



**Department of
Early Education and Care**



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Report on the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) Grant FY 2022

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Purpose of Report

This report satisfies the requirement set forth in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 General Appropriations Act (GAA), line item 3000-6025, that the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) report to the Joint Committee on Education and the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means on the status of the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (CPPI) implementation activities, including but not limited to, a listing of the recipients of grant funding; the number of children served by the grant recipients; the size of awarded grants by recipient; and the recipients' workforce development efforts. This report covers FY 2022 grant activities.

Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative Overview

The state first established the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative in the FY 2016 GAA as a planning grant to encourage communities to identify the local infrastructure, funding and supports needed to increase access to high quality preschool programs through public school and EEC-licensed program collaboration.

In FY 2020, the state CPPI Grant funded implementation activities in local communities to expand pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) or preschool opportunities on a voluntary basis to 3- and 4-year-olds. In FY 2022, due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the grant's original three-year timeline was extended for an additional year. Funds awarded in FY 2022 provided funding for Cohort 1 Grantees that provided sustainable funding for the high needs communities that had received a CPPI implementation grant in FY2019 through a competitive process, to continue their efforts to implement preschool expansion and local preschool quality improvement and alignment efforts, utilizing the Massachusetts Preschool Expansion Grant public-private partnership model. Cohort 2 received funding through a competitive process by which new high-need communities which had conducted prior preschool planning efforts could begin implementation of program models that met the requirements of the grant.

In FY 2022, an additional \$5 million was added to the budget, allowing EEC to post two new grants during the fiscal year: the FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grant and the FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant.

CPPI Cohorts 1 and 2

The FY2022 CPPI Grant is designed to encourage community-based collaboration between public school districts and EEC-licensed early education programs to expand local access for 3-and 4-year-olds to high quality care that meets the diverse needs of families in their communities. Currently, there are nine (9) communities that received funding through the grant:

- **Cohort 1:** Boston, Lowell, New Bedford, North Adams, Somerville, and Springfield
- **Cohort 2:** Holyoke, Lawrence, and Northampton

Districts subgrant funds to local EEC-licensed programs to support quality improvements and expanded access to preschool classrooms. Funding can be used to reduce costs for families; remove barriers to

special education services, particularly for children of working parents; provide mental health and other comprehensive services; and align professional development and quality improvement supports for educators.

Based on the 722 age-eligible children enrolled between September 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022¹ for whom we have age and income data, 43% were 3 years old as of September 1 and 57% were 4 years old on that date. Just over half of enrolled children were male (52%), while 48% were female. Fifty-one percent of children were identified as being Hispanic or Latino. Of the non-Hispanic or Latino children, 25% were identified as White, 10% as Black, 8% as Asian and Pacific Islander, and 6% were identified as two or more races or other race/ethnicities. Thirty-three percent of children were from households where English was not the primary language.

Table 1. FY 2022 CPPI Grantees, Award Amounts, and Grant Partners

Grantee Name	Number of Classrooms Funded	Number of children enrolled	FY2022 Award	Grant Partners
<i>Cohort 1</i>				
Boston Public Schools	3	49	\$500,000	• Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center • Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester • Ellis Memorial
Lowell Public Schools	9	140	\$625,000	• Community Teamwork • Greater Lowell Family YMCA
New Bedford Public Schools	10	127	\$625,000	• Little People's College • NorthStar Early Learning • P.A.C.E Head Start • YMCA South Coast
North Adams Public Schools	2	26	\$335,000	• Child Care of the Berkshires
Somerville Public Schools	13	165 ²	\$625,000	• Elizabeth Peabody House • Somerville YMCA • Dandelion Montessori • Community Action Agency of Somerville Head Start

¹ Programs reported an additional 89 children who were enrolled in CPPI classrooms but did not provide permission to share their data. For children with available data, data were missing at relatively low rates (0 to 4% for six of the sociodemographic characteristics above and 9% for one more sociodemographic characteristic [financial aid receipt]). Only one variable had extremely high levels of missing data: family income data (51%).

² Due to missing data, the number of funded slots was used in place of the number of enrolled students for three programs in Somerville (Somerville YMCA, Bigelow Cooperative Daycare, Pooh and Friends Child Care).

				• Open Center for Children • Bigelow Cooperative Daycare • Pooh and Friends Child Care • Tree House Academy
Springfield Public Schools	4	65	\$625,000	• New Beginnings • Square One • YMCA of Greater Springfield
<i>Cohort 2</i>				
Holyoke Public Schools	3	52	\$625,000	• Valley Opportunity Council
Lawrence Public Schools	10	160	\$625,000	• Greater Lawrence Community Action Council • The Community Group
Northampton Public Schools	9	77	\$625,000	• Community Action Head Start and Early Learning Center • Gummybears Family Child Care • Meadowlark Childcare Center • Nonotuck Community Schools
TOTAL	63	861	\$5,210,000	

Family income data was more challenging to collect, as many programs, particularly public schools, do not systematically collect this information. As a result, income data was missing for 51% of all enrolled children. For those for whom we have data, 72% of families reported annual incomes of \$40,000 or below. More than two in five children (44%) were supported with subsidies; 14% with Head Start funds; 20% received other forms of financial aid; 29% paid some form of tuition, including parent fees; and 16% were enrolled in public school classrooms.

Cohorts 1 and 2 Grant Implementation

The community collaborations in the nine (9) communities funded in FY 2022 focused on three areas of the grant:

1. Expanding access to integrated special education services for working families.
2. Building consistent quality across all CPPI-funded classrooms and aligning quality expectations with K-3 programs.
3. Expanding access to low- and middle-income children currently not enrolled in preschool.

The grant implementation continues to be managed by steering committees comprised of leadership from the grantee school districts, EEC-licensed subgrantees and key community stakeholders. These groups meet monthly to coordinate the work of the grant, review what is working, make changes as necessary, and make plans for future activities. The steering committees continue to work with established subcommittees to manage more intensive development work resulting from local plans, such as planning

and coordinating professional development, identifying criteria for grant-funded tuition scholarships to expand access, and coordinating community-wide birth-to-grade 3 planning and outreach. All CPPI grantees have Grant Coordinators whose role is to facilitate the collaborative work and manage the communication and administrative work of the grant.

Each public school has sub-granted funds to between one (1) and eight (8) agencies running EEC-licensed programs. Typically, the grant funds go to programs already in operation to build key quality components, ensure the needs of children with special needs and their families are met, and expand access to low- and middle-income families not currently eligible for subsidies.

The primary use of grant funds has been:

- Grant coordination/collaboration facilitation
- Itinerant special education services
- Fund lost revenue at the classroom level for children paying reduced tuition
- Increased salaries for educators
- Training and coaching for educators
- Classroom quality observations
- Case management and comprehensive services for families

Expansion of Access

CPPI grantees were tasked with developing and/or revising strategies to expand preschool access in their communities. A review of the different strategies used by grantees in FY 2022 to accomplish this task highlights the complexities of increasing local access to high quality preschool. Programs focused on both addressing family barriers to access in their community and increasing the quality and alignment of existing programs. In general, CPPI grantees developed plans and strategies to address known access barriers, such as transportation, hours, and cost, across all CPPI-funded classrooms.

One barrier addressed by several grantees was affordability for working families who did not meet voucher or subsidized care requirements and for whom public school options were not accessible due to the short hours (most districts only provide a half day Pre-K program). Four (4) grantees (Boston, Lawrence, New Bedford, and Somerville) funded classrooms at a high enough level to guarantee free or reduced cost opportunities for enrollment in CPPI programs to reach children whose families had a financial need.

Another identified barrier for working families was program operation hours. If programs are not open during a parent's full working hours, the program is likely to be inaccessible to that family. All communities were able to provide extended day options for working families through their partnership with EEC-licensed programs. Three (3) grantees (Lowell, New Bedford, and Northampton) worked to increase the availability of extended care by increasing a 2.5-hour day to a 6-hour day in Pre-K public school classrooms.

All grantees recognized the need for increased, targeted family recruitment to reach and serve the children most in need in their communities. Grantees took steps to align their recruitment strategies to the populations they were trying to recruit by partnering with local organizations serving similar populations.

Workforce Supports

The CPPI grant was designed to support the workforce in two ways. First, grantees are required to invest in coordinated quality improvement through the provision of professional supports to both educators and program educational leadership. Second, grantees are required to ensure commensurate salaries for educators across public school and private CPPI classrooms, with the option of requiring lead educators in CPPI classrooms to hold at least a bachelor's degree.

In six (6) of the communities (Boston, Lowell, North Adams, New Bedford, Somerville, and Springfield), this work has been coordinated around efforts to align curriculum and provide supports to educators and program leaders in high quality curriculum implementation. In these communities, public school districts have developed or selected curricula that are designed to support improved child outcomes in domains of concern for the community, such as literacy, language, mathematical concepts, and social emotional skills, and that are aligned with the curricula used in the district's early elementary grades. Training and coaching are provided to educators in using the curriculum. Educators in EEC-licensed classrooms are often trained with public school educators, providing opportunities for aligning practice and building a strong local professional community. Coaching has supported educators in high fidelity curriculum implementation and in understanding how to make effective adaptations that are responsive to the needs of children in their classrooms. Feedback gathered from educators in three communities suggest that there is consistent appreciation for the structure the curriculum provides once educators become comfortable with effective curriculum adaptation. Strong implementation provides educators confidence that they are meeting children's needs.

The remaining communities are engaged in collaborative planning processes with grant partners to develop a shared definition of high-quality practices and, in some cases, align local curriculum criteria or curriculum selection process. In these communities, the required use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) provided a shared understanding of the importance of high-quality interactions between the teacher and the child throughout the day. The assessment data provides insight for leadership to develop professional learning opportunities for staff.

All nine (9) communities also focused on creating opportunities for educators with expertise supporting children with special needs to work with other educators to build strong inclusive practices in CPPI classrooms, particularly in EEC-licensed programs, either through onsite comprehensive service providers or itinerant special education supports. In these models, experts consult with educators around best practices for working with children who have particular needs (i.e., speech/language, behavioral challenges, occupational therapy needs), identify opportunities for adjustments to classroom practices, and support educators in effectively engaging in the special education referral and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process.

All nine (9) communities are also developing joint professional development plans that are based on classroom quality observation data and include community goals for educators and opportunities for educators from EEC-licensed programs and public schools to engage in training together.

To address the grant requirements to support competitive educator salaries and strong qualifications, all communities are developing plans to ensure educators receive salaries that align with public school educator salaries. Only three of the nine communities (Boston, Lawrence, and Lowell) felt that it was possible to implement a bachelor's degree requirement, due to the severe shortage of early educators meeting this requirement and concerns that educators with this qualification inevitably gravitate to higher salaries and more comprehensive benefit packages offered by public school systems. Although the grant funds must be used to address some of these inequities, communities have struggled with this grant requirement, noting that funding is not adequate to achieve full parity (which would require private programs pay *higher* salaries than the public schools to account for longer school calendars and provide additional benefits). Additionally, private programs are concerned about the short-term nature of grant funding, which creates a substantial long-term commitment to educators that is not sustainable without additional funding. Programs can utilize CPPI funding to raise salaries for staff and educators in CPPI funded classrooms. However, CPPI funding is targeted and cannot fund these kind of increases for staff in non-CPPI-funded classrooms. As a result, private programs have reported that it can be difficult to match funds to improve salaries and benefit packages for educators teaching in classrooms that are not CPPI-funded. This can create challenges for programs interested in taking on the larger systems changes to increase salaries and benefit packages for *all* educators, not just those in CPPI-funded classrooms.

Additional Supports for Children and Families

The CPPI grant is designed, in part, to encourage grantees to increase engagement with and support of children and families within the context of preschool settings. Programs primarily achieve this through case management, providing a range of comprehensive services, and making sure itinerant special education services are available to those who need them.

In order to increase engagement with children and families, five (5) grantees (Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, North Adams, and Springfield) used grant funds to hire case managers to work with families in CPPI classrooms. In some communities, staff were hired to support targeted populations, for example, staff were hired in North Adams to support homeless families. In most cases, grantees hired staff to support a broader range of families by linking them to a range of services including, but not limited to, employment opportunities, housing, food assistance, adult education opportunities, and immigration services. In Lowell, a public-school caseworker and a CPPI family support worker collaborated to support families in partner programs. Most other grantees dedicated a single staff member to manage all CPPI families. Beyond employing a case manager, all programs supported family engagement through a variety of events, parent education series, and in-class opportunities for parents and families to participate in activities together.

In addition to case managers, grantees chose to build out the services they offer by contracting with a range of specialists, including but not limited to, mental health practitioners, behavior specialists, speech and language pathologists, trauma services, nurses, and hearing/vision/dental/nutrition services. One (1) grantee (North Adams) indicated having trouble finding and hiring qualified specialists to support CPPI classrooms, but other grantees appeared to be successful in recruiting the specialists identified as necessary for their population of families.

For children referred to special education services, the grantee public school is responsible for managing the referral and providing services once an IEP is in place. In some communities, all IEP services were provided at public school sites, requiring that children be brought back and forth from their program to receive services (Boston, Lowell, and Lawrence). In other communities, the grant funding supported the provision of some targeted itinerant services onsite at EEC-licensed partners (Holyoke, Northampton, New Bedford, Somerville, and Springfield).

Sustainable funding

All CPPI grantees are required to consider how to sustain the changes they made using CPPI funds and seem to recognize it is a challenge requiring continued attention and resources. Some grantees, such as Boston, use CPPI grant funds to supplement existing local funding streams while others rely solely on CPPI grant funds.. Springfield has explored ways to meet their special education obligations through collaboration with EEC-licensed programs and the use of special education funds to support access for children with IEPs at these sites. Another grantee (Northampton) has been engaged in advocacy work to both increase public school budgets targeted towards early education and open new avenues of funding for private preschool via collaboration with the local chamber of commerce. Four other grantees (Holyoke, New Bedford, North Adams, and Somerville) are currently braiding other grant and local funding sources with CPPI funds, though these would not currently be large enough to sustain CPPI initiatives on their own.

CPPI funded initiatives that are the most challenging to sustain within current funding structures include financial support for families that are not eligible for subsidies, increases to educator salaries, and comprehensive services for families such as mental health and case management supports.

FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grant

Public school districts, in collaboration with EEC-licensed early education programs, could apply for a planning grant to conduct a needs assessment for local early education systems, including programs serving infants and toddlers. The goal of the needs assessment was to give districts the opportunity to collaborate with key stakeholders in the community to identify crucial issues regarding building quality and improving access for families and children. A set of Priority Strands were identified to support districts in focusing their planning efforts:

1. Priority Strand I: Expansion and access to quality preschool
 - The focus of this strand is for communities to make a significant investment in addressing local affordability and specific access challenges for local families.

2. Priority Strand II: Building locally-aligned quality
 - The focus of this strand is for communities to build locally aligned quality regarding curriculum and learning goals across preschool classrooms and kindergarten curriculum.
3. Priority Strand II: Equitable access to special education and inclusion
 - The focus of this strand to provide caregivers choice of care for children with Individual Education Plans (IEP) to have full access to required supports without unnecessary transitions or other barriers.

After the needs assessment was completed, grantees would have identified barriers to access in the community and created a strategic implementation plan to use as a roadmap to support future implementation and collaborations utilizing FY 2023 grant opportunities.

There were nine communities that applied for the FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grant. All applications were approved for grant funding. The table below provides information on: (1) the districts that submitted applications for grant funding, and (2) the size of the award grants by recipient. Since this was a planning grant, the applicants did not provide information on the number of classrooms funded, the number of children to be served, or the grant partners.

Table 2. FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grantees and Award Amounts

Grantee Name	FY 2022 Award
Brockton Public Schools	\$40,000.00
Fall River Public Schools	\$40,000.00
Falmouth Public Schools	\$31,384.00
Hoosac Valley Regional School District	\$40,000.00
Lynn Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Malden Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Milton Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Sandwich Public Schools	\$50,000.00
Worcester Public Schools	\$30,000.00
TOTAL	\$381,384.00

FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant

The FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grants targeted public school districts that are currently contracting with and funding local EEC-licensed early education programs to provide free public preschool

opportunities for local children. The purpose of this grant was to pilot a process in which CPPI funds incentivize and support the accessibility and quality of district investments in preschool expansion through collaboration with EEC-licensed programs. The grant funds are used to supplement district funds and fund affordable full-day and full-year programming for all enrolled children. Communities are also expected to evaluate local needs and adjust services being offered to meet the needs of families and ensure that the birth to three early education system is not negatively affected. EEC will learn from the districts piloting this funding about the successes and challenges of utilizing multiple funding opportunities, both state and federal, to ensure working families have access to a preschool program that meets their needs.

Three communities applied for the FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant, and all were approved for grant funding. The table below provides information on: (1) the districts that submitted applications for grant funding; (2) the number of classrooms funded; (3) the number of children to be served; (4) the size of the grant awards by recipient; and (5) the identified community-based grant partners.

Table 3. FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grantees, Award Amounts, and Grant Partners

Grantee Name	Number of Classrooms Funded	Number of Slots	FY2022 Award	Grant Partners
Boston Public Schools	3	28	\$34,703.00	• Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center • South Boston Neighborhood House
Framingham Public Schools	4	76	\$520,000.00	• MetroWest YMCA • Framingham State University – Centers for Early Childhood Education
Salem Public Schools	3	50	\$345,000.00	• Salem YMCA • Salem Community Child Care Center • Ashley Preschool and Day Care
TOTAL	10	154	\$899,703.00	

Future Directions

EEC plans to release two competitive grants for FY2023. Cohorts 1 and 2 grantees can apply for the first grant, the FY 2023 CPPI Maintenance Grant. The second grant, the FY 2023 CPPI Cohort 3 Grant, will be available for the recipients of the FY 2022 CPPI Planning Grant and the FY 2022 CPPI Implementation Grant. Both grants will focus on the three Priority Strands previously mentioned: (1) expansion and access to quality preschool; (2) building locally aligned quality; and (3) equitable access to special education and inclusion.