



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®

Illinois Professional Development System

Professional Development Advisory Council

January 21, 2026

Meeting Minutes

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Bela Mote	Johnna Darragh	Pam Womack
Beth Knight	Julia Auch	Paula Schnicker Johnson
Christi Chadwick	Julie Lindstrom	Rebecca Pruitt
Cindy Berrey	Karen Bruning	Sharyl Robin
Connie Shugart	Kate Connor	Shauna Ejeh
Danen Busch	Larissa Mulholland	Stephanie Hellmer
Debbie Jaye	Laura Rhodes	Tamara Notter
Edwina Tolbert	Lauri Morrison Frichtl	Tammy King
Emily Dorsey	Leslie Layman	Tina Wiegel
Gabriel Holmes	Lori Harrison	Tom Pavkov
Guadalupe Valdivia	Lynn Burgett	Toni Porter
Gwyn Moss	Madelyn James	Toni Potenza
Hollie Hoole	Malia Owens	Trinita Winston
Jacqueline Melendez	Marcus Brown	Wendy Connell
Jamie Nichols	Marcy Mendenhall	Wendy McCullough
Jennifer Brown	Marie Donovan	Yinna Zhang

Welcome:

- Attendees were welcomed to the meeting.
- Co-Chairs welcomed back to Shauna Ejeh, who had been on a sabbatical.
- The vision, mission, and values were read by council members.
- Marcy Mendenhall introduced the main focus of the meeting, which is to gather insights on the current state of Gateways credentials and training.
- The workgroups will be identifying and documenting strengths, friction points, and challenges during a series of meetings now through May. Groups are divided into three groups: Engaging, Efficient, and Inclusive.



IDEC Program Integration and Redesign:

- Christi Chadwick shared an update on the work of IDEC.
- Focus on IDEC's progress and upcoming changes. The agency will merge programs from three agencies into one on July 1, 2026.
- She outlined various ongoing initiatives, including supporting families with special needs, multilingual learners, data analysis, technology, funding alignment, program alignment, advisory bodies, and workforce development.
- They continue to develop a strategic vision and plan to redesign service delivery – current state, what is going well, and where are the challenges related to the early childhood workforce.

PDAC outline for today's meeting:

- Johnna Darragh presented the agenda for the meeting.
 - Review IDEC's request and our planned approach.
 - Review Gateways credentialing and training systems.
 - Will use Breakouts for working groups to work on focus areas.
 - Closing and next steps will be reviewed.
- PDAC is needed to assist IDEC
 - Capitalize on the current expertise and experience of PDAC members.
 - Engage in workgroups, use data and analysis regarding the current state.
 - Elevate what is working well, identify issues, and rubs
- Mapping the current state of credentials and training systems, aligning them with IDEC's values of engaging, inclusive, and efficient systems, and preparing for future workforce development.

Gateways Credential and Training Committees:

- Marsha Shigeyo Hawley outlined the structure and leadership of three workgroups focused on Gateways Credential and Gateways Training in Illinois.
 - Engagement with Co-Chairs: Gwyn Moss, Sharyl Robin, and Larissa Mullholland
 - Inclusion with Co-Chairs: Madelyn James, Anna Perry, and Lisa Downey
 - Efficient with Co-Chairs: Leslie Laymen, Bela Mote, and Kate Connor
- The workgroups will focus on areas for credentials and training over the next four months, with working groups meeting in February and March to examine Gateways credentials, followed in April and May with a focus on the training system.



- **Gateways Credentials:**
- Credential options and availability
- Levels and Lattice
- Pathways
- **Gateways Training System:**
- i-learning and CCR&R Core Training
- Professional Development Record
- Alignment between training and credentials
- General effectiveness of the training system
- The process includes synthesizing information, creating a final report, and planning next steps, with full PDAC meetings scheduled for March and June.
- Beth Knight reviewed the Training system, and the PDR key components include:
 - The Registry system
 - The Illinois Trainers Network
 - i-learning
 - The Gateways Training Calendar
 - Training is a key part of Gateways Credentials – Registry-approved trainings align to Content areas, competencies, ExceleRate Illinois, and DCFS licensing.
- The review aims to examine the purpose, clarity, and training aspects of the system through an inclusive lens, focusing on effectiveness, efficiency, and engagement.
- Focus areas include:
 - Engaging: Participation and Recognition
 - Inclusive: Access (Diverse) and Relevance
 - Efficient: Access (Ease) and Alignment
- Marsha reviewed the in-and-out of-scope of work to help establish guidelines for the workgroups:
 - In scope includes: a high-level look at the credentials, looking through the lens of inclusion, efficiency, and engagement. The purpose, clarity, and coherence of the credentials and training for the workforce, and bringing perspectives of the workforce and personal experience to the discussions.
 - Out of scope includes: Formal recommendations for specific changes or additions to the credentials or training. Recommendations for changes in the structure of the credentials or training. Eliminating a current process or system.



Workgroup Approach and Timeline:

- During February and March, workgroups will review Credentials.
- During April and May, workgroups will review the Training System.
- Participants were encouraged to be active listeners, respect the limited time we have for meetings, use the Padlet for sharing ideas, and allow the co-chairs to guide the upcoming meetings.
- A reminder: The review will not make specific recommendations for structural changes but will identify challenges and areas for improvement, with a focus on understanding the current system's strengths and weaknesses.
- The three workgroups broke into breakout sessions to begin the introduction to the work.
 - The intent was for them to recap insights from the December PDAC meeting.
 - Review and begin to explore the guiding questions that each group was given.
 - Review and provide feedback on data analyses and future data needs.

Wrap-up of the meeting:

- Wendy McCullough outlined the schedule, which includes monthly 90-minute working group meetings starting in February, with full committee meetings planned for March 25th and June 25th.
- The groups will use Padlet to document their discussions and insights.
- Workgroups will provide their monthly meeting dates/times to Julie who will schedule and provide links to the Zoom meetings.
- Workgroup members can continue to add thoughts to their Padlet table.

Adjourn