



Board of Early Education and Care

May 10, 2016

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Department of Early Education and Care

51 Sleeper Street, 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02210

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present

Nonie Lesaux, Ph. D., Chairperson

Mary Walachy, Vice Chairperson

James Peyser, Secretary of Education

Robyn Kennedy, Designee for Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services

Joni Block

Elizabeth Childs, M.D.

J.D. Chesloff

Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.

Joan Wasser Gish, Esq.

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

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Absent

Katie Joyce

The meeting was called to order at 1:09 p.m.

Comments from the Chair:

Chairperson Lesaux welcomed the members of the Board and the public and stated that she was looking forward to today's meeting. She noted that there has been significant Board activity since the last full Board meeting and that today's meeting will entail a discussion of the budget and the Board's two working groups. The Board's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Ad-hoc Working Group and its Workforce and Program Quality Working Group have each met twice since the last Board meeting. Chairperson Lesaux noted that the working groups are off to the right start and she thanked Anita Moeller, Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration, for supporting the groups.

Comments from the Secretary:

Secretary Peyser noted that Governor Baker hosted a reception to thank and honor the inter-agency team that worked on the Eagleton matter. The Governor expressed his personal thanks and provided certificates and his appreciation to the individuals and agencies involved. Secretary Peyser stated that EEC was at the center of all of the work regarding Eagleton and that the staff who worked on the matter did an honor to the Department and the Commonwealth.

Comments from the Commissioner:

Commissioner Weber updated the Board on the following items:

Eagleton School:

Commissioner Weber thanked Secretary Peyser for noting the successful resolution of the Eagleton matter. He added that Governor Baker spent an hour with the group and thanked each person in attendance individually. Governor Baker's office was intimately involved with the Eagleton matter and though there were a lot of unhappy circumstances, the Commonwealth rose to the occasion. Commissioner Weber stated that he was pleased that Governor Baker requested that the Office of the Child Advocate review residential schools and how to strengthen the Commonwealth's systems and coordinate efforts across agencies.

Workforce Focus:

Commissioner Weber noted that Anita Moeller has been appointed Deputy Commissioner for Program Administration. He explained that her role will be to focus to the Department's policy and program agenda with special attention on the workforce. Commissioner Weber discussed the agency-wide conference call that he held to discuss the Department's focus on the workforce and asked EEC staff to consider how their actions relate to the workforce and quality improvement. He also met with EEC's Leadership Team and discussed the question in light of EEC's leadership. Commissioner Weber noted that the Department ~~distributed~~ issued a job posting seeking an Associate Commissioner for Workforce and he is looking forward to learning about the candidates. The Board is also beginning its workforce related work, so the Department and the Board are both heading into an important direction.

Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) System:

Commissioner Weber stated that CCFA will replace the Department's legacy billing and payment systems, Child Care Information Management System (CCIMS) and Electronic Child Care Information Management System (eCCIMS). Until CCFA rolls out, the Department will use an alternative payment method. The Department communicated to the field that CCFA is looking to re-launch on July 1, 2016, but the final decision regarding a re-launch will be made at the beginning of June. The goal is ensuring that the field can successfully operate. Commissioner Weber noted that the plan is for support after the re-launch date, because development and support work for the CCFA application will be ongoing.

Routine Business:

- Approval of the April 12, 2016 Board Minutes - Vote

Board Member J.D. Chesloff moved to amend the Board Minutes to reflect that he was not present at the April 12, 2016 meeting.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care approved the minutes of the April 12, 2016 Board Meeting, as amended.

Board Committee Reports:

Advisory Council:

Board Member Block announced that the next Advisory Council meeting will occur on Friday, May 20, 2016.

Fiscal and Oversight Committee:

Board Member Elizabeth Childs stated that the Fiscal and Oversight Committee met on Monday, April 25, 2016. At the meeting, Deputy Commissioner for Administration and Finance William Concannon presented the House Budget that will be presented during today's Board Meeting. In addition, the committee discussed the CCFA project, noting that a new project manager, Chuck Welti, has begun to assist with the project. She stated that the CCFA team is presently going through potential risks and conducting testing, and final confirmation of the project's July 1, 2016 launch date will be disseminated in June 2016. Board Member Childs noted that a high-risk area is the earned sick time module, because there is a greater than 50% chance that this module will not launch on July 1, 2016.

Board Member Childs provided the Board with an overview of the caseload accounts, which must be documented on spreadsheets due to limitations caused by CCFA. She explained that the Department has spent \$1.1M more than projected in EEC's spending plan, and with respect to contract payments, EEC has paid \$4.5M less than projected. She also noted that EEC's waitlist remediation vouchers have been fully issued, and that the number of children on the waitlist stood at 24,516 as of April 19, 2016. Board Member Joan Wasser Gish inquired whether there has been a discussion about the potential for an alternative if CCFA does not launch on July 1, 2016. Commissioner Weber responded that there is no other system scheduled to be brought online because CCIMS and eCCIMS were brought offline over one year ago. The only alternative would be to continue the alternative payment method, although it is not desirable or sustainable.

Board Member Childs informed the Board that the next Fiscal and Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2016. Commissioner Weber then noted that Mass IT has become the CCFA project's oversight as the project has approached re-launch, which has lend itself to the opportunity to add to the team.

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 Lesaux or Commissioner Weber.

No members of the public provided statements.

- **Disclosures**

Board Member Sharon Scott-Chandler submitted a written disclosure that she is employed by Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), a recipient of EEC funding. Board Member Eleanora Villegas-Reimers submitted a written disclosure that she is employed by Wheelock College, a recipient of EEC funding. 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.

Items for Discussion and Action:

I. Fiscal Year 2017 House Budget Update - Discussion

Relevant resources included in Board Materials:

- *FY17 House Budget, PowerPoint Presentation dated May 10, 2016*

EEC Deputy Commissioner Concannon presented the FY17 House Budget to the Board. At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Concannon noted that the budget affirms the Board's attention to workforce development and rate increases and in almost all instances, the Department received level or greater funding than in FY16.

Deputy Commissioner Concannon stated that the House Ways and Means released its FY17 budget recommendation on April 13, 2016. In the recommendation, the House Ways and Means recommended an overall budget of \$557.4M, which is \$4.7M more than the FY16 available funding. After deliberations, the House released its final budget recommendation on April 27, 2016, proposing that the Department receive increased funding for a number of key line items. In particular, the budget increased the \$10M rate reserve to \$15M, which would constitute a 4.2% rate increase for center-based providers and family child care systems. In addition, the House Ways and Means budget provided that the Department would receive an additional \$1M toward quality supports, \$500K more for Head Start, \$200K in additional funding for the Preschool Expansion Grant partnership planning, \$950K more for CFCE, and an

additional \$300K for the Reach Out and Read initiative. In total, the House budget recommended that EEC receive \$565.4M, which is \$12.6M more than EEC received in FY16.

In addition to the specific line item increases, Deputy Commissioner Concannon stated that the House Budget added language to the caseload accounts to allow for recoupment of FY16 funding due to the alternative payment method. In addition, the administration line item reflects a transfer of approximately \$6.7M in salaries from the admin account to the quality account, including funding for licensors and other quality-related position. There is still a bit of a shortfall in the budget recommendation in the amount of \$325K, which is needed to maintain current staffing levels and to account for increases in rent and salaries. EEC should work on moving money to quality to help focus on those areas and to work on compliance with the reauthorization of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG).

Related to the quality improvement line item, increased funding reflects money that was transferred from six other accounts, as well as \$4M in funds earmarked for quality programming. In most other places of the House Budget, the Department received level funding. In addition, some funding that was previously accounted for in the caseload accounts was moved to the quality account. There has also been money allocated for 600 supportive vouchers. Deputy Commissioner Concannon stated that the House Budget for Executive Office of Education's Information Technology does not fund the anticipated needs across the Secretariat.

Board Member Wasser Gish noted that the presentation assumes that since voucher access is closed, there will be an attrition of the number of vouchers. Deputy Commissioner Concannon responded that the House did not fund waitlist remediation, and the intention is not to increase access and children will continue to serve income eligible children through a contract and Department of Children and Families (DCF) children through expansion. Board Member Childs remarked that the House Budget is a good budget and thanked the governor and the Secretary stating that the Department should be very appreciative. She noted that amendments are important related to the CCFA language and the IT funding, which is very important because it directly affects the Department's initiatives. She also remarked that the House Budget reflects the Board's priorities.

Commissioner Weber noted that the Department has been able to support some of its IT work through the Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant and the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS). It is challenging for the Department to connect its work because the IT budget is within the Secretariat's budget, but it is very important. EEC has tremendous IT needs to support quality and workforce with the Licensing Education Analytic Database (LEAD) and CCFA work supported by this funding. Chairperson Lesaux stated that is nice to see consistency between the budget and the quality and workforce work undertaken by the Department and the Board. Board Member Chesloff stated that the Massachusetts Speaker of the House is starting a workforce quality group at the end of the month so there is a consistent theme for this topic.

II. **Workforce and Quality Improvement Working Group Update - Discussion**

Relevant resources included in Board Materials:

- *EEC Board 2016 Workforce Working Group & QRIS Ad-Hoc Committee, PowerPoint Presentation dated May 10, 2016*

Board Member Eleanora Villegas-Reimers provided the Board with an update regarding the Workforce and Quality Improvement Working Group. She stated that the working group has met twice already, with the goal of establishing an agenda to support the early education workforce. The question arose whether the group is looking at the entire workforce or a specific group. It was decided that the working group would examine the workforce from birth to age eight. Board Member Villegas-Reimers set forth three tasks for the working group: 1) to gather data and information from Massachusetts and compare it to other states; 2) to develop evidence-based guiding principles for the workforce, revisit and revise the career ladder, and share it publicly for feedback; and 3) to develop budget recommendations for grant funding to occur in FY18 reflecting the Department's workforce goals and initiatives. The working group will also draft specific goals with input from the public and the Advisory Council.

Related to the first task, it was determined that the Workforce Working Group would review the relevant research data available in the Professional Qualifications (PQ) Registry. There is a plan to review existing models from out of state, including in Seattle, Tulsa, New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York. The group will attempt to complete the comparison prior to the next Board Meeting. The working group hopes to heavily accomplish the second task during the Board's retreat over the summer, during which time the Board will review its goals and determine the best way to elicit feedback. Related to the third task, the group hopes to have its work completed in time to propose language for grant funding for inclusion in the FY18 budget. The group then hopes to communicate its recommendations for funding related to the design of a new workforce grant in the fall and winter of 2016-2017, and then implement the grant's design in the spring of 2017.

Board Member Chesloff recommended that the working group stay in touch with the Speaker of the House's effort, because the business community may be able to contribute to the discussion. Board Member Wasser Gish remarked that there has been a historic reticence to make radical changes to existing grants to avoid destabilization. Chairperson Lesaux added that this is a good question and inquired whether anything needed to be completed in July. Commissioner Weber responded that changes to the grants allow for a healthy discussion and provides the ability to finalize its work and anticipated that a Request for Resources (RFR) be completed within the winter or spring of 2017. He wants to build in time for the field to review and weigh the impacts to allow for changes to the grant process in FY18. Board Member Wasser Gish expressed that she is for the changes but wants the Board to consider the impact the changes in grants may have on the field. Commissioner Weber responded that he discussed the origins of the account and the intent to shift budget language, but the Department should take this opportunity to communicate the Department's intent and explain why the Department is proceeding in this manner. Board Member Childs asked whether there are other models that set forth the expectations of the workforce. Board Member Villegas-Reimers responded that other states have

innovated and expanded, such as with public/private partnerships, but she is not sure whether there have been clear expectations of the workforce. Chairperson Lesaux added that some systems have done them in different ways with some mixed delivery, noting that the Tulsa, Oklahoma's workforce has a strong public/private partnership but the approach to workforce seems more sophisticated. Secretary James Peyser added that to the extent the Department needs to develop, modify, or adopt different pathways, including the consideration of competencies, then the Department should consider the delivery system for approaching its targets.

Vice Chairperson Walachy stated that this is a great opportunity for the Board to take a deep dive to review EEC's workforce. She also noted that in Western Massachusetts, classrooms are closing, and she asked whether the Department has data about this problem. Commissioner Weber responded that the Department does not collect data on staff turnover, but has heard the turnover rate is approximately 30-35%, which is consistent when speaking with providers. There is the additional complication for the field with trying to attract and retain staff with a B.A., but that the Department does not track the staff turnover at programs. He also noted that overall system capacity has remained relatively stable with a 230,000 children licensed capacity each day. Vice Chairperson Walachy added that the Board knows that compensation and recruitment of educators is a problem, and that the Department needs to be better about campaigning for early education as a career and there is a need for a conversation on this topic.

Board Member Block stated that she has heard of a lack of capacity for infants and toddlers, and there are family child care programs that are closing down too. Chairperson Lesaux added that the Board is hoping to land on a viable and effective strategy to push workforce development throughout the short, medium, and long-term. Board Member Villegas Riemers inquired whether there is data available about births in Massachusetts, and how we can use the data to assist the Department's work. Board Member Wasser Gish noted that there are 75K-80K children born in Massachusetts every year, and children are growing up at a lower income, with increased amounts of children living in areas of concentrated poverty. Board Member Scott-Chandler stated that it is difficult to find affordable infant and toddler care.

III. QRIS Study Ad-Hoc Committee Update - Discussion

Relevant resources included in Board Materials:

- *EEC Board 2016 Workforce Working Group & QRIS Ad-Hoc Committee, PowerPoint presentation dated May 10, 2016*

Chairperson Lesaux presented the QRIS Study Ad-Hoc Committee Update to the Board. Chairperson Lesaux noted that the QRIS Ad-Hoc Committee will be time limited and specific to the QRIS validation study and revision process. The Committee is starting to think through the revision process and develop clear guidelines. The first task, to finalize the validation study work and calendar is almost complete with the Wellesley Research Center and UMass Donahue Institute finalizing the analysis plan, and in July and August 2016, they will look at the impact analysis and child outcomes. The second task is to begin the framework and the revision process. The third task is to develop clear recommendations to inform the

Workforce and Program Quality Working Group's work. The final task is to gather input from the public and finalize the committee's proposed revision. The final report is due in late October 2016, which will inform the Board's discussion and recommendations for the November or December Board Meeting when there will be a final discussion and vote. Chairperson Lesaux noted that there is lost time so the Board needs to capitalize on the data to inform QRIS revisions. Joanne Roberts will be assisting with the revisions and by late June 2016, the committee anticipates that it will have a better understanding of how the study will inform the Department's work.

Chairperson Lesaux discussed the analysis plan walkthrough, noting the four aims of the revision. The first aim will be on an item level to determine where there are clear redundancies, what can and cannot be measured, and where re-leveling is appropriate, which is crucial to take into account in the system. The committee will also consider the second aim, which is to look at the programs themselves, and what characteristics, if any, are differentiated by level. The third and fourth aims of the revisions are to measure program quality and child outcomes with analytics to provide some opportunity to make associations between level and characteristics associated with quality and child outcomes. She noted that the committee wants to get to a place where the Department can make strong distinctions between licensing and quality, as well as to fold a certain amount of quality into licensing, and look at what is a quality improvement and what areas are consistent across the levels. It is a validation of measurement and a validation of quality improvement across the system. She added that quality should mean better outcomes for children who are served.

Secretary Peyser inquired whether there was any consideration into looking at whether there should be four QRIS levels or more or fewer levels. He noted that during the last QRIS discussion, there was mention of the ambiguity between levels 2 and 3 on some items and asked whether this discussion was on the table. Chairperson Lesaux responded that this is definitely a part of the discussion and is on the table, but the tricky part is that much of the data is concentrated in levels 2 and 3. Secretary Peyser noted that this information will be especially consequential when the rate structure is modified to increase rates based on QRIS level, and noted that it is especially important for there to be a meaningful look at leveling and is why it is important to consider it in the context of the workforce working group. Chairperson Lesaux agreed that it is very consequential and noted that the connections are present.

Board Member Chesloff recommended that the Board share the workforce and QRIS work with the legislature because they are interested in work in this area. Commissioner Weber responded that the Board has already initiated the discussion through its budget request, which reflected the Board's efforts to organize around a workforce and quality agenda. Board Member Block noted that this is a strong place to start and stated she hopes that the legislature will be ready to discuss the workforce and quality agendas in the context of the Department's FY18 budget request. Commissioner Weber noted that the issues might blend with other priorities, such as the Department's discussions related to the upcoming revisions to the Department's income eligible and priority populations' contracts.

Chairperson Lesaux reminded the Board that the Board Retreat would be taking place on August 4, 2016.

The meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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