

**Professional Development Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 3, 2025**

Aja Owasoyo	Kate Connor	Pam Womack
Angela Herrington	Larissa Mulholland	Paula Schnicker-Johnson
Barb Christmas	Lauri Morrison-Frichtl	Rebecca Livengood
Barb Volpe	Leslie Layman	Rebecca Pruitt
Bela Mote	Linda Ruhe Marsh	Rosie Dorsey
Beth Knight	Lisa Downey	Sara Seitz
Christi Chadwick	Lori Harrison	Sharyl Robin
Danen Busch	Madelyn James	Stephanie Hellmer
Edie Washington	Malia Owens	Steven Sharp
Emily Dorsey	Marcus Brown	Stormy Udell
Gabriel Holmes	Marcy Mendenhall	Tammy King
Gwyn Moss	Marsha Shigeyo Hawley	Thomas Pavkov
Hollie Hoole	Medina Bailey	Tina Wiegel
Joan Longtin	Mellissa Ferguson	Toni Porter
Joyce Gronewold	Mercedes Mondragón	Toni Potenza
Julia Auch	Nichole Miller	Wendy Williams
		Yinna Zhang

**PDAC Members were welcomed to the PDAC meeting by Marcy Mendenhall and Marsha Hawley.**

- Minutes: June 18, 2025
  - Bella Mote moved to accept the meeting minutes.
  - Christi Chadwick seconded the motion.
    - Minutes were approved.

**Strategic Plan X Year 2**

- Marcy Mendenhall introduced a new tool, the Strategic Plan Tracker which all committees will use to track the progress in year two of the three year Strategic Plan.
  - Qualifications and Credentials Update
    - Bela Mote updated efforts to help DCFS better appreciate the work related to Goal 1 of the QC Strategic Plan. Goal 2 involves coordinating with the Higher Education Committee and Joellyn's work on the PDR. The QC Committee is considering adding a new goal focused on credential reviews, as many credentials are due for renewals.
  - Workforce Development and Pathways Update
    - Christi discussed aligning higher education coursework with DCFS requirements, with Christi explaining that IDEC is responsible for developing a website process in collaboration with the Board of Higher Education and DCFS. Lauri presented updates

on workforce development goals, including access, communication, innovative practices.

- Financial Supports Update
  - Committee will focus on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) costs and financial barriers.
  - Committee Tri-Chairs will meet with Higher Education Committee Co-Chairs on September 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - The committee will monitor various scholarship programs and consider prioritization strategies if funding levels decrease.
  - The committee will continue examining wage scales.
- Higher Education Update
  - Rebecca Pruitt presented updates on the goals for FY25 and FY26. The focus was on identifying and promoting innovative practices, with a statewide forum held in FY25 and plans for another in FY26.
  - A large-scale research study involving student voice was discussed, along with initiatives supporting professionals and investigating infant-toddler class availability. The committee will also explore specific goals related to competency infrastructure and kindergarten licensure through ISBE.

### **PDAC Annual Membership**

- Initial PDAC Membership Results
  - Survey results show that 23% specialize in early childhood education, 14% in administration and 13% in higher education.
  - Largest membership concentration is in the Chicago metropolitan area with 54%.
  - PDAC membership is made up of 59%caucasian/white, with African American/Black at 19% and Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander at 7% each.
  - 71% of PDAC membership are Gateways Registry members.
  - We currently have 24% of PDAC members who have been with PDAC from 1to 5 years.

### **Reports and Updates**

- **Illinois Department Early Childhood**
  - Starting conversations with parent groups to find out what is important to them.
  - Will hold listening sessions, want to hear from the workforce in regards to what is important to them to set priorities. <https://idec.illinois.gov/events/2025/ec-idec-workforce-listening-session.html>
  - Later this fall a will be standing up a working group to help us make recommendations across the state.
  - It is important that we connect with the advisories, so we are connecting with higher education, ECACE etc. for a comprehensive set of stakeholders.
- Illinois Department of Human Services
  - Currently collecting the data for the Quality Progress Report that we do annually for the Federal office. It includes programs outlined in the Child Care Development Fund of the state plan which includes the work of PDAC. Once completed the report will be posted.
- Illinois Community College Board
  - ECACE Consortium members need to submit their information for the quarterly reports.
  - Have a few grant projects that focus on early childhood and in terms of dual credit.

- Due to Senate Bill 1497, ICCB and three community college faculty members will have representatives on the State Education Educator Preparation and Licensing Board. Over the next few weeks will finalize recommendations to forward to them.
- Senate Bill 1497 also expands the ability to create partnerships between community colleges and universities to get students completed towards the professional educator license. The idea is to build partnerships to make sure we provide access points.
- Illinois Head Start Association
  - The administration has reinterpreted a 30-year law that moved Head Start from an educational program to a federal public benefit. This does not allow Head Start to serve illegal immigrants. Head Start has never asked about citizenship, so this is a new requirement.
  - Head Start has amended their current lawsuit to include this issue regarding immigration status, which will be heard on September 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - Currently regarding funding, the House has put forward flat funding for both Child Care and Head Start. There is a probability of a short-term continuing funding resolution as the next Federal funding cycle begins on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Illinois Board of Higher Education and Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity
  - ECACE Scholarship Information:
  - AY 21-22: 412 learners received scholarships with \$5.7 million expended.
  - AY 22-23: 2,137 learners received scholarships with \$29.5 million expended.
  - AY 23-24: 4,679 learners received scholarships with \$76.4 million expended.
    - AY 23-24: of the 4,679 recipients 43% represented downstate, 21% represented Chicago and 36% represented the collar counties.
    - AY 23-24: of the 4,679 recipients 24% attended public universities, 35% attended private 4-year universities, and 41% at community colleges.
  - AY 23-24: 39% recipients were at the associate's degree, 42% at Bachelor's degree and 12% at Master's degree with others at certificate or post baccalaureate.
  - Current work to highlight
    - AAS to BA Transfer Study is currently in process with Columbia University's Community College Research Centers. The goal of the project is to identify effective practices and barriers in pathway creation. Currently looking for funding to continue the work.
    - Multilingual Pathway project with the University of Illinois Chicago. The goal of the project is to identify high education programs offering courses in other languages. A survey has been conducted at other institutions to find out what is offered in other languages.
    - Community of Practice / Credit of Prior Learning Working Group: A high interest from higher education institutions regarding the work. Group met in August decided on two paths for the meeting: Problems of Practice and Resource Sharing.
  - ECACE Consortium meeting will be held on September 30<sup>th</sup> – minutes will be posted on ECACE.org.
  - The Consortium was invited by the National Early Care & Education Workforce Center to participate in the Community for Action on integrating credit for prior work experience into career pathways.
    - This allows for targeted technical assistance to support efforts to strengthen career pathways for the state's incumbent ECE workforce and to engage with peers.

- Illinois State Board of Education
  - On July 10<sup>th</sup> a meeting, facilitated by Dr. Jason Helfer, was held concerning the recommendations of changing the grade level bands.
  - ISBE did not have a competitive grant for the Early Childhood Block Grant for 2025.
  - ISBE released the continuation grant in May with applications due in June.
  - The first FY27 budget hearing will be held on September 30<sup>th</sup> in person and virtually on October 16<sup>th</sup> and October 21<sup>st</sup> information is included on the ISBE budget web page.
  - ISBE did receive their federal title grants for Title I, II, III and IV which supported students especially for language learners and can be released to the districts.

**Adjourn**

**Next meeting: November 5, 2025**



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