



Date: March 16, 2009

To: Senate President Therese Murray
Speaker Robert DeLeo
Senator Robert O'Leary, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Education
Representative Martha Walz, Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Education
Secretary Paul Reville, Executive Office of Education
Secretary Leslie Kirwan, Executive Office for Administration and Finance

From: Sharon Scott-Chandler, Chair, Board of Early Education and Care
Sherri Killins, Commissioner, Department of Early Education and Care

RE: FY2009 Comprehensive Annual Legislative Report

On behalf of the Board and Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), we respectfully submit to you our Annual Legislative Report. This comprehensive report was prepared to fulfill the reporting requirements outlined in MGL Ch. 15D, Sec. 3(g) and line-item 3000-1000 of the FY09 General Appropriation Act, which require that the Agency report on the status of, and progress made in, several key areas of the Agency's work. Rather than submit numerous reports separately, some with overlapping requirements, we have folded into this report all annual reporting requirements, including the following:

- **Five-Year Master Plan.** To meet this requirement, the Board submitted a Five Year Strategic Plan, which was the subject of an extensive and inclusive planning process. Note that the Department is developing a companion *Work Plan* that will outline the Agency actions that will be taken over the course of the next year to meet the goals for the Strategic Plan. This Work Plan will address specific "master plan" requirements outlined in legislation, and moving forward, will be included as part of our Annual Legislative Report.
- **Annual Report.** An "Annual Report" is referenced in both our enabling statute and the FY09 General Appropriations Act. This comprehensive Report outlining the accomplishments of the Agency meets both requirements.
- **Annual Workforce Report.** Each year, EEC has submitted this status report updating our progress in the early childhood Workforce area.

A detailed chart, outlining the legislative reporting requirements, as well as where they are addressed in this report, is also included. Please note that the *System Capacity Study*, a one-time report required by an outside section of the FY09 General Appropriations Act, is still under development. We anticipate submitting this by July 1, 2009.

The Annual Legislative Report is organized into two main sections:

1. Jan 2008-Jan 2009 Board/EEC Actions, Policy Decisions, and Accomplishments

This section highlights key actions taken, policy decisions made and accomplishments achieved by the Board/EEC. It is organized within the framework of the Board's Strategic Plan. Where relevant, public commentary heard by the Board relative to these items is noted. It is our hope that this section provides an informative overview and update of EEC's progress over the past year.

2. Progress Updates by Initiative

This section responds to specific reporting requirements on the status of the following EEC initiatives, as outlined in MGL Ch. 15D, Sec. 3(g) and in line-item 3000-1000 of the FY09 General Appropriation Act:

- a. Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)
- b. Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- c. Alignment of "Rates" and Quality Standards
- d. School Readiness Assessment/Child Outcomes
- e. Workforce and Professional Development (Core Competencies)
- f. Supporting National Accreditation
- g. Promoting Positive Behavioral and Mental Health in Early Education and Care

The Strategic Plan and Workforce Report are included as companion pieces.

As the Agency moves forward in its efforts to provide high quality early education and care to children and families, we would like to take this opportunity to communicate our **commitments and priorities** on several fronts as follows:

- **Mixed delivery system:** EEC is committed to a mixed delivery system, which includes public schools and supports alignment of curriculum for young children, to help ensure smooth transitions within our system and to the k-12 education system.
- **Prioritization of children and families most in need:** EEC will continue to prioritize and focus efforts on children and families with highest needs, using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's designated "Commissioner's districts" as one construct for prioritization.
- **Balancing Access and Quality:** In these difficult economic times, EEC will continue efforts to balance access and quality, as both are important goals that must be pursued in tandem.
- **Partnership with the higher education system:** EEC is committed to working with the Commonwealth's system of higher education to ensure that early educators – who comprise a diverse and unique field – have access to the supports and resources necessary to successfully gain and apply additional skills in early childhood education.
- **Tracking outcomes:** EEC is committed to and fully intends to both define and track the impact of early education and care programs and services on our youngest citizens, starting at birth and continuing through elementary school and beyond.
- **Families as partners:** Through external communications and efforts to engage parents as partners, EEC will continue to communicate that we are focused on supporting and serving *all* families in the Commonwealth.
- **Accountability across the system:** EEC is committed to continuing efforts to further define accountability goals relative to early education and care access, quality, and affordability and to holding local, regional and state systems accountable for meeting those goals.
- **Interagency partnerships:** As part of the new Executive Secretariat, EEC fully intends to take full advantage of partnerships with each of the other Education Commissioners, the Executive Office of Education, and other state agencies that provide access to services that support the development of the whole child.

We are pleased with the many accomplishments of this still relatively new agency. It is our hope that this report provides a helpful update on our work. As you know, EEC has experienced a number of key transitions over the past year and we appreciate your patience as we strive to keep the agency moving forward and to meet our legislative mandates.

Thank you for your continued support of our efforts. We look forward to working together in the months and years ahead.

