

# **The Business Imperative for Early Education**

## **Findings and Recommendations of the Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group**

### **Theory of Action**

*“When taken at face value, early education and care may not seem like a business or labor issue. But make no mistake, it is.”*

House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo

In recent years, one of the highest priority issues for the business community has been improving the workforce pipeline. Surveys have shown that 75 percent of Massachusetts employers have difficulty finding people qualified to fill open positions.<sup>1</sup> This means our businesses are not achieving their full potential and our residents are missing out on existing opportunities because they lack proper qualifications.

In an effort to improve the quality and supply of our workforce, the business community has engaged in various initiatives to support the efforts of universities, community colleges, workforce training programs, vocational technical schools and K-12 public schools. However, there has not been sufficient focus on one key area of the workforce development pipeline that can have a significantly profound impact: the early learning years.

Research shows that participation in high-quality early education and care (EEC) programs increases a child’s likelihood of graduating from high school, attaining a college degree, and being gainfully employed. When children enter the classroom with a strong early learning foundation in place, they are more likely to succeed in the early grades and to be on a path to reading success by age 8. If children read at grade level by age 8, they are four times more likely to graduate from high school,<sup>2</sup> and those who participate in high-quality early childhood programs are twice as likely to attend college.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, access to high-quality EEC can increase the talent pool available to meet employers’ workforce needs. It also gives our children a better chance at succeeding in school and being qualified for high-potential job opportunities.

All of these benefits, however, are only realized if the early childhood programs are of high-quality. The most significant determinant of quality is the educator leading the classroom.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, doing what is best to support the Commonwealth’s children, working families, communities, and successful economic growth rests on developing, professionalizing and retaining the early education and care workforce.

## Guiding Principles

- Access to high-quality early childhood education and care not only benefits children, but is also a workforce issue, an economic development issue and a good business imperative.
- High-quality early childhood education is important for the Commonwealth's long-term economic health because it can increase the supply of qualified workers while reducing demand and cost on remedial services.
- In order to achieve the desired results and return on investment, expanding access to early education and care must be coupled with ensuring that our early education and care programs are high-quality.
- Developing, professionalizing and retaining the early education workforce is critical to delivering high-quality programming.

## The Business Case

*“Every dollar spent on high-quality, birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children delivers a 13 percent per annum return on investment... The cost of inaction is a tragic loss of human and economic potential that we cannot afford.” James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in economics, University of Chicago. “The Heckman Equation (12/5/16).”*

■ **Businesses need employees who are well prepared and job-ready, today and into the future.** Investing in EEC improves the workforce pipeline. Research has shown that high-quality Pre-K, for example, increases high school graduation by 31 percent, college attendance by more than 80 percent, and employment by 23 percent.<sup>5</sup> It leads to gainful employment later in life, with better health outcomes, and decreases the chances of incarceration and the need for social services.<sup>6</sup> The brain grows most rapidly in the first 5 years, and learning gaps appear as early as 9 months of age, making it crucial that meaningful investments begin in the early years.<sup>7</sup>

■ **Investing in high-quality early childhood education yields an attractive return on investment (ROI).** An investment of \$16,000 - \$18,000 per child annually in the early years returns a total public benefit of \$700,000 - \$800,000 over the life of the child.<sup>8</sup> Research suggests a greater ROI the earlier the investment, yielding positive returns in savings on education, crime and welfare spending, and increases tax revenues on earnings. In addition, mounting evidence shows that high-quality EEC can help establish the foundation for good health throughout life.<sup>9</sup> When children start school with a strong early learning foundation they are more likely to succeed in the early grades and be on a path to reading success by age 8. If children read at grade level by age 8, they are 4 times more likely to graduate from high school.<sup>10</sup> A high school dropout in Massachusetts, on average, costs taxpayers \$349,000 more over a lifetime – in decreased tax revenues and increased public assistance costs – than the average high school graduate.<sup>11</sup>

■ **Access to EEC helps families obtain and maintain employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.** When those programs are high-quality, it further supports families and businesses by providing an enriching learning environment that allows families to go to work knowing that their children are being better prepared for academic success. This leads to increased workforce productivity while simultaneously laying the foundation for a stronger workforce of tomorrow. Currently in Massachusetts, 69 percent of children under the age of 6 have both parents in the labor force.<sup>12</sup> Access to EEC impacts families who are eligible for subsidies but are on waitlists, as well as families who do not meet subsidized eligibility requirements but struggle to afford care.

■ **Quality early education and care can dramatically improve physical health throughout life.** Mounting evidence shows that high-quality EEC helps establish the foundation for long-term wellness. A child's earliest years are not only the period in which the most rapid brain development occurs; it is also a crucial time for shaping healthy behaviors. Quality programming can impact long-term mental health and rates of obesity – indicators of some of the most common chronic diseases including heart disease, diabetes, depression and substance abuse – providing good outcomes for children that also translate directly to health care savings for employers and taxpayers.<sup>13</sup>

### **Massachusetts System Data Points**

■ The Department of Early Education and Care licenses approximately 10,000 group child care centers and family child care homes across the state that serve infant, toddler, preschool and school-age children. EEC's licensed programs and agencies have the capacity to serve over 240,000 children.

■ There are 2,137 licensed center-based programs, 6,228 family child care homes and 492 public schools with preschool classrooms.

■ The Department of EEC's FY17 budget is \$544 million, supporting about 58,000 children from low-income or at-risk families to attend a high quality early education and care program. Of this \$544 million, 92 percent is governed by federal requirements.

■ There are an estimated 90,000 educators working in EEC-licensed programs in Massachusetts.

■ 14,813 children (ages 0-5 years) are on the Department of Early Education and Care's wait list for Income Eligible Child Care financial assistance.

■ Average cost for full-day full-year child care is \$17,062 for infants and \$12,781 for a 4-year-old, making Massachusetts among the top 10 least affordable states in the nation.<sup>14</sup>

■ Median annual educator salary is \$25,001 - \$27,500 in family child care and \$22,501 - \$25,000 in center-based programs. The average starting salary for a public school teacher is \$40,462.<sup>15</sup>

■ Median wage for child care workers has decreased by 2 percent and the wage for preschool teachers by 5 percent since 2010. Some 39 percent of child care worker families participate in one or more public income support programs.<sup>16</sup>

## Early Childhood Funding Streams

The per-child cost of high-quality preschool ranges from \$10,000 to \$15,000 depending on the program model. The Department of Early Education and Care's reimbursement rate to providers for full-day, full-year preschool is approximately \$8,500 per year. The Chapter 70 foundation budget rate for half-day public school preschool is \$3,586. Private rates average an annual cost of \$12,781 for 4-year-olds.

### Private

- Parent fees: Are the largest source of funding in the system, paid by an estimated 44 percent or 98,121 of the state's preschool-age population.<sup>17</sup>

### Federal

- Child Care Development Fund: Requires a state match, and has eligibility requirements tied to parents' work status. This funding source (\$481 million in FY17) provides subsidized income-eligible contracted slots and vouchers for DCF-involved children. Supplemented with state funding for waitlist reduction (\$12 million in FY16) and rate reserve for educator salaries (\$12.5 million in FY17). 76 percent of the EEC's total funding is federal, with an additional 16 percent as the required state match. Roughly 8 percent or 18,319 preschool-age children access programs through an EEC subsidy. There are waiting lists for state subsidies.

- Head Start: Funding flows directly to local Head Start programs, supplemented with \$9.1 million in state funding in FY17. There are 11,819 preschool-age children in Head Start, or 5 percent of the preschool-age population.

- Preschool Expansion Grant: Competitive grant providing \$15 million for 4 years to enroll more than 850 4-year-olds in high quality preschool classrooms in 5 communities.

### State

- Chapter 70 education aid: Aid to local school districts, which enroll an estimated 29,000 3 and 4-year olds annually, 13 percent of the preschool-age population, typically in half-day inclusive preschool classrooms (i.e., classes with 50 percent children with special needs, 50 percent typically developing children).

- Inclusive preschool learning environment: Serves children with and without disabilities in inclusion classrooms in public school, Head Start, and licensed center-based programs at \$9.2M in FY16.

- Early Childhood Educator Scholarship: Provides \$3.2 million annually to help EEC educators with the cost of pursuing AA and BA degrees.

- Educator and Provider Support Grant (EPS): \$3.3 million in FY16 to support educators in degree attainment and increased competency, accreditation and upward movement in Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), and foster a comprehensive professional development system.

- Universal Pre-K grant: \$6.3 million in FY16 to support preschool programs in QRIS with quality, curriculum, assessment, professional development.

## **Workforce System Components**

A vibrant, functioning workforce system has a variety of essential components. A robust system encourages career advancement, includes a shared understanding of core competencies, professional development and training, and career advancement that links knowledge and training attainment to compensation. Currently, within the EEC field, there are minimal entry-level requirements and minimal ongoing professional development requirements. There is no defined career pathway, professional development requirements do not build upon each other, and reimbursement rates do not always align with quality.

High quality early education and care yields an attractive ROI for government and taxpayers by increasing income tax revenue and decreasing government spending on crime, welfare and remedial education. It increases workforce productivity and deepens the current and future talent pool available to meet employers' workforce needs. It also supports success in school and beyond. All of these benefits, however, are only realized if the early childhood programs are of high quality, which requires developing, professionalizing and retaining the early education workforce.

The following is a review of key elements of the early childhood workforce system in Massachusetts and considerations that could be addressed:

### **1. Credentials and Degrees in Massachusetts**

In Massachusetts, there are different requirements for teachers in public school and licensed community-based settings resulting in critical gaps in foundational skills and competencies among the workforce. Currently, it is recommended but not required, that early educators in licensed programs have college degrees. Certifications for teacher and lead teacher require a minimum of a high-school diploma, plus college coursework and experience. A critical step in laying the foundation for a strong EEC workforce is clarifying a set of goals within the professional development framework in order to establish the skills and knowledge, or core competencies, required to be an effective early educator.

In an effort to increase the number and percentage of the EEC workforce with A.A. and B.A. degrees, the Massachusetts Legislature created the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Scholarship in FY06. For the past decade, the scholarship has helped thousands of educators pursue higher education and, with the help of enhanced tracking and outcome data, there may be an opportunity to build on the state's investment.

#### **Considerations:**

- Shortage of early childhood teachers with degrees, credentials and foundational skills in child development. EEC programs report increased hiring shortages and high turnover.
- Recognizing core competencies for early educators.
- ECE Scholarship data and monitoring.

## 2. Compensation

■ Compensation has contributed to high turnover and hiring shortages in community-based settings. The average salary in a center-based program is \$25,000 while the average kindergarten salary is \$67,000.<sup>18</sup>

■ The 2016 federal poverty guideline for a family of four in Massachusetts is \$24,300, just barely below the average salary for center based preschool teachers. Because the early education and care workforce is predominantly female, poor compensation perpetuates income inequality and denies the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency for workers and their families.

■ Massachusetts has increased compensation through the rate reserve (for subsidized programs only), UPK grant funding, and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) quality-improvement grants. However, there is no differentiated rate to recognize quality, therefore, no incentive to participate in the current QRIS system that is designed to align quality with rates.

### Considerations:

- Average salaries in center-based programs have led to high increases in turnover, and are just barely above the federal poverty level for a family of four.
- Rates are not tiered based on quality, and therefore, not aligned with a credential or professional development attainment or outcomes.

## 3. Professional Development

Professional development (PD) access and quality vary greatly. Early educators often access PD on nights and weekends, and online when possible. Community-based programs usually cannot offer substitutes and stipends as is the norm in K-12. Effectiveness of most PD is unknown, but new research indicates that coaching models are a promising strategy for improving teacher effectiveness.<sup>19</sup> Research also shows that for PD to be effective it should be ongoing, embedded and continuous.<sup>20</sup>

### Consideration:

- Early educators lack access to high-quality, relevant PD, and have fewer PD opportunities than K-12 teachers.

## 4. Career Ladder

In 2011, the EEC Board endorsed a career ladder as a resource and reference, but no official or mandated career ladder is in use currently.

### Consideration:

- No clear, widely used career ladder exists, which creates confusion in the field, limits professional advancement and contributes to high turnover.

## **5. Workforce Pipeline Coordination**

There are many workforce development initiatives at the state level; however there is no systematized coordination for early childhood professionals. The Department of Early Education and Care is the primary entity responsible for governing the early childhood sector. It is important to support collaboration efforts among the Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Higher Education and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, to help to address workforce needs that are dependent on policies tied in to those at the K-12 and higher education levels.

For example, high school students studying early childhood education at vocational-technical high schools should be connected to college and career opportunities. Similarly, higher education and early childhood lack alignment in the preparation of early educators and an obvious, professional career path. To ensure that Massachusetts has a high-quality early education workforce in the future, plans must support students and young professionals, and encourage them to stay in the field over the long-term.

### **Consideration:**

- Support strengthening coordination between the Department of EEC and other state education and workforce agencies.

## **Conclusions**

- 1. High-quality Early Education and Care (EEC) is a business imperative.** The Commonwealth should make access to high quality EEC a priority, not only to benefit our children, but because it is a workforce issue, an economic development issue and a business imperative. Quality EEC increases the talent pool required to meet employers' workforce needs. It also gives our children a better chance at succeeding in school and qualifying for high-potential job opportunities.
- 2. The early education system is in crisis and must be stabilized and strengthened.** Early childhood educator turnover is 30 percent and classrooms are going unfilled because of the lack of qualified teachers.<sup>21</sup> In Massachusetts, only 35 percent of early educators hold a B.A. degree or higher; and the average salary in center-based programs is \$25,000. To have a meaningful impact on children and on families, early education and care programs must be high-quality. The educator is the most important determinant of classroom quality.
- 3. The Commonwealth needs a comprehensive workforce development system for supporting early educators.** Currently, it is insufficient to create a pipeline of quality early educators. Massachusetts needs a functioning workforce development system with the essential, traditional components to properly support its workforce. A mature system includes an obvious career path, from education to employment, with compensation that is tied to professional development, educational attainment and outcomes.
- 4. There is not a long-term plan to sustain the early education and care system in Massachusetts.** In order to "professionalize the profession" for early childhood educators, there should be a comprehensive long-term workforce development strategy that plans 5, 10 and 20 years in advance to cultivate, attract, develop and retain educators.
- 5. Quality investments in the early education and care system must be designed to measure results.** Investments in the EEC workforce must achieve measurable results both for early educators and the children they serve. Establishing goals, collecting relevant data, and measuring progress must be part of an accountability system in EEC investments.

## Recommendations

Given the conclusions listed above, the research confirming the value of high-quality early education and care (EEC), and the importance of a professional EEC workforce to the Commonwealth's future, the EEC Business Advisory Group supports a mixed-delivery system of universal access to high-quality EEC, particularly for the state's most vulnerable children and families.

The recommendations in this report support this framework by stabilizing providers, spurring higher quality by aligning rates with quality measures, and urging the creation of a sustainable workforce development system. The Commonwealth should support planning for EEC to scale these investments in quality and increase access over the long term.

### Stabilize the Early Education and Care Workforce (Years 1 and 2)

**Recommendation 1:** Stabilize the early childhood workforce, in the short term, through a rate reserve to providers, building upon the investment made in the FY17 state budget, and consider a goal of working toward a higher market rate over the next 2-3 fiscal years.

**Recommendation 2:** Develop the key elements of a workforce system, including but not limited to the establishment of a core credential, aligning core competencies and connecting to QRIS, professional development, and a career ladder. Update core competencies and establish stackable credentials that address the need for foundational knowledge of all early educators.

### Build Quality (Years 3 +)

**Recommendation 3:** Reimburse early childhood providers contingent upon attainment of the core credential and other quality measures through a plan to align professional development and training opportunities with rates. Initially focus on the most vulnerable populations, prioritizing children ages 0-5.

**Recommendation 4:** Support coordinated professional development, scholarships and other activities to assist educators in attaining additional training and educational opportunities.

### Create a Sustainable System (Ongoing)

**Recommendation 5:** Establish a long-term goal for reimbursement rates to providers that ensures high quality, a timeline to achieve that goal, and a plan to both scale these investments in quality and increase access as expeditiously as the Commonwealth can afford to do so.

**Recommendation 6:** Increase collaboration and explore opportunities within the Workforce Skills Cabinet to identify opportunities for early childhood educators. This should include building and strengthening connections with vocational technical schools, community colleges,

4-year colleges and the University of Massachusetts; engaging the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development to explore strategies to include the early education workforce in high-priority sector initiatives; and exploring current funding streams and initiatives at public higher education institutions that could further support the early educator workforce.

**Recommendation 7:** Identify IT needs to assess measure and track workforce development outcomes.

**Recommendation 8:** Establish a series of benchmarks for the implementation of these recommendations and report progress, findings and recommendations.

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## **Appendices**

- A. Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group Members
- B. Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group Statement of Purpose
- C. October 6, 2016 Presentation by Dept. of EEC Commissioner Tom Weber
- D. Boston Globe Column, Shirley Leung, June 3, 2016
- E. Endnotes.

## **Appendix A. Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group Members**

*Speaker Robert A. DeLeo, Massachusetts Speaker of the House*

*Representative Alice Peisch*

*Robert Bradford, President & CEO, North Shore Chamber of Commerce*

*Jonathan Butler, Vice President & COO, 1Berkshire Strategic Alliance, Inc.*

*JD Chesloff, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Roundtable*

*Nancy Creed, President, Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce*

*Secretary Jay Gonzalez*

*Rick Lord, President & CEO, Associated Industries of Massachusetts*

*Keith Mahoney, Vice President of Communications and Public Affairs, The Boston Foundation*

*Jesse Mermell, President, The Alliance for Business Leadership*

*Matthew Mincieli, Executive Director, TechNet*

*Lt. Governor Timothy P. Murray, President & CEO, Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce*

*Linda Noonan, Executive Director, Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education*

*Wendy Northcross, CEO, Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce*

*Jim Rooney, President & CEO, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce*

*Secretary Rick Sullivan, President & CEO, Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council*

*Mary Walachy, Executive Director, The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation*

## **Appendix B. Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group Statement of Purpose**

### **Mission**

The Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group will provide systems and management expertise, strategic guidance, and data-based programmatic and financial advice focused on the critical needs of the early education and care workforce. Through convenings with subject matter experts, resource collection and analysis, and sharing of best practices, the Business Advisory Group will produce a series of findings and recommendations that “support those who make it their business to educate and care for our youngest and most vulnerable residents.”

### **Theory of Action**

Quality early education helps increase a child’s likelihood of success in school, in their career and in life. Investment in high quality early education leads to being more employable later in life, and decreases the chances of incarceration and remedial services. A key determinant of “quality” is the qualifications of early educators, yet there is an estimated 30% turnover rate in the family/center-based early educator workforce each year. The current compensation structure for early educators does not match that for public (Pre-K) school educators, and there is an insufficient workforce development infrastructure in Massachusetts to create a pipeline of quality early educators.

### **The Business Case**

#### **Businesses need employees who are well prepared and job-ready, now and into the future.**

Investment in early childhood education is a workforce-pipeline issue. Research has shown that high-quality pre-K, for example, increases high school graduation by 31%, college attendance by more than 80 percent, and employment by 23 percent.

#### **Investing in high quality early childhood education yields an attractive return on investment.**

Investment of \$16,000 - \$18,000 per child annually in the early years returns total public benefit of \$700,000 - \$800,000 over the life of the child. Research suggests greater ROI the earlier the investment, which yields positive return in savings on education, crime and welfare spending, and increases tax revenue on earnings.

#### **Early education programs assist families in obtaining and maintaining employment and economic self-sufficiency.**

High quality early education programs impact business and families by providing an enriching learning environment for children that allow families to work and become economically self-sufficient.

### **Timeline**

The EEC Business Advisory Group will convene in April of 2016, and periodically throughout the year, with the goal of issuing its initial set of recommendations by the end of the calendar year for the purpose of informing FY18 House budget and policy recommendations.

# Appendix C. October 6, 2016 Presentation by EEC Commissioner Weber Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group



## EEC Overview and Workforce Development Considerations

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EEC Business Advisory Group  
October 6, 2016



### EEC Oversight and Responsibilities

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- The Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) was established in 2005.
- EEC is the lead agency for all early education and care services and funding in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
  - Thomas Weber, Commissioner
  - Eleven member Board of Early Education and Care
- EEC's responsibilities and services include:
  - Program Licensing
  - Providing Access to Early Education
  - Background Checks
  - Investigations and Enforcement

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### Agenda

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- Department of Early Education and Care Overview
- Context
- Proposed Workforce Action Items and Justification
- Conclusions
- Next Steps

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## Early Education Program Licensing



- EEC licenses approximately 10,000 group child care centers and family child care homes across the state.
  - Infants
  - Toddlers
  - Preschoolers
  - School-age children
- EEC also licenses about 500 “Residential and Placement” Programs:
  - Group residential care facilities
  - Temporary shelters
  - Foster care placement agencies
  - Adoption agencies
- EEC’s licensed programs and agencies have the capacity to serve over 240,000 children.

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## Providing Access to Early Education



- EEC supports about 58,000 children from low-income or at-risk families to attend a high quality early education and care program.
- EEC subsidizes three types of child care:
  - Supportive Child Care for children in the care or custody of the Department of Children and Families
  - Transitional Child Care for families who receive Transitional Aid for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) from the Department of Transitional Assistance
  - Income Eligible Child Care for low-income families

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## Context: Minimal Educator Qualifications for Licensed Programs



Education Level	Work Experience, Courses, Other EEC Requirements	Qualification for Position
Less than high school	One year experience as a parent or one year full time experience caring for young children (first aid/CPR certification required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Child Care Provider caring for up to 6 children</li> <li>• Certified Assistant for Family Child Care</li> </ul>
High school diploma or equivalent	Must be under supervision of a qualified teacher	Assistant Teacher in Group Child Care
	3 credit course in child growth and development and 9 months of experience	Teacher
	12 credits in early childhood education and 36 months of experience	Lead Teacher
	12 credits in early childhood education, 36 months of experience, 2 college credits in child care administration, and 2 additional college credits in early childhood education	Director I
	12 credits in early childhood education, 36 months of experience, 4 college credits in child care administration, and 2 additional college credits in early childhood education	Director II

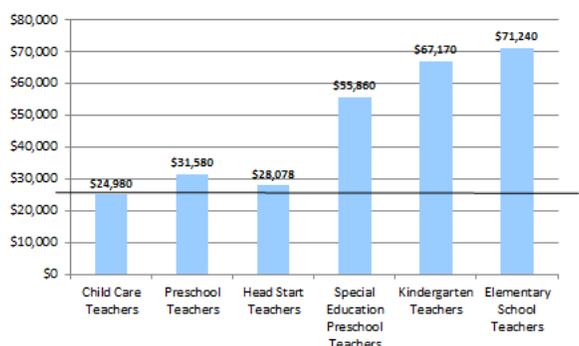
## Context: Funding & Compensation



- MA has **no dedicated state funding sources to support early education and care**, as do some other states.
- In MA, the **median wage for child care workers has decreased** by 2% and the wage for preschool teachers by 5% since 2010 and 39% of child care worker families participate in one or more public income support program. (Early Childhood Workforce Index, 2016).
- **Rate of pay is very low** compared to other industries.
- Regarding the **MA CCDBG State Plan**, ACF states: "We continue to be concerned that your rates may not allow for equal access. OCC plans to make review of payment rates a priority for our upcoming monitoring visits. The conditional approval of your plan **does not** constitute a final determination that your payment rates are sufficient to provide access to child care services for eligible families that are comparable to those provided to families that do not receive subsidies, as required by law."
- **Low compensation** undermines quality.
- EEC Subsidies and most grant funds are **not directly targeted to wages**, regulation and policy do not dictate rates of pay or require that funds are used for pay increases.

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## Context: State Median Annual Workforce Earnings



Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 1 Year data (2014); US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics (2015); Head Start Program Information Report (2015)

\* SNAP eligibility for family of three: \$26,124

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## Proposed Actions:



### Human Capital:

1. Create a Core Credential that addresses the need for foundational knowledge of all educators.
2. Develop a Workforce Development Fund that will define and support a coherent career pathway, beginning with the core credential.

### Compensation and Rates:

3. Increase compensation for educators through rates and scholarships.

### IT Infrastructure

4. Create IT capacity to deliver, support and track workforce development.

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## Justification



- There are **minimal entry level requirements** in EEC Regulations and **minimal on-going professional development requirements**
- Data on most common **licensing citations and QRIS Validation Study findings** point to many **fundamental issues** such as health and safety, qualifications, administration, etc.
- Many **QRIS Level 1 programs are not meeting Minimal Standards** for quality; added supports may be needed to support these programs at the lower levels of quality in order for them to progress in the system.
- Licensing staff observe a **lack of qualified staff, increased legal actions, high educator turnover, and a significant drop in fcc licenses** creating cycles of non compliance with ratio requirements, teachers with credentials that lack experience.
- EEC's **Professional development requirements don't build** upon each other. Educators understand licensing requirements are not fully using QRIS to help them move along a career ladder.
- **Clarification is needed regarding use of CEUs** to meet PD requirements.

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## Conclusions:



- **Competency is the demonstration of knowledge and skills held both by individuals and programs as a whole.**
- **How competency is defined and measured depends on whether the goal is individual or collective competence.**
- **EEC currently supports the development of knowledge and skills at both the individual and program level, however:**
  - A direct tie to core competencies is not made,
  - Core competencies don't fully align with other definitions of quality and need revision/updating,
  - Measurements of competency vary or do not yet exist.

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## Next Steps:



- **Revisit and update EEC Core Competencies**
  - Evaluate models in other states
- **Examine current Teacher Qualification Requirements in terms of where core credentials should align with regulations.**
  - In the longer term determine if current licensing requirements and how they are measured, meet workforce development needs.
- **Define expectation of competency by developing core credentials for individuals and programs with distinction made for role (i.e. assistant vs. director) and setting.**
- **Revise the QRIS Standards based on Validation Study findings.**
  - Incorporate core credential expectations that include individual definitions, program level expectations and achievable measures.
- **Maintain on-going communication with the field (providers, higher education, stakeholders, etc.)**
  - Gather input on competencies, credential development, QRIS revision and measurement mechanisms.

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## Next Steps:



- **Test in FY '17:**

- Design and offer professional development on 1-2 core competencies via QRIS Quality Grant such as: child growth and development in the context of positive interactions and learning environments and curriculum and instruction (a two-part series)
  - Draw from existing resources
  - Make available for individuals, programs, on line and in languages other than English
  - Draw on EPS Grant Support (PD and Coaching)
  - Allow for purchase of materials if needed for implementation
- Pilot Apprenticeship Program
- Benchmark outcomes via classroom observation
- Study economic impacts (per current contract with UMDI)
- Incorporate learning into FY 18 workforce-related grants

- **Address Information Technology Needs**

- Professional Qualifications Registry (PQR)
- Teacher Qualification (TQ)
- Learning Management System (LMS)
- QRIS Program Manager (QPM)

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## Appendix D.

# The Boston Globe

## Putting early education front and center in Mass.



By [Shirley Leung](#) Globe Columnist June 03, 2016

House Speaker Bob DeLeo is done talking about the value of preschool education. It's time to get it right in Massachusetts.

This week DeLeo began meeting with a group of business leaders to develop a plan on how the state could increase not only access to early education but improve quality. His goal: Come up with a set of recommendations that can be turned into legislation or new programs by the next budget cycle.

More than expanding charter schools, reforming preschool could be one of the most important education initiatives for the Commonwealth in decades. Study after study indicates that kids who are schooled at an early age graduate from high school and college at higher rates than those who do not. They are also less likely to abuse drugs, end up in jail, or rely on public assistance.

Yet in the fight for scarce public dollars, early education has been low on the priority list, overshadowed by the needs in K-12 and public colleges.

"We're so worried about kindergarten and up, but we're really not setting forth the foundation for education," DeLeo told me in an interview Wednesday at his State House office. "In talking it through, I found that we really weren't paying enough attention to early education."

Even though Massachusetts was the first state to create a department of early education in 2005, rolling out universal preschool has been more complicated than anyone thought. Of the nearly 225,000 children who are between 3 and 5 years old in Massachusetts, about 30 percent remain unschooled, according to advocacy group Strategies for Children.

Of those in a preschool, only a quarter are in a publicly financed program. That means, by and large, kids in preschool are from families who can foot the bill at a private center, which at an average cost of \$12,800 a year is the most expensive in the country.

DeLeo sought out the business community, knowing they would get it. Good preschools are an investment in the future workforce, and give working parents peace of mind. What he didn't expect was the response.

"The enthusiasm, I have to tell you, was surprising to me," DeLeo said. Business leaders "felt they were missing out on an opportunity to correct something."

Executives have been out front on lifting the state cap on charter schools, pushing for more math and science courses, and creating workforce development partnerships at community colleges. Early education — which encompasses programs and schooling for kids 0 to 5 — hasn't been high on the agenda.

"My experience is that early education and care have been important to the business community, but it hasn't ever been anyone's No. 1 issue," said JD Chesloff, executive director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable. "It takes leadership and a champion."

That's where DeLeo and Jay Gonzalez come in. Chesloff's group began taking a closer look at the issue earlier this year at the urging of Gonzalez, chief executive of CeltiCare Health and a former administration and finance secretary under Deval Patrick. After Gonzalez went into the private sector, Patrick appointed him chair of the state board of early education and care. Gonzalez served only a year before Governor Charlie Baker appointed a new chair, but Gonzalez's time on the board made a lasting impression.

"This has become my favorite issue," said Gonzalez, who is a member of the roundtable. "This is the most formative point in the person's life — 90 percent of brain development happens before age 5 — yet it's a time in the life when we as society are doing the least."

After reading studies on how early education can close the achievement gap and increase chances of success in careers and quality of life, the roundtable's board voted in March to make early education one of its issues.

The roundtable was among more than a dozen business groups, including the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, and the Alliance for Business Leadership, that gathered Wednesday in DeLeo's office to strategize about early education.

DeLeo himself got interested in the topic two years ago, intrigued by similar studies that had caught the eye of roundtable members.

"The one that really got to me was the fact of lower incarceration rates," said DeLeo. A study that has been following low-income children in Chicago for two decades found that those who attended preschool and full-day kindergarten experienced a 22 percent reduction in felony arrests and 28 percent reduction in jail time.

The speaker decided he wanted early education to be one his priorities this year, and has already included an extra\$10 million in the House budget to improve programming and help boost the salaries of preschool teachers.

All the buzz about early education has been focused on the concept of preschool for all. DeLeo wants to refocus the idea on quality, which hinges on retaining teachers. Early education primarily consists of private sector and nonprofit providers, and public subsidies are directed to these centers so low-income children can enroll.

Early education teachers are paid on average about \$25,000 a year, while public school teachers earn a starting salary of roughly \$45,000, which explains why the annual turnover rate among early educators is about 30 percent.

"You can have world-class standards, you can have a world-class curriculum, but you want to make sure you have the strongest workforce possible," said Tom Weber, the state commissioner of early education and care. "The early education workforce is the delivery system."

Weber tells me the state has learned a lot in the decade since it created a department of early education. A better preschool system will be about getting providers to increase wages for early educators, while trying to build scale so more children have access.

It won't be easy, but at least everyone knows what's at stake. It's an important moment for early education in the Commonwealth, which makes DeLeo and the business community's timing impeccable.

## Appendix E. Endnotes.

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*I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the membership of the Early Education and Care Business Advisory Group.*

*Since announcing the formation of this advisory group in March of 2016, I have been heartened by your engagement and enthusiasm in our efforts, and your input and guidance throughout this process has been invaluable.*

*Special thanks also goes out to JD Chesloff at the Massachusetts Business Roundtable for his ongoing support.*

*Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Early Education and Care workforce for all you do supporting children and families in the Commonwealth.*

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. DeLeo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small circular stamp or mark at the end.

ROBERT A. DeLEO