



Dear Senator Dorcena Forry,

As a member of Joint Committee on Education, we wanted to take a moment to let you know that our coalition continues to support the legislature's efforts focused on supporting the quality and compensation of the early education workforce. We appreciate the investments in the rate reserve in the FY17 budget proposals and are advocating for \$15 million in the Conference Committee Budget recommendations.

We also hope to see the legislature to continue its commitment for the planning and implementation of targeted, high-quality Pre-K in Massachusetts. We have been so encouraged to hear about the progress being made in the five communities – Boston, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell and Springfield - that received the Federal Preschool Expansion Grant. Over 700 children who had not previously had access to preschool had the opportunity for a high-quality preschool experience this year as a result of this grant.

We are also grateful to the Legislature for including funding in the FY16 budget to support the planning activities to expand pre-kindergarten or preschool opportunities. Thirteen grants were awarded in January and we expect to see the final strategic plans by June 30. We know there have been many lessons learned as leaders from the public schools, city government, private early education providers and Head Start have worked together over the last six months to develop a strategic plan for the young children and families in their communities. We have seen an unprecedented level of collaboration in the mixed delivery system and look forward to learning more about their plans.

Finally, we appreciate the leadership of Speaker DeLeo and Senate President Rosenberg for the Business Leader Advisory focused on the early education workforce and the Senate's Kids First Initiative and. The momentum continues to grow in the Commonwealth and we look forward to continue working with the legislature and the Baker Administration on this important work.

Thank you for your leadership and all you have done demonstrate these commitments.

*Jason*

Jason Williams  
Stand for Children

*Amy*

Amy O'Leary  
Strategies for Children