



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®

Illinois Professional Development System

Professional Development Advisory Council Meeting

March 25, 2026

Minutes

Aja Owasoyo	Joan Longtin	Marcy Mendenhall
Anna Perry	Joellyn Whitehead	Marsha Shigeyo Hawley
Anne Pradzinski	John Phillips	Nichole Miller
Bela Mote	Johnna Darragh	Pam Womack
Beth Knight	Joyce Gronewold	Paula Schnicker-Johnson
Brenda Eastham	Julia Auch	Rebecca Livengood
Carole Franke	Julie Lindstrom	Ruth Kimble
Connie Shugart	Kate Connor	Sara Seitz
Danen Busch	Kimberlee Hendricks	Sharyl Robin
Deborah Rogers-Jaye	Larissa Mulholland	Shauna Ejeh
Denise Monnier	Laura Rhodes	Sherial McKinney
Dr. Marie Donovan	Leslie Layman	Tamara Notter
Emily Dorsey	Leslie Layman	Tina Wiegel
Gabriel Holmes	Linda Ruhe Marsh	Tom Pavkov
Gail Nelson	Lisa Downey	Toni Porter
Gwyn Moss	Lori A. Harrison	Toni Potenza
Hollie Hoole	Lynn Burgett	Wendy Connell
Jamilah R. Jor'dan	Madelyn James	Wendy McCullough
Jennifer Brown	Marcus Brown	Wendy Williams
		Yinna Zhang

Welcome

- PDAC Members were welcomed to the meeting.
- The vision, mission and values were read by council members.
- Minutes: January 21, 2026
 - Jennifer Brown moved to accept the meeting minutes.
 - Madelyn James seconded the motion.
 - Minutes were approved.
- Recap of recent activities:
 - Three work groups were formed based on PDAC values: Engaging, Inclusive and Efficient.
 - Engaging co-chairs: Gwyn Moss, Larissa Mulholland and Sharyl Robin with Shauna Ejeh
 - Inclusive co-chairs: Anna Perry, Lisa Downey and Madelyn James with Johnna Darragh.
 - Efficient co-chairs: Bela Mote, Leslie Layman and Kate Connor with Marcy Mendenhall.



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Illinois Professional Development System

- In February and March, the focus of the groups has been on the Gateways Credentials system.
- Focus of each group was to identify the strengths, frictions, and challenges.

Mid Term Report Update

- Wendy McCullough gave a Mid-Term Update.
 - The work has been organized by the three PDAC values of engaging, inclusive and efficient.
 - The three workgroups engaged in detailed reviews looking specifically at:
 - Engaging: Participation and Recognition, which includes:
 - Who and how is the workforce meaningfully engaged in the system
 - What workforce settings are missing
 - Where are the credentials recognized
 - How well does the system recognize competencies developed across a range of experiences
 - Inclusive: Diverse Access and Relevance, which includes:
 - Are credentials accessible across languages, genders, ages, and cultures
 - Who is underserved
 - Are the credentials reflective of the competencies needed by the workforce in today's environment
 - Efficient: Ease of Access and Alignment, which includes:
 - How easy is it to access the Gateways pathways
 - How is the current system meeting delivery and modality needs
 - Where are there alignment or gaps with other related systems
 - Current percentage of the workforce holding an ECE credential:
 - Center Directors: 35.5%
 - Teachers: 19.4%
 - Assistant Teachers: 22%
 - Family Child Care Providers: 43.1%
 - The Gateways Registry has more than 116,000 active members.
 - 64% of those in the Registry work in a Licensed Center setting.
 - More than 9,500 Registry members hold an ECE level 2-6.
 - The lowest number of credential holders reflects the ESL Bilingual Credential, the newest credential, with 46 holding the credential.
 - 48% of the Registry are people under the age of 38.

Additional look at strengths and rubs from the discussion points from each of the workgroups:

- Strengths Engaging:



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- Growth in awareness of the credentials over time, licensed child care providers participate most in credential attainment.
- Inclusion in State systems such as: DCFS, DHS and ISBE, ExceleRate.
- Rubs Engaging:
 - Low numbers in mid-level credential attainment, especially Level 3, low level of Level 6 attainment.
 - Some credentials are not incorporated into any state or local system. The difference in wages is small until Level 5.
- Strengths Inclusive:
 - Regionally, credential attainment is fairly even across Illinois; minority populations have high credential rates.
 - Collectively, the competencies resemble high-quality care and education by design.
- Rubs Inclusive:
 - Underrepresented categories include males, language other than English and Spanish.
 - Some credentials could benefit from a comprehensive review.
- Strengths Efficiency:
 - Eligibility rates are fairly high for most credentials, with the use of two routes to earn credentials offers more options, credentials are stackable and interrelated, alignment with state systems.
- Rubs Efficiency:
 - The workforce often has trouble understanding credentials and competencies; the variety in how competencies can be met can lead to a patchwork approach of credential attainment.

Breakouts

- Breakout rooms were opened for members to learn more about each of the workgroups. Discussion questions were used to facilitate the discussions within the breakouts.
- Questions for the breakouts included:
 - What strengths and or rubs do you see elevated?
 - Are there strengths and rubs that are missing?
 - Padlets were set up to collect feedback from the breakout sessions. Members were encouraged to add information to the Padlet after the meeting to collect as much information as possible.

Shift to Gateways Training

- For April and May workgroups will shift to review the Gateways Training System.



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- Engaging: participation in April and Recognition in May.
 - Inclusive: Access (Diverse) in April and Relevance in May.
 - Efficient Access (Ease) in April and Alignment in May.
- Key Components of the system include:
 - Registry System: tracks credentials, training hours, and career pathways.
 - The Illinois Trainers Network, i-learning, and the Training Calendar.
- Registry approved training aligns to:
 - Gateways Content Areas
 - ExceleRate Illinois standards
 - DCFS licensing requirements
- Training is a key part of Gateways Credentials
 - Trainer requests a review for credential alignment and training participant submits request for alignment review with their credential application.
- Gateways Registry- Approved Training – FY2025 Data
 - Workshops: 5,705 were offered. 49,835 participants with 136,397 participants hours.
 - Multi-Session Series: 841 offered, 6,591 participants with 207,492 participants hours.
 - Online Training: 200+ free on i-learning and 900+ (most fee-based). 325,619 participants with 668,974 participant hours.
- Proposed Data that will be reviewed in the upcoming workgroup sessions:
 - Engaging:
 - Participation: Reviewing active Registry members who are participating in Gateways Approved trainings using setting and roles, scan of training as it recognized in the Gateways Credential System
 - Inclusive:
 - Reviewing Registry-approved trainings broken out by geography, language and time offered. Looking at CCR&R system training needs and assessment findings.
 - Efficient:
 - Reviewing the Registry-approved training courses broken out by modality, numbers fee-based vs free trainings offered, review barriers to taking trainings, scan of trainings as they align to the Credential system.

Next Meeting

- Thursday, June 25, 2026