EEC Board Committee
Planning and Evaluation

Thursday, December 9, 2010
11:30am-2:00pm

Department of Early Education and Care
51 Sleeper St. 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

AGENDA

Members of the Committee Present
Sherri Killins, EEC Commissioner (Ex-Officio)
Carol Craig O’Brien, Committee Chairperson
Eleonora Villegas-Reimers, Board Member
JD Chesloff, Board Chairperson

Members of Board Present
N/A

EEC Staff Present
Sarah Harding
Evelyn Nellum
Dena Papanikolaou
Kelly Schaffer

The meeting was called to order at: 11:35 am.

Welcome and Introductions
Committee members were welcomed.

Routine Business:

Minutes
Members had an opportunity to review the minutes. No changes were necessary for the November 16, 2010 minutes.

Disclosures
Carol Craig O’Brien disclosed that she works for the Westwood Public Schools as an Early Childhood Coordinator and is a recipient of a CFCE grant.

Eleonora Villegas-Reimers disclosed that she works for Wheelock College who is a recipient of EEC grant funds.

Agency Updates
No Commissioner updates.

Committee Updates

- **Early Childhood Information System Institute/Legislative Action**
  (Handout - Early Childhood Data System: Establishing a Policy and Legislative Context)

Commissioner Killins provided an update on the ECIS and Harvard Symposium which occurred in November. She noted the Symposium gave Board members a few items to think about, such as universal data exchange, access and confidentiality issues. At the Symposium there was also discussion about protective factors and how they link to a child’s data. Stakeholder buy-in was strong, and they talked about some of the challenges in implementing a data system along with not wanting it to generate increasing levels of work for staff.

Commissioner Killins also noted that she met with the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Education, Representative Martha Walz. They had a conversation about legislation related to data collection - EEC has an obligation to know about all children, but the current legislation does not give the tools to do so - and they also discussed the challenge of opponents who may worry about “big brother” collecting data. Rep. Walz wants to support full day kindergarten but no one knows how many children that would affect and what the impact would be on local aid. Commissioner Killins acknowledged that a data system would be helpful in describing those numbers. EEC will be providing draft legislation related to the ECIS by Friday (12/10).

Finally, Commissioner Killins updated the Committee that Advisory feedback has been helpful related to the ECIS and she pointed to Rep. Canessa’s feedback that relative to preventing drop out, data collection in early education is important. She also acknowledged a conversation with Secretary Reville regarding legislation for the ECIS and noted that Governor Patrick may want to file the legislation as part of his own Readiness Agenda.

Lastly, Commissioner Killins provided an overview of the Department’s position related to the recent release of a Pew report on state pre-kindergarten investments. EEC’s position is that the Governor is committed to supporting universal preschool as part of his Readiness Agenda. The Department does not believe that one line item in the budget is the way to get to universal pre-kindergarten, and other resources have been utilized for this purpose. For instance, ARRA funds have been used to support access and expanding quality. EEC is also preparing for the launch of its QRIS with funds attached, and this and other initiatives link to the UPK standards. Pew looks at a single line item (UPK), but EEC is balancing access and quality through other line items as well.

Discussion
The Committee questioned the feedback related to the Pew report and Commissioner Killins explained that the model Pew is looking for is more like that of states such as New Jersey or Connecticut where they primarily fund access. Pew doesn’t give credit for children enrolled through ARRA funds, and there is also issue when funding is tied to parental work status because they are viewing universal pre-kindergarten as a right. The Committee continued to discuss whether universal preschool access was originally tied to parental work status and where that EEC requirement came from.
Board Chairperson JD Chesloff responded that Sarah Walzer from PCHP (Parent Child Home Program) and a local PCHP representative met with him yesterday and discussed recent cuts to their program. At that meeting, conversation focused on whether the strategy would be around an earmark or number of children served. Commissioner Killins responded that is not the way the Department is headed. EEC needs to get legs under the home visiting legislation. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff noted that the national PCHP representative understands this larger view and that locally the PCHP may feel as if the CFCE merging took away some autonomy. Commissioner Killins acknowledged that prior to the CFCE merging families were accessing services through three separate points and not a single supportive community.

Commissioner Killins then updated the Committee that on April 8, Reach Out and Read (ROR) will be holding a conference sponsored by EEC and will be bringing information to begin community relationships with pediatricians. Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien responded that PCHP has argued ROR should not be a part of that group, and Commissioner Killins responded that despite no new funding ROR has been able to connect with every pediatrician’s office in Springfield.

- **Advisory Council on System Planning**
  (Handout- Advisory Council Feedback on System Planning)

Commissioner Killins provided a handout on Advisory Council Feedback on System Planning and asked the Committee to think about whether there is anything in the feedback that they feel the Department is not currently supporting in some capacity. She noted the Advisory is interested in knowing if the Board is going in the directions that are cared about. Feedback from Committee members needs to be received by January 14th.

**Discussion**
The Committee asked what the Commissioner’s feedback is and Commissioner Killins responded that the document includes EEC responses to each piece of Advisory feedback. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff asked where the feedback is from the Legislative Advisory and Commissioner Killins responded that document is separate and will come later.

The Committee agreed it is critical for the Board to respond to the Advisory’s feedback at the January meeting when they will all come together again for the full Advisory meeting.

- **Accreditation Expectations for Income Eligible Programs**
  (Handout- Accreditation Expectations for Income Eligible Contractors)

Commissioner Killins reminded the Committee that the bidding process for Income Eligible included a line which said that IE programs must be accredited and participate in QRIS. When it came time for the bidding and contracts, this requirement got watered down because QRIS had not yet been implemented. Accreditation also got linked to QRIS when this requirement could have moved on its own. She stated that EEC has drafted a letter to providers that asks them to be in the process of being accredited by 2012, as this will give programs 18 months to respond. She also acknowledged that the Board resolution says that resources will be made available to do this, and that she thinks the Department is providing this resource through QRIS. Commissioner Killins continued to say that
it may not be as necessary to push all of the family child care providers for accreditation, as they are concerned about QRIS.

Discussion

Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien asked to clarify application versus in process related to accreditation for IE programs, as she thought the language said the Department would give those programs 18 months to get accredited. Commissioner Killins responded that she’s certain the letter says in process, and she agreed that application itself is not sufficient.

EEC General Counsel Dena Papanikolaou joined the meeting and commented that EEC’s PMT group is aware that accreditation is a requirement for IE but that they have expected a process. The group providers, including preschool and infant/toddler have expected the requirement, but because family child care and school age was up in the air they expected more of a process for phasing in and determining what is required. She noted the group had concerns about the requirements being implemented without notice or process.

Commissioner Killins noted that programs must be in the application process for accreditation by the end of FY12 for preschool and be in the QRIS system by FY12. Commissioner Killins continued to say that programs will need to submit documentation showing their accreditation application level. She noted that 65% of IE programs were already accredited at the time of their original contract. Commissioner Killins also stated that family child care homes and after school programs will also have to participate in the QRIS. Dena Papanikolaou asked whether the QRIS requirement will be for a certain level and Commissioner Killins responded no, that the system is too new to define a level for them. EEC will let providers come into the system and learn before they are given a requirement for a certain level.

Dena Papanikolaou asked where a BA degree fit in for school age programs, as this was another concern of the PMT group. Commissioner Killins responded that there is a requirement for site coordinators and program administrators but EEC is not defining educational group leader because there is no research to support it. Dena Papanikolaou added that school age programs were concerned about having to be at a certain level in QRIS and Commissioner Killins responded that we will give them time to enter the system first.

Commissioner Killins continued to say that programs will need to submit documentation showing their accreditation application level. She noted that 65% of IE programs were already accredited at the time of their original contract.

The Committee then discussed how family child care providers will be required to participate in QRIS. They discussed whether it will be only providers who accept subsidies that will be required to participate, to which Commissioner Killins responded yes and that they can come in at level 1 and be licensed and that in two years the Department may decide they can stay at that level or if they have to demonstrate their moving to the next level. The Committee also discussed whether requiring QRIS might potentially cause a provider to not accept a subsidized child. They also questioned whether all providers should be required to participate in QRIS, but decided that because EEC does not pay systems for all providers this would be difficult to require. Requiring providers that accept subsidized children makes sense because that’s where funds for quality go. Commissioner Killins also updated the Committee that the new online QRIS system will allow programs to see how many standards they’ve met at each level and this is a good development tool and can be a conversation
Commissioner Killins concluded by saying that her and Sarah Harding, EEC Human Resources Director, met with a group of 6 systems in the state and the meeting was positive and systems wanted to be prepared and supportive of their providers.

**QRIS/Wheelock QRIS Meeting**  
(Handouts – PowerPoint presentation and revised QRIS standards)

Commissioner Killins provided an overview of the PowerPoint presentation that will be presented to the Board meeting on Tuesday. The presentation provides history and information about the changes EEC has made. The Committee confirmed that the vote next week will be on the standards and measurements. Board Chair JD Chesloff inquired how much time was allocated for the Board to discuss QRIS at the meeting and Commissioner Killins responded that they’ve seen most of the presentation before but the public needs the big picture and will include the fit with the strategic plan, the purpose, definitions, etc. They will also talk about the role of the entities involved; those providing input, EDC and EEC. She added that people are worried about how EEC will support QRIS.

Commissioner Killins continued her presentation and touched on teacher qualifications and outcomes to come and family and community at the core of QRIS. She also provided information about scaffolding and the process of revision to the standards. She acknowledged that an email was sent to the 28,000 people in the workforce registry and 800 people responded with feedback – some positive and some negative. Board Member Eleonora Villegas-Reimers asked if most resistance is because of educational requirements and Commissioner Killins responded yes, and Committee Chair Carol Craig O’Brien added that it is also around coaching and professional development and providers may be afraid they won’t be able to get there.

Commissioner Killins continued to summarize the presentation and noted that the standards went through a revision process with EDC and took out items that are in licensing and eliminated those that had no research base, no way to document or were not aligned with the standards. The Committee discussed whether programs were still able to request one exemption and agreed that they are comfortable with continuing this practice. They also questioned what other states are doing and Commissioner Killins responded that some states, particularly those with a point system, would not require exemptions. She also added that EEC has a choice to accept exemptions or not. She continued to go over the major themes and noted that Sarah Harding will be working on a technical assistance manual by January.

The Committee made suggestions for reorganizing the presentation to make it more concise for Tuesday’s Board meeting.

Commissioner Killins next presented slides about feedback and changes made and noted that a lot of feedback shows that EEC has the standards right, but that there are other pieces to follow such as professional development. Committee Chair Carol Craig O’Brien added that related to staff qualifications she heard feedback that people think the standards are right but it will be difficult to get there. Commissioner Killins continued to present administrative decisions that will need to be made and the Committee clarified that the decisions are EEC administrative decisions and not for the Committee or Board to vote on. The Committee offered a few additional suggestions about the organization of the presentation and how to make the vote clear. They also decided to remove SAC
from the Board agenda to allow more time for QRIS and will ask people to withhold questions until the end of the presentation.

The Committee discussed that they will have the revised standards in their binder and they will be posted online. Revisions are still being made. The Committee also discussed the process for if the standards are approved and then EEC needs to make clarifying or formatting changes and if this would be allowed. Commissioner Killins asked Dena Papanikolaou to clarify and Dena responded that language can be added to the motion that will allow EEC to make changes for consistency, clarify and grammar. She also added that the Commissioner will decide what the larger issues are. The Committee continued to discuss whether there needed to be language in the motion that says that substantive changes must be revised by the Committee and whether the Committee would decide if something has to go back to the Board for vote. Dena Papanikolaou stated that the Committee gives feedback but the decision lies with Commissioner Killins. Commissioner Killins could also report back to the Committee on any improvements.

Commissioner Killins provided a handout that outlined feedback related to the definition of diversity. Diversity was meant to represent a broader set of ideas about diversity, but some in the field have interpreted differently. The Committee reviewed the handout and decided to combine definitions presented to make a single definition of the term.

**Legislative Report Framework Outline/Draft**  
(Handouts – DRAFT (12/9) Legislative Report)

Commissioner Killins noted that the draft Legislative Report provides no updates for the purpose of discussion. January 19th will be an orientation for freshman, and in February EEA will do some work around the Legislative Report. She also noted that EEC is thinking through the “what’s next” section of the report and this will be updated, and the push is to be objective about what the agency is doing with the money in terms of outcomes.

**Discussion**

Board Chairperson JD Chesloff asked when the orientation is on January 19th and Commissioner Killins responded that it is 1:00-3:00pm. The event in February will be around the release of the Legislative Report. Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien noted that the report will go to the Board for discussion in January and in February for vote. It was also discussed that there will be an executive summary to the report.

**Commissioner’s Evaluation**  
(Handout - Board survey from 2010 evaluation)

Board Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien updated the Committee that they can consider what was done for the evaluation in the past and do some tweaking so that they are on schedule for the evaluation to occur in February. She continued to say that she sent an email to all Board members asking them for feedback about the process and she got three responses – Joan Wasser Gish, Mary Pat Messmer, and JD Chesloff. She noted that Joan Wasser Gish felt the evaluation was comprehensive but deferred to last year’s Board members for the process. Board Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien noted that Mary Pat Messmer’s feedback included that the process and format was fine, but that she felt it is problematic if
with the Commissioner as CEO the evaluation information that Board members send goes to a staff member who reports to the Commissioner. The Committee discussed that the issue was not reflective of the competency of staff, but the information going through a staff person at all. Potential solutions discussed included the information coming through the Committee or Board Chairperson JD Chesloff.

Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien continued to say that feedback from JD Chesloff included whether a survey of staff should be done again this year and asked to clarify if that was part of the evaluation process. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff added that the staff survey worked great last year and people seemed generally happy with it. Another staff survey would keep with consistency and they already have a benchmark for progress and it may identify places for improvement. Commissioner Killins responded that the staff survey was a request and not part of the evaluation. The Department learned some things from the survey but she added that improvement would not be seen. It was about organizational climate and was not a measurement factor. Commissioner Killins continued to say that she does not think it’s appropriate to redo and she cited staff wanting an all staff meeting, which has not yet been able to happen. She added that a staff survey is something that should be done as a manager but not as an evaluative measure. Commissioner Killins noted that last year there was also talk about a 360, which is not an evaluation but a developmental tool that provides feedback. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff responded that he thinks it’s fine if a staff survey is not part of the evaluation but that we should think about doing it again. Commissioner Killins asked Board Member Eleonora Villegas-Reimers whether she thought it should be done again and added that if you look at the things staff are saying – such as the Department is understaffed and the agency doesn’t get together enough – those things are being addressed. She continued to say that doing a staff survey and not having the resources is difficult.

The Committee continued to discuss whether a staff survey should be done periodically as a way to help direct resources. Commissioner Killins asked Sarah Harding to ask staff if they want to do the survey again. Sarah Harding responded to say that licensing staff wants to get together for an all staff meeting and that there is a committee of staff who are committed to responding to the issues from the staff survey. She suggested doing the survey again after the all staff meeting or some other activities are complete. She also noted that communication is an issue and perhaps doing a survey after some of that is done would be helpful. Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien responded that the staff survey is not part of the Commissioner’s evaluation, but that as a Board member it was helpful to hear. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff acknowledged not wanting to lose the opportunity of having last year’s staff survey as a benchmark to be able to see trends over time. He suggested adding a component about priorities from last year’s meeting and retreat from the previous year.

Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien stated that last year the Commissioner was asked to take everything the Department was doing and translate that into response to the evaluation questions and noted that all of the accomplishments create a huge documentation process. She raised the question of whether the detailed information is helpful. Commissioner Killins responded that the issue was not rewriting the Legislative Report but instead talking about the leadership that led to it. She also noted that the other part of the process is the Board telling her what they want her to focus on. Board Chairperson JD Chesloff responded that this would be the retreat priorities and Commissioner Killins noted that some are broad. She continued to say that last year there were some outlier comments in the evaluation and she questioned what the process is to know.

The Committee continued to discuss the role that the Board plays and Commissioner Killins added that a good thing about the evaluation process is that it lends itself to the priorities of the board and provides a way to evaluate if that is still the same direction they’re headed. For instance, if EEC gets a $4M line
item for QRIS, that will put a lot more attention on QRIS and the Department will have to make it a central item. The Committee continued to discuss that organizing the evaluation into the priorities of the retreat would be helpful, or the Commissioner could work off of the executive summary that results from the Legislative Report. They agreed that it’s helpful for the Commissioner to outline the accomplishments.

Next, the Committee returned to the conversation about staff feedback as part of the Commissioner’s evaluation. Commissioner Killins noted that the Department’s three year staffing plan is in response to some criticism. Committee Chair Carol Craig O’Brien added that there is a lot of change going on and asked if the leadership competency section of the evaluation would include anything related to staff feedback. Board Chair JD Chesloff responded that it seems versus a year ago that the Department is more stable with defined roles. Commissioner Killins responded that it is unstable in a different way this year. She acknowledged that some things aren’t done well and asked if the evaluation process for that should be repeated and made public. Board Chair JD Chesloff added that an update or report from the staff survey from one year ago would be helpful and could say what was learned and what was done in response. The Board could then use this when thinking about management competencies. Committee Chair Carol Craig O’Brien noted there are two separate issues – it is heard that a staff survey is a management tool, but the question is how to address the Board’s need to know about in house information. Sarah Harding responded that the progress on staffing issues can be different and not concrete and she suggested allowing more than one year between staff surveys, she suggested that the original survey was done in March 2010 and allow 18 months and do another staff survey. Commissioner Killins added that there may be other changes coming in February around the time of the evaluation. Committee Chair Carol Craig O’Brien stated that staff satisfaction versus leadership and reporting back would be different and noted that progress can be reported. Sarah Harding offered to take the staff survey and map it into core competencies of leadership. Board Chair JD Chesloff noted not wanting to lose the opportunity to compare this year to last year. He also suggested a one-page document be drafted as part of the survey that maps to the rest of the survey to inform how the agency responded to staff. The Committee and Commissioner Killins agreed that mapping last year’s staff survey to how the Commissioner responded to the issues would be done as part of the Commissioner’s evaluation.

Finally, the Committee discussed the issue of a staff person receiving Board feedback for the Commissioner’s evaluation. They discussed the process by which the survey is done and considered whether it should be done online or by paper. They also discussed whether an EEC staff person could load the survey onto survey monkey and then JD Chesloff is the only person who is able to view the responses. The other option presented was that an EEC staff person loads the survey and then Sarah Harding views the responds. Carol Craig O’Brien will follow up with Mary Pat Messmer to find out how she feels about the options. Commissioner Killins added that last year Julie Culhane called all Board members and JD could do this for the current year. Board Chair JD Chesloff responded that he could call everyone and ask for any additional comments and then summarize feedback. He added that they will need to think about a timeline. Sarah Harding concluded the conversation by stating that EEC will clean up the evaluation draft by January 15th and Board Chair JD Chesloff added that a notice should go to Board members about the process and timeline for the evaluation.

**Community and Strategic Planning- Professional Development and CCRR**

Commissioner Killins noted this agenda item will be held until January.
SAC Early Childhood and Out of School Time State Wide Assessment- Design Discussion
(No materials provided)

Commissioner Killins updated the Committee that the SAC Early Childhood and Out of School Time Statewide Assessment will go out before the January meeting.

Discussion
Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O'Brien asked if the assessment is a survey of programs and Commissioner Killins responded that it also surveys parents and others. EEC has a draft and is aligning it with national assessments. Committee Chairperson Carol Craig O’Brien reminded the Committee that there were recommendations in October and follow up in November. Commissioner Killins concluded that the assessment will be out prior to the January meeting.

Board Priority assigned to Committee to build upon the system of Early Education and Care
(No materials provided)

Commissioner Killins stated that EEC staff Anita Moeller is working on a presentation on EEC’s four major systems – Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE), Professional Development, and Mental Health. The presentation will describe what EEC tried to buy, what the Department is getting and what we still need. A question for the January Board meeting will be are those the right systems.

The next meeting of the Planning and Evaluation Committee is January 13 at EEC’s Boston Office from 1:00-3:00pm.
Agenda items:
- ARRA Update- Waitlist Design
- FY11 Legislative Report
- Commissioner’s Evaluation
- Legislative Agenda
- Birth to 8 Community Planning/Implementation-Community Family Engagement Grantees
- Board Priority assigned to Committee to build upon the system of Early Education and Care

The Committee convened at 2:09pm