



Board of Early Education and Care

September 13, 2011

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Department of Early Education and Care
51 Sleeper Street
Boston, MA 02210

MINUTES

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Present

J.D. Chesloff, Chairperson
Paul Reville, Secretary of EOE
Elizabeth Childs, M.D.
Carol Craig O'Brien
Sharon Scott-Chandler, Esq.
Mary Pat Messmer
Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Ph.D.
Joan Wasser Gish, Esq.
Cheryl Stanley, Ed.D.

Sherri Killins, Ed.D., Commissioner of the Department and Secretary to the Board

Members of the Board of Early Education and Care Absent

Chi-Cheng Huang, M.D.
Marilyn Chase, designee of JudyAnn Bigby, M.D., Secretary of EOHHS

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

Welcome and Comments from the Chair

Chairperson JD Chesloff welcomed participants and board members back from vacation. He expressed his profound sorrow to the family of Gabriel Josh-Cazir Pierre, the little boy who died when he was left in a transport van and requested a moment of silence in honor of Gabriel.

Chairperson Chesloff updated the Board on the report written by the UMass Donahue Institute following the Board's August retreat. The report summarizes the strategic directions discussed. Board members were asked to complete a survey prioritizing the indicators of success for the strategic directions. Chairperson Chesloff will tabulate and prioritize three indicators for success for each strategic direction. Once this is completed, he will assign one or more indicators to each of the Board Committees to provide oversight of the indicator(s), noting that some indicators will be assigned to more than one committee.

Comments from the Secretary

Secretary Paul Reville expressed his sympathies to the family of Gabriel Josh-Cazir Pierre. He noted that everyone is deeply touched when something like this happens. He then

welcomed Dr. Cheryl Stanley as the newest Board member and thanked her for her willingness to service.

Secretary Reville provided an update on Governor Patrick's priorities for his second term. Higher education and closing the Achievement gap are still top priorities on his agenda, including the collaboration of EEC and ESE to close the achievement gap by third grade. He announced that October and November are Education months in the Commonwealth and mentioned that just today he was visiting a school in Dorchester. Secretary Reville hopes in the near future to bring the Boards of all the Education departments (EEC, ESE, DHE) together to do more collaborative work.

Secretary Reville expressed that the Early Learning Challenge Grant is a top priority for his office and they will do what they can to assist EEC in submitting the best application. On behalf of Governor Patrick, Secretary Reville stated the recommitment of the Patrick administration to support early education and care.

Comments from the Commissioner

Relevant document included in the Board materials:

- Commissioner's Report, dated September 13, 2011

Commissioner Killins began by stating that she was saddened by the loss of Gabriel Josh-Cazir Pierre. EEC is currently looking at the policies and procedures that are relevant to this matter but since there is an investigation in progress, she is unable to comment further.

She submitted her monthly report to the Board and highlighted the following topics, which are detailed in the Commissioner's Report dated September 13, 2011:

EEC Staffing: The Executive Office and Education (EOE) and EEC have welcomed EEC's new CIO, Tanuja Gopal who started on September 6th. Ms. Gopal comes with extensive state experience as she most recently worked at Mass DOT as the Deputy Chief Information Officer.

Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Grant: Commissioner Killins provided an update on the Early Learning Challenge Grant (ELC). EEC is moving forward and she feels the Department is positioned well for the work. Commissioner Killins has been working with private agencies such as the United Way agencies and the Ys, and has conducted community conversations to gather shareholder feedback. Additionally, she has recently formed a Leadership Committee that consists of several members of the Advisory Group who are providing input for the grant. EEC continues its collaborative work with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), two partnerships that are critical to the ELC grant. EEC has hired Chad d'Entremont as its project manager as well as Johnston Associates as the grant writers to work on the application.

FY12 UPK Grant Renewal: Commissioner Killins provided an update on the status of the UPK grants; the first third of the grant funds have been awarded. As part of the FY12 requirements, UPK grantees must participate in QRIS.

QRIS update: Commissioner Killins reported that 449 QRIS grants were award and that the Board will hear more during the presentation later in the agenda.

State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (SAC) Needs Assessment: EEC has been working with the consultant, Kenley Branscome who will present more details later in today's meeting.

PreK to 3rd Alignment: Commissioner Killins reported that EEC is continuing its commitment to PreK-3 initiatives. EEC is strengthening its relationship with the Holyoke superintendent and is working with Berkshire/Pittsfield on these initiatives.

FY12 Child Care Quality Literacy Support Grant: EEC has awarded 21 literacy grants which were supported through the license plate funds.

Information and Referral, Consumer Education and Voucher Management

(CCR&R): EEC is working on the new CCR&R bid and will continue to refine the role of the CCR&Rs in the early education and care system.

Help Me Grow: Commissioner Killins explained that the Help Me Grow initiative is critical to the ELC application because comprehensive assessment systems, like Help Me Grow, are integral. In this initiative, selected CFCE grantees are conducting the ASQ and ASQ:SE screenings with families to assist the Department to deepen its understanding of the screening tool before it is scaled as an universal screening.

Supporting Military-Connected Families with Young Children: Commissioner Killins reported that EEC is working with military families to support them and to help them meet their needs. The Department conducted a webinar to discuss the issues of military families with the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees.

Waiting List: Commissioner Killins discussed the launch of EEC's new waitlist system, Kinderwait, noting that although there are a few bumps in the roll-out, overall the process has gone well.

STEM Summit: Commissioner Killins announced that Scholastic donated \$500 and materials for the STEM conference. Commissioner Killins will co-host an early education workshop which will discuss learning scaffolding in partnership with public television, Wheelock College, and others.

Institutions of Higher Education Mapping Project: EEC is continuing its work with the Department of Higher Education and has entered into an Interdepartmental Services Agreement (ISA) for shared staff to work on alignment and competencies.

Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Scholarship Program: Commissioner Killins reported that the Early Childhood Scholarship fund has continued to be successful. The award process had to close earlier than expected since there were more applications than available funds. Currently, 989 applications have been approved.

Meetings: A full meeting of the EEC Advisory Council is scheduled for September 23rd; the primary topic will be the Early Learning Challenge Grant. Commissioner Killins is continuing regional meetings with the CFCE, MH, CCR&Rs and EPS grantees to discuss how the grantees can work together in their communities to help families.

ARRA Update: Commissioner Killins announced that EEC has spent 95% of the ARRA funding received by the Department. She is confident that EEC will spend the remaining funds before the September 30th deadline.

End of Commissioner's Report.

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 Killins.

- **Amy Schroeder, Development Associate of Jump Star**, invited the Board to participate in Read for the Record Campaign beginning Oct. 6, 2011. Events will be hosted in many locations including Boston public schools and local libraries as well as family child care programs. Ms. Schroeder asked Board members to let her know if there was a location at which they would like an event to be held.
- **Amy O'Leary, Director, Strategies for Children/Early Education for All Campaign**, thanked the Board for its commitment to children and stressed the importance of the Early Learning Challenge Grant to Massachusetts.
- **Kim Dion, Program Director, Child Care Resources**, reported that the Child Care Resource and Referral Network has restructured itself with the election of a four person executive committee and the establishment of an advisory committee.

End of Public Comment Period.

Routine Business:

Disclosures:

Board Member Sharon Scott-Chandler submitted a written disclosure that her employer is an EEC grantee and contract recipient. Board Member Mary Pat Messmer disclosed in writing that her agency receives EEC funding. Board Member Carol Craig O'Brien verbally disclosed that her employer, Westwood Public Schools, currently receives EEC funding and has a potential interest in receiving additional funding.

Approval of 6/14/11 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 June 14, 2011 Board meeting, as presented by the Commissioner. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of final CCDF State Plan for FY2012 – 2013

Relevant documents in Board materials:

- *Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Massachusetts FY2012-2013; and*
- *Proposed motion to Ratify the Child Care and Development Fund State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2012-2013 Submitted to the Administration for Children and Families*

Acting General Counsel Carmel Sullivan provided the Board with a brief overview of the process for submitting the CCDF State Plan. She explained that at the June 14, 2011 Board meeting, former General Counsel Dena Papanikolaou had presented the State Plan to the Board who voted to approve EEC's process to update and finalize the State Plan, since the format had changed two days prior to the June 14th board meeting. Ms. Sullivan summarized the changes to the format and explained that EEC has finalized the plan and submitted it to the appropriate federal agency.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the Board of Early Education and Care ratify the updates made by the Department of Early Education and Care to the Commonwealth's Child Care Development Fund Plan for federal fiscal years 2012-2013, which was submitted to the Administration for Children and Families, in a timely fashion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Committee Reports

- **Research and Policy**

Board Member Joan Wasser-Gish briefly described that the Policy and Fiscal committee and the Research and Communication committee have been reorganized as two new committees, Research and Policy and Fiscal. The first meeting of the Research and Policy Committee will be Monday, September 19th and the agenda items are the Early Learning Challenge Grant and ARRA initiatives. Committee chairs from both Research and Policy and Fiscal will attend both meetings.

- **Fiscal**

Board Member Beth Childs thanked Secretary Reville and Governor Patrick for their support for early education and care which was reflected in the FY12 budget. She reported that EEC anticipates a deficit of \$3.6M in the Income Eligible Account and explained that several options to reduce this deficit have been presented to the Committee. Board Member Childs noted that the Department's numbers need to be in line before proceeding with other initiatives. She thanked EEC staff for doing a great job getting ARRA funds out and noted that EEC is on track to spend all of them before the deadline. The fiscal committee's next meeting is Monday, September 19, 2011 at 11:30am.

Chairperson Chesloff remarked that EEC cannot end the year with a deficit as it did last year. Board Member Childs agreed that the deficit issue needed to be resolved so this does not occur again next year.

- **Planning and Evaluation**

Board Member Craig O'Brien welcomed the committee's newest member, Cheryl Stanley. She reported that the Planning and Evaluation Committee will have its first meeting Thursday, September 22nd from 10am to noon. The Committee will discuss the Early Learning Challenge Grant, the learning needs of young children, the higher education mapping project, UPK as well as updates on the SAC Needs Assessment and QRIS. Additionally, the Committee will look at benchmarks of universal access, and the definition of universal.

Chairperson Chesloff noted that the Board's priority of universal early education and care is an essential part of the strategic plan and that this priority will likely be assigned to the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

Items for Discussion and Action:

- I. Early Learning Challenge Grant Proposal- Discussion
 - Relevant documents included in Board materials:
 - *Early Learning Challenge Opportunity, PowerPoint, dated September 13, 2011*

Commissioner Killins presented the Board with an overview of the Early Learning Challenge Grant Application that was released in August, 2011. She explained that the goal of the grant is that states better prepare more high needs children for kindergarten because children from birth to age 5, including those from low-income families, need a strong foundation for success in school and beyond.

Commissioner Killins reviewed the grant application and the eligibility requirements for each state. She explained that in order for states to be eligible to apply they must execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each participating state agency or partner, have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education as well as have submitted an updated MIECHV State Plan. State award amounts were determined by how, the state was ranked according to its share of the national population of children, ages birth through 5 years old from low-income families. Massachusetts is a category 4 state and is therefore eligible to apply for up to \$50M.

Commissioner Killins then summarized the grant's five key areas of focus and the selection criteria related to each:

- Establishing successful State Systems
- Defining high quality, accountable programs
- Promoting early learning and development outcomes for children
- Supporting a great early childhood education workforce
- Measuring outcomes and progress

The "absolute priority" categories -- those that must be addressed throughout the application -- are promoting school readiness for children with high needs. There are also "competitive preference priorities" where states can earn extra points and include all early learning and development programs in the tiered quality rating and improvement system and/or understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. Lastly there are two "invitational priorities" which states may answer but do not earn extra points or preference for answering and address sustaining program effects in the early elementary grades and encouraging private-sector support.

EEC will partner with various agencies including state partners (ESE, DHCD, DPH, DCF, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), Children's Cabinet), private partners (WGBH, EEA, United Way, Ys), community supports (hospitals, pediatricians, dentists, nutritionists, local government, parks and recreation departments) and federal partners (WIC, ACF, USDOE, Head Start, Home Visiting). EEC has convened an ELC Leadership Team with participants from the Board, agencies with vendor/contract relationships with EEC, legislators, business/civic, higher education, state associations and K-12 linkages. Memoranda of Agreement are required that confirm that agencies will work with EEC to align systems on family engagement and standards. EEC has partnered with DCF and DPH and will enter into MOUs with each of them as well as other state agencies.

Commissioner Killins then compared the alignment of EEC's work with the grant's priorities and outlined opportunities for growth:

1. Absolute Priority 1- Using early learning and development standards and kindergarten entry assessments to promote school readiness
 - Development of state Common Core Standards Development and provision of online courses for early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers, core competencies and preschool for CEUs or college credit. Growth Opportunity -

build capacity within the field by developing a self assessment tool for the field to assess their own competency.

- Efforts to link the early education and K-12 systems from birth to 3rd grade through aligned screening, assessment, and curricula practices. Growth - expansion of currently piloting Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Model and Design project.
 - Use of formative assessment in QRIS system. Match salaries of early educators to career ladder in collaboration with Dept. of Labor.
 - Creation of effective professional development system including development of a PQ Registry and a Professional Development Calendar and the development of the FY12 Professional Development Catalogue.
2. Absolute Priority 2- Using Tiered QRIS to promote school readiness
- QRIS launched in January 2011. Growth - on-going commitment to support increasing number of high need children in high quality programs and in the QRIS.
 - Introductory QRIS training and content-focused field consultation to programs. Growth - development of a 2 part QRIS course with a statewide reach with the purpose of advancing the quality of programs.
 - Program participation in the QRIS System within the mixed delivery system. Growth - development of strategies to encourage all programs to participate.
 - Piloting use of the Ages and Stages online questionnaire for families. Growth - build upon existing initiatives to communicate with families.
 - Creation of communication materials for parents around quality standards. Growth - future communication efforts will be around validating the standards and communicating with parents and programs around the meaning of the QRIS standards so there is a shared understanding.
3. Competitive Priority - Include all Early Learning and Development programs in the QRIS.
- Program participation in QRIS. Growth - development of strategies to encourage all programs to participate and build upon and develop accessible community based developmental supports.
4. Invitation Priority 1 - Sustaining program effects in early elementary grades
- Establishment of ECIS. Growth - enhance EEC's ability to collect and track data, allocate resources and support children's development and support the collection and organization of educator quality and child-level data.
 - CSEFEL Pyramid model training. Growth - build in opportunities for coaching and mentoring.
 - Head Start Public School meeting to review importance of alignment and effective strategies to support children's school readiness. Growth - joint planning across education agencies and develop a shared understanding at the local level.
 - Birth to 8 Leadership Institute
5. Invitation Priority 2 - Encouraging private sector support
- Work to leverage private sector relationships with United Way, MASS211, and the Davis Foundation on early childhood initiatives. Growth - work toward an agreement to align work and funding for children 0-5 and their families.

Commissioner Killins reported that she has met with groups and the public to discuss the Early Learning Challenge grants; over 200 participants attended 8 meetings that were offered. Feedback included topics of family engagement, teacher evaluation and compensation, partnerships, training, and screening access. She described the opportunities and obstacles faced by the Department in its preparation for ELC. The opportunities include governance, all children of high need, QRIS, interagency relationships, higher education strategy, early childhood information structure and private sector commitments. The

obstacles include integrated practice across health, child welfare and TANF, funding QRIS, the kindergarten readiness assessment, lack of wholesale early childhood policies for PreK to 3 alignment and the data infrastructure for early learning childhood information.

Chairperson Chesloff questioned how the grant allocated points, in particular how many points are available for new and innovative ideas. Commissioner Killins responded that from her workshops and conference calls she believed it to be an 80/20 split. The grant reviewers will be looking for states that are out in front, ready to go to scale with their initiatives.

Board Member Stanley asked how the Readiness Centers will be used to communicate with the community and how will they be part of the collaboration. Commissioner Killins replied that the Readiness Centers will be part of the EPS works and that they are EEC's vehicle to communicate with the community.

Chairperson Chesloff sought clarification of the roles of the project manager and of the vendor. Commissioner Killins responded that ELC Project Manager Chad d'Entremont will help with the MOUs as well as identify initiatives that should be included in the application. He will then pass those ideas onto Johnston Associates who will write the grant.

Board Member Craig O'Brien observed that EEC is under capacity and asked what the Board can do to help with interagency agreements or anything else. Chairperson Chesloff noted this is what he meant by "all hands on deck" and that Commissioner Killins and EEC can rely on the Board to help in any way they can. Secretary Reville agreed that this is a collective effort both from internal state agencies as well external partners and the Secretariat is prepared to help make this grant application happen. Commissioner Killins recognized Board Member Eleonora Villegas-Reimers' assistance as the board representative on the ELC Leadership group.

II. Quality Rating and Improvement System Update- Discussion

Relevant documents included in Board materials:

- *Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System, PowerPoint, dated September 13, 2011*
- *QRIS Exemption Requests Summary*

Sarah Harding, EEC's Director of Operations Human Resources updated the Board on QRIS grants and activities and the next steps for FY12. She introduced the other QRIS team members, Evelyn Nellum and Pam Roux and acknowledged all their hard work.

As of September, EEC has received 2,501 QRIS applications: 1,027 applications are in draft and 1,474 applications have been submitted as final as of September 2, 2011. Of the final applications, 540 were center/school based, 728 were family child care and 206 were after school/out of school time programs. Most of these final applications have self-assessed at Level 1 with some at Levels 2 or 3 but with very few at Level 4. EEC has seen steady participation in QRIS since March, 2011.

Board Member Scott Chandler asked if there are programs participating who do not accept subsidies or who are not required to participate. Director Harding replied that public preschools have participated along with programs not receiving subsidies.

Director Harding explained that QRIS is a partially voluntary system. Programs who receive particular EEC funding are required to participate. By May 2012, all family child care and out of school time programs that receive contracted slots will be required to participate. All

programs must complete a self-assessment, submit a final application via the QRIS Program Manager and mail the required documentation to EEC for review and verification.

Director Harding reported that between March 2010 and June 2011 over \$6M was awarded to 1089 programs located in 43% of the Commonwealth's cities and towns. Approximately 926 programs and educators have applied for QRIS grants, requesting over \$7.7 million. In total 449 programs/educators were awarded grants, representing all program types and regions statewide and 49% of programs that applied were funded. Programs most frequently spent grant funds on supplies and materials, equipment and contractual services.

Chairperson Chesloff asked if the requests totaling \$7.7M represent the cost to fully fund QRIS. Director Harding noted that QRIS is not yet universal and that the cost would likely be more. She explained that up to \$10,000 was originally available for any program type. However, EEC had to reduce the family child care grants to \$5,000 in order to fund more programs. In the first group of awards, programs were required to have at least 50% of their enrolled children receiving subsidies and have scored in the top 3rd. Once this initial group was funded, remaining funds were divided up regionally. Board Member Scott Chandler stated that determining a cost to fully fund QRIS is tricky as there will be different costs and resources needed by each program as determined by their level on QRIS and what they need to move to the next level. Director Harding agreed that it is not just about funding but includes training opportunities and providing access to ways to increase quality.

Board Member Wasser-Gish asked if EEC had a map of the resources needed. Director Harding will provide a map that details how a program participates in QRIS and how much it costs in the general sense (staff time, resources, etc.). Board Member Wasser-Gish asked what is EEC's ability to validate programs' QRIS levels. Commissioner Killins responded that there are only 26 programs that require a validation visit and that EEC had trained a group of people to reliability on the environmental rating scales. Board Member Wasser-Gish asked if there has been any feedback now that the QRIS has been launched for 9 months. Director Harding explained that a sample of the QRIS pilot programs had been surveyed regarding their experience and that Wheelock College and Oldham Research have surveyed mentors on their experiences.

Director Harding discussed how EEC has provided programs with an option to request an exemption for QRIS. The most requested exemption was Program Administrator Qualifications and Professional Development. She then addressed the linkages to literacy through QRIS. Two hundred and thirty seven participants participated in 10 four hour training sessions in the preLas 2000 Oral Language and Pre-Literacy Assessment tool and received assessment kits. This training provided an overview of the tool and offered strategies which can be used with children to support second language acquisition and dual language learners EEC has planned additional training sessions for the EPS grantees and their 10 partners. Director Harding anticipates that EEC will continue QRIS grant funding in FY12 \$800,000 to be awarded this fall. In addition, an online course will be developed and translated into 3 languages (Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian) to enhance QRIS entry while other online courses will be developed to support specific standards more in depth such as curriculum, learning and diversity, workforce qualifications and professional development, and family and community engagement.

Chairperson Chesloff asked if the \$800,000 for FY12 is in addition to the \$2.8M that was available in FY11. Director Harding responded that the \$800,000 is additional funds and if Massachusetts is awarded the ELC grant, additional funds could be targeted to QRIS.

III. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)- Continued Initiatives- Discussion

Relevant documents included in Board materials:

- *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act: Continued Initiatives, PowerPoint, dated September, 2011*

Deputy Commissioner of Administration and Finance Bill Concannon presented information regarding thirteen ARRA funded initiatives that will have sustained impact for EEC. Deputy Commissioner Concannon summarized the sustained results and quantified the impact for:

- Infant/Toddler Early Childhood Program Standards and Guidelines
- Environmental Ratings Scales training
- Improvement of Physical Environments in Child Care Programs
- CSEFEL Professional Development
- English Language Learners Professional Development
- Professional Development Systems Research Project
- Readiness Center Support
- Early Literacy Program
- Communications Campaign
- Early Childhood Information System (ECIS)
- Mass 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services
- Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Infrastructure
- Improved Centralized Waitlist

Deputy Commissioner Concannon reported that billing is still coming in so many of the ARRA initiatives have not reached their allocated spending limit but should do so once the final bills are processed. He noted that the overall financial impact on initiatives supporting Educator and Program Quality was \$2,132,379 and for Community and Family Engagement the financial impact was \$2,095,202. The total allocation for sustained initiatives was \$4,227,581 with approximately 17% of the ARRA funds used for these initiatives.

Board Member Craig O'Brien thanked the EEC staff who worked on these initiatives and acknowledged the challenge to continue to sustain the initiatives. Chairperson Chesloff thanked Deputy Commissioner Concannon for the new caseload reports and expressed how helpful these reports have been. Deputy Commissioner Concannon replied that the reports were developed through EEC's work with the Public Consulting Group and represented a clear set of business rules.

IV. State Advisory Council (SAC) Needs Assessment Study- Update

Relevant documents included in Board materials:

- *Massachusetts SAC Needs Assessment, PowerPoint, dated September 13, 2011*

Kenley Branscome of Applied Policy Analytics provided the Board with an update on the State Advisory Council (SAC) Needs Assessment and stated that he hopes to work closely with the ELC grant team during this project. He noted that in his research of other states, Massachusetts is ahead of others in conducting needs assessments. Mr. Branscome noted that the needs assessment data will augment the data EEC currently possesses.

Mr. Branscome explained that the study's goal is to assist EEC in conducting a needs assessment of children from birth to age eight along with an assessment of the quality and availability of early childhood education programs and services for children from birth to school entry. The study will address the following questions:

1. What are the needs for families to support child development?

2. Which children/families have access to programs they need, including high-quality early education and care programs, health care and community resources/supports?
3. Are children on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
4. How prepared is the workforce to provide effective early education and care? How stable is the workforce? What supports are available to educators to become more reflective practitioners?
5. How does the workforce define and understand quality?

He then provided examples of the survey modifications developed by Wellesley College last spring and an update on the survey design and administration. Mr. Branscome noted that the family survey will explore topics such as access to programs and services, need for resources to support child development, and child development and school readiness. There will also be an opportunity for a convenience sample during which the survey will be open to all families and promoted through the Building Brain in Progress website and by other stakeholder organizations. Mr. Branscome and his team will mail flyers in English, Spanish and Portuguese to all families selected for participation with a link to an online survey and a phone number for more information. The data for the family survey will be collected through an online questionnaire with phone calls to families who did not respond online. The educator survey will explore the perceptions of quality and the stability of workforce and professional development. The educator sample design relies on a representative sample of 415 centers, representing approximately 1,400 educators and a sample of 1,300 family child care educators randomly obtained from the licensing and professional qualifications databases. Outreach to the sample will include fliers in English, Spanish and Portuguese mailed to selected centers and family child care providers. Centers will be asked to forward survey information to their educators to complete. The educator survey can be completed online and the team will again make two attempts to contact the educators. In addition, there will also be an opportunity for a convenience sample where the survey will be forwarded to all educators in the Professional Qualifications Registry. Data will be collected through an online questionnaire with follow up phone calls and emails to educators who do not respond. There will be incentives for families and educators who participate in the surveys. The CFCE grantees and other community agencies will be asked to assist with family survey outreach efforts; EPS grantees will be asked to assist in educator survey outreach efforts. Data collection for both surveys will begin on October 17th and continue through November 30th. Data analysis will occur through December with a draft final report due December 30, 2011. The final report will be due February 20, 2012.

Board Member Childs asked how long it will take families and educators to complete the surveys. Mr. Branscome replied that the team continues to shorten the survey but he believes either survey will not take more than 15 minutes. Board Member Messmer inquired as to how the sample of families will be selected and how the team will ensure that urban and rural communities are represented. Mr. Branscome responded that the team will use commercial mailing lists and telephone based lists. The sample will be populated by county to ensure representation.

Board Member Craig O'Brien thanked Mr. Branscome for taking into consideration all of the comments and suggestions from the Planning and Evaluation Committee.

- V. Understanding the Learning Needs of Young Children: Assessment for Quality and Child Outcomes- Panel Discussion
 - Relevant documents included in Board materials:
 - *Understanding the Learning Needs of Young Children: Formative Assessment for Quality and Child Outcomes, dated September, 2011*
 - *Panelists' Bios*
 - *Panelists' Outline*

The assessment panel consisted of Jake Murray, Director of the Aspire Institute at Wheelock College, Carol Campbell of Associated Early Care and Education and Amy Bamforth of the Somerville CFCE and Somerville Public Schools.

Mr. Murray began the discussion by providing an overview of the Aspire Institute. The Institute was founded four years ago and focuses upon research and development, in particular early childhood quality, workforce development and out of school time. The Institute has worked with Associated Early Care and Education, Inc. to gain a better understanding of assessment in programs and it has trained 25 coaches in QRIS.

Mr. Murray admitted that there is a knowledge and skill gap in the workforce relating to assessment. The challenge is to address and close this gap and recommended the following actions:

- Incorporate assessment training into degree programs and align with the state requirements.
- Support emerging professional development structure through the EPS grantees and the Department of Higher Education. Evaluate system data to determine impact?

Carol Campbell from Associated Early Care and Education was introduced. Ms. Campbell has provided training over the last two years to EEC educators and to other organizations in the areas of Work Sampling System, Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum, Teaching Strategies GOLD and the High Scope COR. She has trained educators on how to use information gathered from these tools and on data to guide curriculum.

Chairperson Chesloff asked how child outcomes are measured and if goals are based on anything standardized. Ms. Campbell responded that educators assess a child at a point in time and identify what the next step is to the goal. Assessments are required to be completed every 6 months, but some programs complete them more often. Assessments help educators measure the program's effectiveness over time and this information can be shared with families. Board Member Villegas-Riemers asked if the trainings help families when their child is not "making grade." Ms. Campbell explained that there are strategies in the assessment tools to help educators and families partner and work together.

Amy Bamforth of the Somerville CFCE discussed the Help Me Grow project. She noted that many CFCE grantees are thrilled to be able to provide screenings again to children and families. Fifteen CFCEs were chosen to pilot the ASQ and ASQ:SE assessment tools with families. She believes that the social emotional piece is essential because it makes a difference in school success. Children who come to school with good social emotional skills have been shown to be more likely to succeed. Ms. Bamforth stated that she has already piloted parts of the Help Me Grow Initiative with a few families by using the ASQ:SE. CFCE grantees involved in the pilot are going out into the community to reach families; some have gone into grocery stores while others have contacted pediatricians. Somerville is assembling a four person team to figure out how to use the network of families to help with outreach. She expressed some of the concerns she has heard from families such as privacy and confidentiality of family information.

Board Member Wasser-Gish asked the panelists to articulate their vision of how the assessment system should look. Ms. Bamforth responded that ongoing supervision and providing information to administrators and education as to why assessment is useful was important for sustainability. The assessment itself should contain all relevant information, but teachers are overwhelmed in writing the report (literacy issues), and need ongoing support. In addition, information needs to get back to families as soon as possible. Ms.

Campbell commented that Massachusetts is off to good start identifying useful assessment tools. The trainings conducted have been well received and they help administrators learn more about their children and the teachers' hard work. She noted that it is also important to introduce administrators to screenings and to provide the link between the two. Ms. Campbell noted that it would be helpful if the Assessment grant could be awarded earlier so there is more time to work on it. Mr. Murray agreed with both Ms. Bamforth and Ms. Campbell, explaining that there must be a level of leadership development at a policy level to assist educators and programs on how to make a decision based on assessment results.

Board Member Villegas-Reimers asked the panel if they had any thoughts or recommendations about the kindergarten readiness assessment. She noted that at the ELC conference only one state reported using the same tool in every one of their programs. Ms. Bamforth suggested that the inclusion of a social emotional component is important. She also noted that a prescreening tool would provide "instructions" for children going to kindergarten, but it would be very difficult to screen every child. Board Member Villegas-Reimers responded that there was an important difference between social emotional learning and social emotional development. She questioned whether Massachusetts should have a unique tool to measure kindergarten readiness or continue what we are doing now. Mr. Murray responded that if we could answer this question, we would be helping out many other states as well. Massachusetts should look at lessons learned, Boston's Thrive in 5, and the pilot in Springfield. Ms. Campbell added that the tools have been updated over time and that there is a difference between formative assessment (curriculum improvement) and normed assessment. Because there are so many districts and tools used by districts, it is difficult to compare their process with early childhood. Formative assessments help to guide teachers in child progress and their curriculum. There is a need to look at screenings, formative and normed assessments together.

Board Member Childs stated that looking at individual children is important. Assessments are a lot of work but the next step is to move programs through to high quality. EEC is working to do that through the QRIS. The administrator level is the link between children and program quality. Ms. Bamforth responded that the process works well for some educators, but there are a number who do not view the results as applicable to the educator as well as to the child. The complexity of assessment is the changing of adults not the children. Ms. Campbell noted that programs need to look at assessment as an ongoing process, not just a one-time occurrence. Assessment is based on observations over weeks and months, not just when they fill out the forms. Educators should use what they learn from the assessments to provide curriculum improvements.

Board Member Scott Chandler asked the panel how to determine success. Is changing adult behavior the way to know or is there some other way to know that the process is successful? Mr. Murray replied that that is the ultimate question and it is a major part of what we are trying to achieve with the ELC. Normed assessment provides one barometer and program by program review of how a child grows over time is another barometer. ELC should give us an opportunity to look at one way to see how we make progress.

Commissioner Killins noted that there is a bias in ELC about formative assessment. Normed assessments are a one-time review. Programs could use normed assessment information to validate the formative assessment. The recent ELC conference discussed the importance to get formative assessment correct and that it needs to be used in a structured environment. Board Member Stanley noted the importance of providing trainings regarding what an assessment is and how to use it. She stated that assessment is about the child, family and programs.

Mr. Murray acknowledged that the field is at different stages. Some programs have been using assessment tools for years while others have little knowledge regarding assessments. It is important to help those programs in the middle learn to use the tools and talk with families regarding the results. Board Member Craig O'Brien added that educators also need a strong understanding of child development and that support from the program administrator is necessary. In addition, the value we give to behaviors and to what we are reporting is what we see and hear and not just judging. Ms. Bamforth agreed that children will appear differently to different people doing the assessment. Board Member Craig O'Brien noted that formative assessment allows children to show their skills in many different ways, but that normed assessment is more task oriented.

Commissioner Killins stated that the assessment process still has issues/differences surrounding race, culture, language, gender, and disabilities (special needs population). Ms. Bamforth provided an example that the ASQ does not translate sounds into different languages, but that the surveys can be obtained in different language. Board Member Stanley pointed out that formative assessment is akin to child watching. Educators are looking at the children through a particular lens. She noted that it is important to make sure educators are sensitive to those areas.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was:

VOTED that the meeting in honor of Gabriel Josh-Cazir Pierre adjourn at 4:00 p.m., subject to the call of the Chairperson. The motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,
Sherri Killins, Ed.D.
Commissioner of the Department and
Secretary to the Board