

**Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)
Examples of Inter-Agency Initiatives
For the Joint-Board Special Meeting – December 15, 2014**

Building the Foundations of Future Success for Children from Birth through Grade 3

As part of our state’s work with the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Early Learning Policy Academy (presented at the Joint ESE-EEC Board meeting in January 2014), we have created the *Building the Foundations* document, which identifies essential competencies across five developmental domains, as well as the foundational experiences that will lead to the development of these competencies. For the first time in the Commonwealth’s history, we have identified the competencies that all children from birth through grade 3 should demonstrate in order to be on the path to college and career success. This document is directly aligned with the 2013 [Definition of College and Career Readiness](http://www.mass.edu/library/documents/2013College&CareerReadinessDefinition.pdf)* that was approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Board of Higher Education (BHE). This document is intended to serve as the anchor for the development and implementation of all birth through grade 3 initiatives in Massachusetts.

*<http://www.mass.edu/library/documents/2013College&CareerReadinessDefinition.pdf>

Standards Development in the Domains of Social-Emotional Development and Approaches to Learning

EEC, in partnership with ESE, has contracted with the University of Massachusetts/Boston to create a comprehensive set of preschool and kindergarten standards in the domains of *Social-Emotional Development* and *Approaches to Play and Learning*. Due to be completed by the spring of 2015, these standards are being informed by and vetted with local, regional, and state early childhood practitioners; with national researchers including Sharon Lynn Kagan (Teachers College, Columbia University) and Stephanie Jones (Graduate School of Education, Harvard University); and with the National Governor’s Association (NGA) and the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

It is anticipated that, if approved, these standards would provide a much needed resource for the field as it relates to curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices of young children. These standards will also inform on-going professional development related to early childhood education, as well as help make the critical link for administrators, educators, and families to the acquisition of academic competencies.

Revisions to the Birth-Kindergarten Curriculum Guides

EEC and ESE are jointly leading a workgroup in the revision of two important curriculum guides: The *Kindergarten Learning Experiences* (ESE, 2008), and the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* (adopted by then DOE – Department of Education, 2003). These resources have guided school districts,

early childhood programs, and early childhood educators in the development and implementation of curriculum and instructional supports that are developmentally appropriate and aligned with our state's Curriculum Frameworks. The joint effort to align these curriculum guides is part of EEC and ESE's work to develop a continuum of educational practice from birth through kindergarten. EEC and ESE began holding working group meetings in November 2013 and are continuing this work through next year in order to make revisions to the curriculum guides to ensure their alignment with the current Curriculum Frameworks.

The workgroups have completed revisions to the English Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the documents and the proposed revisions are under current review by both Departments. Currently, the workgroup participants are proposing revisions to the Science and Technology/Engineering sections of both documents. When the workgroups have made their final proposals for revisions, the two Departments will undergo review and editing. In addition, the two Departments, along with the working group, will develop a plan for professional development for administrators and educators on the updated guides.

Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)

The MKEA, a Race-to-the-Top Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) Grant initiative, is a collaborative endeavor between EEC and ESE that supports the use of formative assessment in Full-Day kindergarten classrooms. Currently, more than 170 districts participating in the MKEA initiative are using on-going formative assessment as a way to measure the developmental and learning progress of over 36,000 kindergarten students. While a small number of districts that engaged in the MKEA initiative early chose to use the Work Sampling System (published by Pearson), the majority of districts use the TS Gold system (published by Teaching Strategies). The formative assessment tools were selected to provide districts, schools and educators with the following benefits:

- Assessing children's growth and learning across all developmental domains (e.g. cognitive, physical, social, emotional);
- Informing instruction and strengthening professional development, leading to more individualized teaching and learning; and
- Providing schools with new sources of data to share with families through report cards and other forms of communication.

The state has learned a great deal in the first two years of implementation and has developed a comprehensive training and technical assistance system to support teachers and administrators in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years. As the state's RTTT-ELC grant will end in December 2015, the state is currently reflecting on the status of MKEA, what needs to happen in the next year, and how MKEA will evolve and continue to be supported beyond the RTTT-ELC grant term.