

GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®

Illinois Professional Development System

Professional Development Advisory Council

December 10, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Aja Owasoyo	Joyce Gronewold	Mellissa Ferguson
Anna Perry	Julia Auch	Mercedes Mondragon
Anne Pradzinski	Julie Lindstrom	Miranda Lin
Barb Christmas	Karen Bruning	Nichole Miller
Bela Mote	Kate Connor	Paula Schnicker-Johnson
Beth Knight	Kimberlee Hendricks	Rebecca Livengood
Carole Franke	Larissa Mulholland	Ruth Kimble
Christi Chadwick	Laura Rhodes	Sara Seitz
Cindy Berrey	Lauri Morrison-Frichtl	Sharyl Robin
Connie Shugart	Leslie Layman	Sherial McKinney
Danen Busch	Lisa Downey	Stephanie Hellmer
Deborah Rogers-Jaye	Lori A Harrison	Stormy Udell
Emily Dorsey	Lynn Burgett	Tamara Notter
Gabriel Holmes	Madelyn James	Tina Wiegel
Gail Nelson	Marcus Brown	Toni Porter
Gwyn Moss	Marcy Mendenhall	Toni Potenza
Jamie Nichols	Marie Donovan	Trinita Winston
Joan Longtin	Marsha Shigeyo Hawley	Wendy McCullough
Joellyn Whitehead	Medina Bailey	Wendy Williams
Johnna Darragh		

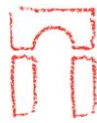
Welcome and Reading of the Vision, Mission and Values of PDAC

- Attendees were welcomed to the meeting by Johnna Darragh and Marcy Mendenhall. Shauna Ejeh, Tri-chair, is on sabbatical until January.
- Members read the Vision, Mission and Values of PDAC.

Goals of PDAC for FY 26 (January – June 2026)

- PDAC Co chairs reviewed the PDAC FY26 work shift for PDAC members as this work will help to inform the new Illinois Department of Early Childhood (IDEC) on the Gateways credentials and training system.
- Role will be to gather insights into the current state of Gateways’ credentials and training. The process will capture members’ feedback about the strengths and challenges that the field experiences to ensure the early childhood workforce has a clearly aligned and achievable pathway for





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their professional development. PDAC workgroups will identify what is working well and where there are pain points:

- Collecting and using current information
- Making sense of the information
- Documenting the information and insights

What do we need from PDAC members:

- Will capitalize on the current expertise and experience of PDAC members.
- Engage in workgroups, data exploration, and analysis to map out the current state.
- Elevate what is working well and identify pain points and rubs in our system.
- Findings will be captured in a report that will be given to IDEC.

Workgroups:

- Will use the three sub values of PDAC to begin the work.
- Will stand up three workgroups to undertake the work. Each workgroup will have co or tri- leaders to facilitate the workgroups. The workgroups are:
- **Engaging:** Respects and cultivates education, training, and experience; recognizes and equitably compensates achievement based on levels of competence.
- **Inclusive:** Has diverse representation of culture, linguistics, ability, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography, supports inclusive high-quality, culturally responsive care and education for all children, youth and families in all settings.
- **Efficient:** Is accessible, affordable, and diverse in opportunities; develops and expands core knowledge, skills and dispositions.

Launched the use of Padlet to collect responses to questions that will help guide the work- [Current State of the Gateways Credentials and Training \(PDAC 12/10/25\)](#)

Questions asked on the Padlet – Current State of the Gateways Credentials and Training:

- What parts of the Gateways Credentials and/or training systems are working well?
- Where do you experience friction, confusion, or barriers?
- What challenges do you workforce members face?
- Where can you find information about the Gateways credentials and training?
- Is it easy to find information about the credentials and training? Why or why not?

Data sets were shared to give background and context of the use of credentials:

The following numbers represent the percentage of workforce members holding the Gateways ECE Credential:

- In 2015: Center Directors 5%, Teachers 4.1%, Assistant Teachers 1.5%, and FCC providers 1.3%
- In 2020: Center Directors 32.6%, Teachers 22.3%, Assistant Teachers 27.8%, and FCC providers 38.3%





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- In 2025: Center Directors 35.5%, Teachers 19.4%, Assistant Teachers 22.9%, and FCC providers 43.1%

The following numbers represent the increase in wages with attainment of Gateways ECE Credentials:

- High School/GED education \$18.02, with credential \$18.46.
- Some college education \$18.72, with credential \$18.89.
- Community College certificate \$18.68, with credential \$19.12.
- Associate Degree \$18.96, with credential \$19.66.
- Bachelor Degree \$20.63, with credential \$21.66.
- Graduate Degree \$22.05, with credential \$23.91.

Gateways credentials were highlighted showing the total awarded credentials (from their inception date) with breakouts between entitled and direct routes:

- Illinois Director Credential: 5,821 with 90% awarded through the direct route,
- ESL & Bilingual Credential: 87 with 84% awarded through the direct route,
- ECE Credential: 24,163 with 58% awarded through the direct route,
- Infant Toddler Credential: 11,140 with 75% awarded through the direct route,

The three workgroups that will be launched to review the credentials and training systems:

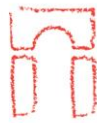
Efficient: Is it accessible affordable and diverse in opportunities; develops and expands core knowledge, skills and dispositions?

- Accessible – How accessible are the pathways to credentials and training across the state?
- Affordable – What is available and what will make the pathways to credentials and trainings across the state more affordable?
- Diverse in Opportunity – Is our current system meeting the needs of different delivery/modality needs? Are we meeting the needs through credentials and trainings?
- Clarity in Pathways – Are the credentials and trainings, clear, coherent and supportive of growth? What are the redundancies or unnecessary barriers?

Inclusive: Has diverse representation of culture, linguistics, ability, ethnicity, gender, age and geography, supports inclusive high quality culturally responsive care and education for all children, youth and families in all settings.

- Diverse representation of culture, linguistics, ability, ethnicity, gender, age and geography. Is the credential available to all representatives of the ECE workforce? And does the system value representation and demonstrate values through the credentials, training and competencies?
- Reviewing what is inclusive in the system, credentials and training:
 - Are the gateways credentials and training accessible across the cultures, languages, abilities genders, ages, and geographies.





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- Are the workforce settings included in the credentials and training?
- How do we ensure high quality and culturally responsive and defined and practiced?
- Who is underserved or overlooked?

Engaging: Respects and cultivates education, training, and experience; recognizes and equitably compensates achievements based on levels of competence.

- Respects and cultivates:
 - Education
 - Training
 - Experience
- Compensates achievement based on competencies:
 - The credentials and training recognize competence where and how they are achieved and build systems that support this.
- Reviewing engagement in the system, credentials, and training
 - Who is meaningfully engaged in the Gateways Credentials and training system/who is left out?
 - How are workforce members using the Gateways Credentials and training system?
 - How well does the system recognize training, experience, and prior learning?
 - What are the competencies? How are they acknowledged in the credentials and training? Where are they not?

Timeline for January through June 2026

- Using the QR Code or the link <https://forms.office.com/r/UWz7tfZ61M>, members can sign up using the interest form for one of the three workgroups introduced at the meeting. The forms need to be returned before December 24th.
- January – Full PDAC meeting will be held. Date will be shared as soon as possible.
- February – Workgroups begin.
- March – Workgroups continue with full PDAC meeting being held to share work.
- April and May – Workgroups continue to meet, at the end of May leaders of the three workgroups meet to update work with PDAC and IDEC leadership.
- June – Full PDAC meeting held to share summary of work. A final report will be developed and shared with PDAC and IDEC.

Adjourn

