

**Professional Development Advisory Council
November 13, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Aja Owasoyo	Joan Longtin	Pam Womack
Anna Perry	Johnna Darragh Ernst	Paula Schnicker Johnson
Anne Pradzinski	Joyce Gronewold	Rebecca Livengood
Barb Christmas	Julia Auch	Rosario Wortman
Bela Mote	Julie Lindstrom	Rosie Dorsey
Carole Franke	Kate Connor	Ruth Kimble
Cerathel Burgess Burnett	Kimberlee Hendricks	Sara Seitz
Christi Chadwick	Larissa Mullholland	Sharyl Robin
Cindy Berrey	Lauri Morrison Frichtl	Shauna Ejeh
Danen Busch	Laurie Rhodes	Stephanie Hellmer
Debbie Rogers Jaye	Lisa Downey	Tammy King
Elva DeLuna	Marcus Brown	Tammy Notter
Emily Dorsey	Marcy Mendenhall	Tina Wiegel
Erika Mendez	Marie Donovan	Tom Pavkov
Gabriel Holmes	Marsha Hawley	Trinita Winston
Gwyn Moss	Medina Bailey	Wendy Williams
Jacqueline Melendez	Mellissa Ferguson	Yinna Zhang
Jamie Nichols	Mikki Sherwood	

Welcome and Review of Minutes

- Attendees were welcomed to the meeting. Marcy Mendenhall was welcomed as a new PDAC Tri-Chair.
- Minutes: September 4, 2024
 - Marie Donovan moved to accept the meeting minutes.
 - Elva DeLuna seconded the motion to approve the minutes.
 - Minutes approved.

Gateways Bilingual English as a Second Language Compensation Recommendation (Attachment A with additional documentation)

- RECOMMENDATION:
 - The program design for Smart Start Quality Supports FY25 and FY26 should reflect quality support lever for early childhood bilingual staff by engaging in the following:

- **Link Gateways Bilingual/ESL credential to a pay increase of 6% using the base salary of the FY25 SMART START Quality Supports Wage Scale. This percentage is informed by both local and national cost models.** As an interim measure, this proposal creates a career pathway for bilingual staff who have obtained or are pursuing the Gateways bilingual/ESL credential. This initiative supports staff retention in the field and promotes a pathway for economic mobility, particularly for women of color.
- **RATIONALE (including financial impact/monetary breakdown this recommendation would have if applicable):** Illinois is undergoing a transformation in the early childhood system by establishing a unified early childhood agency, accompanied by investments aimed at addressing workforce pay through SMART START Workforce and Quality Supports Grants. It is critical to recognize bilingual educators' linguistic skillset that play a significant role in Multilingual learners' early educational experiences and align compensation to language skills. The recommendation to increase pay for staff who actively have the Bilingual/ESL credential or actively pursuing the Bilingual/ESL credential is necessary for bilingual educator retention. *The state's workforce compensation grants serve as a potential funding stream to pilot a bilingual pay initiative for early childhood educators in licensed centers.* □ The recommendation was approved.
- This recommendation is critical for laying the groundwork to develop a bilingual pay ladder for the state of Illinois and encourage staff to stay in the field and pursue various levels of bilingual specialization. While the initiative directly empowers center leaders to retain and strengthen their bilingual pipeline, it also enhances addresses the quality programming multilingual learners receive in center settings, and addresses pay parity between community-based organizations and schools. Given trends in the workforce, this is timely to prevent high turnover rates. Additionally, as new coursework and training options become available this will incentivize continuous professional development and provide stability in the field.

Committee Updates on Strategic Plan

- Qualifications and Credentials
 - The QC Committee is reviewing Goal 2: Inform and refine existing efforts to expand use of competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials (in partnership with Higher Education Committee Objective 1: Expand the readily accessed PDR to include opportunities that highlight competency attainment and Goal 3: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials by making it accessible and transparent to the field. Objective 1: Standardize all professional development (RBPD, JEPD, and trainings) to identify content using competency language.
 - Currently outlining and identifying timelines to implement the plan. Next step is to loop in the Higher Education Committee in the work regarding these two goals.
- Higher Education
 - The High Education Committee is prioritizing Goal 1: Developing systems for identifying, sharing, and promoting flexible and innovative higher education early childhood/child development program models.
 - Currently gathering information and sharing data with committee members. Members of the Higher Education Committee are also participating in the Gateways Forum Planning Committee. The Forum will be in person at the Doubletree Hotel on April 10th/11th, 2025.
- Workforce Development and Pathways
 - The WDP Committee is focused on aspects of access for the field as part of Goal 1 and the systems around identifying and sharing practices for recruitment and retention for Goal 3.
 - Joellyn Whitehead will join the WDP Committee meeting later this month to review reports, surveys, and data that tie into access and practices of the field.

ECE Level 1

- Review of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee
 - The Ad Hoc Committee met four times earlier this year, and reviewed the history of the ECE Level 1 and the current use of the ECE Level 1.

- Reviewed the title and messaging for ECE Level 1. There is the need to clearly communicate the purpose and use of required trainings for learners.
- ECE Level 1 is essential in how it is being used for DCFS licensing and clock hours.
- At this time, no action was taken to change the ECE Level 1 but will focus on clearly communicating the purpose of the Level 1 to the public.

State Agency Reports

- Illinois Department of Human Services
 - SMART Start Grants: All programs that received a round 1 grant were auto renewed and will be automatically receiving the same amount for round 2, with no action needed from the program. These round 2 checks will mail early December.
 - New programs interested in applying for round 2 the application is currently open through November 20th.
 - Round 3 will open for opt-ins and new applications on January 2, 2025, and will remain open for the full month of January. This application covers funding for the months of April, May, and June 2025.
- Illinois Community College Board
 - A work group from Consortium institution members has been formed to review parameters regarding ECACE scholarship priorities and completion for students in the pipeline. Final recommendations will be released shortly.
- Illinois Head Start Association
 - Funding is still under the FY24 funding, working under a short-term budget resolution.
 - Head Start and Early Head Start programs are busy working through the new Head Start performance standards. One of the changes is that in the next 7 years Head Start needs to have pay parity with K-3.
 - The director of Head Start will be leaving their position shortly.
 - There is concern about the future of Head Start.
 - Programs are concerned about deportation and the impact on families they serve.
- Transition Advisory Committee
 - The 12th meeting of the TAC was held last night. The current listening sessions are being held around the state to hear from families and providers.
 - The listening sessions have had more than seventy sessions, and more than forty organizations have hosted meetings. More than 1, 600 participants were in these listening sessions.
 - Three focus groups have been held to make sure a human centered design is part of the new agency.
 - The website has information about upcoming meetings, opportunities to engage and general information <https://idec.illinois.gov/>
- Illinois State Board of Education
 - The ECBG FY 25 final awards were distributed.
 - For PFA: 4,008 new seats were awarded, PFAE: 1,143 new seats were awarded and for PI: 512 new seats were awarded.
 - Currently planning for the ECBG FY 26 RFP/awards. Grant writing workshops have been initiated to provide overview and assistance for the grant writing cycle. Two listening sessions will also be available.
- **Breakout Sharing**
 - Three questions were put forward for each of the members to discuss in the breakout rooms:
 - What did we not realize or know related to COVID that is impacting us today?
 - What is needed to support children, families, staff post-COVID?
 - What are federal, state, and local issues that may impact our field?

- Thinking of these three questions in relation to the PDAC Strategic Plan: are there shifts in the plan that might need to be addressed based on what is currently happening in the field etc.
 - Each breakout room worked through these questions. Members were encouraged to bring any themes or thoughts to their individual committees as well to review.

