



December 31, 2013

The Honorable Stephen M. Brewer
Chairman, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairmen Brewer and Dempsey:

Pursuant to MGL Ch. 38 Sec. 166, it is my privilege to submit the "Recommendations of the Special Commission on Early Education and Care Operations and Finance." On behalf of the Special Commission Members and the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC or the Department), thank you for providing the opportunity and resources to reflect on the Department's important mission to support all children in their development as lifelong learners and contributing members of the community, and to support families in their essential work as parents and caregivers.

This Special Commission was created in response to the Legislature's interest in learning more about matters of the Department's operations and finance that arose last winter. Since that time, the Department has experienced a change in leadership and undertaken independently a number of operational improvements and reforms, including better estimations of true demand in the Income Eligible Waitlist, a comprehensive update of the EEC Internal Control Plan in consultation with the Office of the Comptroller, and implementation of new access management systems that have led this fall to the swift and successful expansion of Income-Eligible subsidies under the new Waitlist Remediation line item (3000-4070) and will maximize the Commonwealth's investment in early education across Fiscal Year 2014 by mitigating against either a deficit or reversion. Moreover, the Department has been highly responsive to the report issued by the Office of the State Auditor in March, including cross checks of child care providers' addresses against the Commonwealth's sex offender database. These are just several examples of progress among many.

The Special Commission allowed for an important and robust dialogue about EEC's current operations and finances, as well as the challenges and opportunities in administering the system of early education and care in the Commonwealth. Participation and engagement was tremendous. Working diligently to meet our December 31, 2013 deadline, the Special Commission met seven times over the fall to review and discuss the breadth of EEC's work and to formulate the recommendations herein. Special Commission members shared a deep belief



that high-quality early education and care services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children is essential to the long-term health of our citizens and our Commonwealth. The Special Commission's recommendations are intended to sustain and expand EEC and the Massachusetts early education and care field's capacity to meet their essential responsibility to ensure that all children are healthy and safe while strengthening quality across our mixed-delivery system of non-profit, private, and public providers.

Special Commission members found the experience informative, collaborative, and productive. In fact, a recommendation of this report is for EEC to further the work of the Special Commission through the existing Advisory Council, which includes members of the Legislature and many early education and care constituencies. It is important to Special Commission members that the conversations and work reflected herein are sustained and build on the momentum created by Governor Deval Patrick, the State Legislature, EEC, the early education and care field, and this Special Commission.

I thank you in advance for your respectful consideration of this report and for the ongoing support of your offices and the entire Legislature.

Faithfully submitted on behalf of the Special Commission,

Thomas L. Weber, Chairman

Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care

CC:

Therese Murray, President of the Senate

Robert DeLeo, Speaker of the House

Matthew Malone, Secretary of Education

Glen Shor, Secretary of Administration and Finance

Members of the Special Commission on Early Education and Care Operations and Finance