Early Childhood Education Endowment Advisory Board

January 9, 2026

Office of the Treasurer, 165 Capital Avenue, Conference Rooms G006D and G007E

Meeting-In-Person and Virtual Platform

In Attendance:

Senator Ceci Maher, Commissioner Elena Trueworthy, Representative Kate Farrar, Holly Williams, Renee Kleinman, Cris Jiminez-Porrata, Casey Dimaria, Lafayette (Jay) Atkinson, Jr., Dr. Monette Ferguson, Treasurer Eric Russell, Allyx Shiavone, Suzanne Slater, Sandra Dill, Robert Woytowich,

Absent:

Welcome & Introductions

Senator Ceci Maher called the meeting to order. Commissioner Elena Trueworthy and Representative Kate Farrar offered welcoming remarks. The Board members in attendance introduced themselves.

Approval of November 14, 2025, Minutes

The minutes from the November 14, 2025, meeting were reviewed. Senator Ceci Maher requested a motion to approve the minutes. Rep. Farrar approved, and (Jay) Atkins, Jr., seconded. Board members in attendance approved the minutes with no revisions.

Treasurer's Update

Treasurer Erick Russell shared a brief update from the Office of the Treasurer on the SOC Report. He announced that the Endowment balance had reached $319.6 million as of November 30, 2025, indicating consistent and steady growth. Stating the Office's continued efforts to maintain the health of the fund.

Office of Early Childhood Update

Commissioner Trueworthy summarized themes from the December 10 Annual Public Hearing and Fall 2025 Listening Sessions:

- Broad Support for Endowment Vision with urgency for near-term relief
- Workforce Crisis: Recruitment, retention, and compensation remain critical challenges
- Care 4 Kids: Persistent delays and operational strain
- Family Child Care Needs: Equity in access to funding and supports
- True Cost of Care: Calls for reimbursement rates aligned with actual costs
- Equity & Restorative Justice: Prioritizing providers of color and ALICE families
- Facilities & Infrastructure: Significant barriers to expansion without capital investment
- Data & Accountability: Strong emphasis on transparency and cross-sector alignment

Commissioner Trueworthy reviewed the Proposed Spending Plan for the Endowment, summarizing the discussions from the September meeting and detailing the current status of the proposed expenses. Each category included a brief description, noting that the Endowment was established in July and that the September estimates for each category were preliminary. The Office of Early Childhood received funding in early November. The expense proposals for January reflect the current perspective and highlight the differences between the September estimates and the latest proposals.

Commissioner Trueworthy provided updates:

- Request for Applications (RFA): Released November 24, 2025; 548 applications received for Early Start CT expansion. Estimated 1,039 new spaces to open January 2026 across 56 providers
- Rate Increases: Effective October 1, 2025, per-space reimbursement increased by 8%
- Smart Start: 11 new classrooms funded; 7 opened in Fall 2025, 4 scheduled for January 2026
- Scholarships: $1M added for workforce education and credentialing
- Upcoming Initiatives: One Point of Entry Portal development, Local Governance Partner expansion, and facilities planning for $23M bond request in FY26–27B

Board members, Allyx Shiavone, Dr. Monette Ferguson, Casey DiMaria, Renee Kleinman, Sen. Ceci Maher, and Rep. Farrar requested clarification on specific questions.

Commissioner Trueworthy provided feedback on data needs, assumptions, and future reporting structures.

Clarification was provided that expenditures are limited to a percentage of the total fund balance. Distributing the funding received from the OEC, general fund, and federal fund—due to the previous demand before the endowment was established—will help ensure that the fund can sustain itself and maintain continuity for the services it supports.

Additional questions regarding access arose, focusing on the aim of enhancing accessibility through clearer, more diverse community initiatives.

A question was raised about if providers could still apply for other resources if their town's application had been denied. Commissioner Trueworthy confirmed that a town's rejection would not affect a provider's ability to apply for other resources, where applicable.

Inquiries were made about the Connecticut prospect funding for provider payments being rescinded by the federal government and how this might affect the Endowment's future spending as demand for services increases. Commissioner Trueworthy stated that this change should not affect the budget, as Connecticut has robust systems in place to manage its CCF dollars.

Review and Approval of Bylaws

The Board reviewed the final draft of the ECE Endowment Advisory Board Bylaws. Senator Ceci Maher requested a motion to approve the minutes, approved by Allyx Shiavone and (Jay) Atkins, Jr., seconded. Board members in attendance approved the Bylaws with no revisions.

Health Insurance Study Update

Rep. Kate Farrar acknowledged that the work has just begun and wanted to provide the study, noting that any questions could be directed to Access Health later through the tri-chairs.

Review & Approve Annual Report

The Board reviewed the 2025 Annual Report, which summarized the Endowment financial health, expenditures ($469,299 to date), programmatic impact, and legislative recommendations.

Rep. Kate Farrar requested a motion to approve the minutes. Approved by Cris Jiminez-Porrata and Dr. Monet Ferguson, seconded. Board members in attendance approved the Bylaws with no revisions.

Additional 2026 Meeting Dates

Rep. Farrar reminded members that the statute requires the Board to meet four times a year. The meetings for the rest of the year have been scheduled:

Confirmed:

- April 10 (not on agenda)
- July 24
- October 21 (includes Annual Public Hearing)
- December 18

Members were reminded that the health insurance subsidiary needs to be reviewed and voted on by June 30. A brief meeting will be scheduled after Phase Two of the report is completed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 AM.