



### **Board of Early Education and Care**

March 8, 2022

1:00PM to 2:00PM

Virtual Meeting:

NOTE: This meeting will be broadcasted over EEC's YouTube Channel:

<https://youtu.be/XTkPMemHYko>

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

Nonie Lesaux, Chairperson

Jim Peyser, Secretary of Education

Samantha L. Aigner-Treworgy, Commissioner of Early Education and Care (EEC) and Secretary to the Board

Carolyn Kain, J.D., Designee for HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders

Joni Block

Paul Belsito

Jamella Lee

Mora Segal

David Cruise

Sheila Balboni

Nikki Ruiz

Alison Schonwald

### **The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM.**

#### **Welcome and Comments from the Chair**

Chairperson Lesaux welcomed the Board and shared that today's agenda will focus on the transition of the Department's Commissioner and that regular Board business will resume at next month's meeting. Chairperson Lesaux thanked Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy for her leadership and provided an overview of Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy's initiatives and accomplishments during her time as Commissioner at EEC. On behalf of the Board, Chairperson Lesaux wished Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy luck in her next steps as a leader in early education.

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

Secretary Peyser echoed Chairperson Lesaux's comments. He highlighted Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy's leadership during the COVID crisis and discussed how her creative and flexible approaches to financing, regulations, and COVID mitigation have helped to restart and restore the childcare system in the Commonwealth. Secretary Peyser discussed Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy's deep commitment to



supporting the dedicated workforce of educators. On behalf of the Lieutenant Governor and the Governor, Secretary Peyser thanked Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy for her incredibly intense and tremendously productive tenure as Commissioner of Early Education and Care.

### **Comments from the Commissioner**

Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy thanked the children and families of the Commonwealth for the opportunity to serve as Commissioner and to be their voice in state government. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy thanked the programs, advocates, grantees, and other partners who work with EEC for their tireless efforts to be part of the collective transformation occurring currently in the Commonwealth. Commissioner Aigner-Treworgy thanked the staff at EEC for being drivers and collaborators of change. She provided a written statement that was included with the Board materials.

Break until 1:20PM

Chairperson Lesaux welcomed the Board back from break and stated that the meeting will pivot to a discussion of the Acting Commissioner role with a focus on a smooth and productive transition during an important time for the agency and the field. Chairperson Lesaux discussed the budget increase contained in Governor Baker's supplemental budget and highlighted the opportunity for innovation. Chairperson Lesaux stated that Amy Kershaw, current Commissioner at the Department of Transitional Assistance is positioned to step into the Acting Commissioner role at EEC. Chairperson Lesaux provided an overview of Ms. Kershaw's career in public service and highlighted that Ms. Kershaw previously worked at EEC and has a deep commitment to children and families in the Commonwealth. Chairperson Lesaux stated that Ms. Kershaw's focus will be on execution and implementation, and she plans to lead and support the daily work by supporting agency operations and capitalize on momentum and investments. Chairperson Lesaux provided details of the transition and shared that Ms. Kershaw's start date will be March 28, 2022, with the possibility of an earlier start date. Chairperson Lesaux stated that Secretary Peyser will be appointed as Interim Commissioner and will work collaboratively with Ms. Kershaw and the Board in the coming weeks.

Secretary Peyser expressed confidence in Ms. Kershaw and highlighted that she has a diverse knowledge base and has been actively engaged with children, families, and providers from various perspectives throughout her career. Secretary Peyser stated that if he is voted into the Interim Commissioner role, he plans to collaborate with the existing EEC leadership team to maintain operations without any significant policy or personnel decisions. Secretary Peyser thanked Secretary Sudders for allowing EEC to speak with Ms. Kershaw and allowing her to follow her heart to EEC.

Chairperson Lesaux asked for questions or comments on the appointment. (There were no questions or comments).



### **Routine Business**

Vote on the four-part motion due to contingencies surrounding Secretary Peyser and Ms. Kershaw's start dates:

Motion to appoint James A. Peyser to serve as Acting Commissioner of EEC effective immediately through March 27, 2022;

Further move to appoint Amy Kershaw to serve as Acting Commissioner of EEC effective March 28, 2022 and until the Board appoints a permanent Commissioner;

Further move to authorize the Board Chair to change the effective dates of Secretary Peyser and Ms. Kershaw's respective appointments as Acting Commissioner upon notice to the Board of the revised effective dates;

Further move to authorize the Board Chair to negotiate and enter into an employment agreement establishing the salary and terms of employment for Ms. Kershaw in her role as Acting Commissioner.

Approved with Joni Block respectfully abstaining and Secretary Peyser abstaining as to the parts of the Motion relating to his appointment as Acting Commissioner.

Chairperson Lesaux then welcomed Amy Kershaw to provide remarks.

Ms. Kershaw thanked the Chair, Secretary Peyser, and the Board for the opportunity. Ms. Kershaw provided an overview of her career in state service and her involvement with the creation of EEC. She stated that the throughline in her career has been a commitment to making government work better for children and families. Ms. Kershaw acknowledged the challenges of access, affordability, equity, and outcomes and welcomed the opportunity to engage with the Board, EEC staff, and the diverse network of providers to support families and children while contributing to the Commonwealth's economic recovery.

Chairperson Lesaux opened the discussion to questions and comments.

Board member Kain welcomed Ms. Kershaw and thanked her for her willingness to step into the role.



Board member Belsito amplified the comments provided by Ms. Kershaw and stated that she is inheriting a great team and a strong foundation. Board member Belsito welcomed the opportunity to partner with Ms. Kershaw and thanked the Chair for her work throughout the transition process.

Board member Schonwald introduced herself and expressed gratitude to Ms. Kershaw for accepting the role and commented that Ms. Kershaw's career experience will be a benefit.

Board member Ruiz introduced herself and stated that she looks forward to working with Ms. Kershaw and focusing on access to childcare for low-income families. Ms. Kershaw stated that the family voice and experience is at the center of the work at EEC and thanked Board member Ruiz for her comments.

Board member Cruise introduced himself, welcomed Ms. Kershaw, and thanked her for her willingness to serve as Acting Commissioner. He stated that he works closely with DTA in Springfield and shared that the local team holds Ms. Kershaw in high regard and offered his support to help move the agency forward. Ms. Kershaw thanked Board member Cruise and stated that supporting the workforce is critical.

Board member Block shared that she is committed to working with Ms. Kershaw and the Board to continue the work of education and care. She welcomed Ms. Kershaw back to EEC. Ms. Kershaw thanked Board member Block and stated she looks forward to working together.

Board member Balboni welcomed Ms. Kershaw and expressed appreciation for Ms. Kershaw's commitment to the wellbeing of children and support for their growth and development. Ms. Kershaw thanked Board member Balboni.

Board member Segal welcomed Ms. Kershaw and stated that she is looking forward to working with Ms. Kershaw on the educator workforce pathway and connecting early education with K-12. Ms. Kershaw thanked Board member Segal for her comments. Chairperson Lesaux stated that Board member Segal will continue to push for a data driven culture.

Board member Lee thanked Ms. Kershaw for stepping up and stepping into the role of Commissioner. She shared that she looks forward to supporting Ms. Kershaw and expressed confidence in Ms. Kershaw. Ms. Kershaw thanked Board member Lee for her confidence. Chairperson Lesaux shared that Board member Lee will be helpful in future discussions of agency internal functions and team building across agencies, as well as in workforce conversations.

Chairperson Lesaux asked for any last questions or comments from the Board. There were no further questions or comments.



Chairperson Lesaux stated that this touch base conversation between Ms. Kershaw and the Board is the beginning of a collaborative partnership. Chairperson Lesaux shared that the agenda of the Board mirrors the agenda of the agency and serves as a support to the Commissioner as a leader. Chairperson Lesaux thanked Ms. Kershaw, Secretary Peyser, and the Board during this time of transition. Chairperson Lesaux stated that next month's meeting will return to in-person.

Meeting adjourned 1:45PM