed the budget language and allocations for each line item appropriated to the Department. Deputy Commissioner Concannon noted that EEC will seek an increase in the admin account to cover new positions, increases in rent, and costs associated with new collective bargaining agreements. He reminded Board members that today's discussion is focused solely on the "maintenance" budget, with the FY2015 "aspirational" budget to be discussed in November. Board members briefly discussed the proposed FY2015 maintenance budget, with some members voicing concerns about the unknown costs associated with union negotiations.

IV. FY2014-2015 CCDF Budget Administration - Discussion

Relevant resource included in Board Materials:

- *CCDF Presentation, PowerPoint presentation dated October 8, 2013*

EEC Budget Director Sean Reynolds presented an overview of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), explaining why EEC receives federal CCDF funds and how the Department utilizes these funds. Mr. Reynolds noted that 93% of EEC's funding is tied directly to CCDF. He detailed how EEC complies with CCDF expenditure requirements in areas such as quality, administrative cap, and direct services. Mr. Reynolds identified the applicable federal funds and addressed how EEC uses the federal allocations. Questions were raised as to how CCDF funds are monitored and allocated. Mr. Reynolds explained that CCDF use is reviewed during the single state audit and the Department is required to ensure that all money is appropriately matched with state dollars. Board Member Wasser Gish expressed that this information would be helpful to educate new members of the Massachusetts' federal delegation. Board Member Childs thanked Mr. Reynolds for his presentation and expressed how important it is for the Board to understand CCDF funding and its impact on EEC. Commissioner Weber expressed his thanks to Mr. Reynolds for managing and shepherding this funding.

On motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the meeting adjourn at 3:41 p.m., subject to the call of the Chairperson. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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