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# The Post Master's Certificate Program in Early Education Research, Policy, and Practice

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# The Post Master's Certificate Program in Early Education Research, Policy, and Practice

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## Summary/Abstract

The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has selected the University of Massachusetts Boston to lead this innovative initiative. The development of a Post Master's Certificate Program in Early Education Research, Policy, and Practice will build much-needed capacity for advanced graduate study in early education in Massachusetts. This model program is designed to address the demand for new leadership in the rapidly advancing field of early education and care.

## Goals and Objectives

- Establish a pathway from the classroom to leadership and research positions for early educators.
- Build the the next generation of researchers and leaders from among those with a strong practitioner base.

## Results/Impacts: Cohort 1

### Admissions

75 applicants, 15 selected (20%)  
Cohort 1 started January 5, 2013

### Characteristics

- 100% of students work as early educators in Head Start, community child care & early education centers, family child care, Early Intervention, or public school preschools.
- Length of experience as early educators ranges between 6 - 25 years.

### Next Steps

- Evaluate program impact and leadership pathways of early educators in each cohort
- Establish partnerships with additional higher education institutions for articulation and transfer agreements
- Admit 2 more cohorts of grant-funded students

### Quotes

Initial Program Evaluation Survey of Students

"This class has brought the field of early childhood education alive for me in a way I have not been exposed to before. It has been fascinating and eye opening to learn the politics and policies that drive our profession."

"Although it seems like a lot of work, I am determined to succeed. My greatest wish would be not only to complete the Post Master's Certificate Program, but to continue and earn a Doctoral degree. Even though my parents did not complete grade school, they always talked about the importance of a good education."

Photo to right of MA Commissioner of Early Education and Care at Cohort 1 Orientation with cohort members, staff, faculty



Photo of Student, Commissioner Killins, and Professor Anne Douglass, at Class 2



Photo at Class 2 with Prof. John Lippitt

## Approaches and Methods

1. Design innovative four course/twelve credit certificate program for experienced EEC teachers with master's;
2. Engage students in research to improve practice while enhancing skills as researchers and leaders;
3. Support three cohorts of fifteen students from across state to complete this certificate between 2012-15;
4. Ensure that post masters certificate transfers into doctoral and certificate of advanced graduate study programs in higher education institutions across MA;
5. Build statewide partnerships and capacity in higher education to support post master's degree work in EEC.

## Additional Partnerships

- MA Department of Early Education and Care
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Elms College, MA
- Statewide Advisory Committee (representing higher education, Readiness Centers, EEC professional development grantees)