



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®

Illinois Professional Development System

PDAC Qualifications and Credentials (QC) Committee

Tuesday, October 24th, 2023

1:00 PM—3:00 PM

Virtual Meeting Agenda

Barbara Volpe	Danen Busch	Joan Longtin	Stormy Udell
Bela Moté*	Debbie Rogers-Jaye	Joni Scritchlow	Tammy Notter
Brooke Walker	Denise Monnier	Miranda Lin	Tami O'Daniel
Cerathel Burgess-Burnett	Elva DeLuna*	Sharyl Robin	Teri Talan
Connie Shugart	Gwendolyn Moss	Stephanie Hellmer	Wendy Connell

*Denotes co-chair

Welcome – **Bela Moté & Elva DeLuna, co-chairs**

Review and Approval of April 11th, 2023, meeting minutes

- Motion by Cerathel Burgess-Burnett.
- Motion seconded by Tammy Notter.
- Motion passed and minutes approved.

Breaking News!

- Today, Gov. Pritzker announced a proposal to create a unified Early Childhood State Agency. The new agency will unify the following programs under a single agency:
 - The Early Childhood Block Grant at ISBE, which funds Preschool for All and the Prevention Initiative home-visiting program.
 - The Child Care Assistance Program, Home-Visiting, and Early Intervention services at DHS
 - Day care licensing currently managed by DCFS.
- Ann Whalen has been named the agency's Early Childhood Transition Director.
- An external advisory committee will be established to seek input from stakeholders across the state in preparation for the proposal. The committee will be chaired by Bela Moté. **Congratulations Bela!**
- Read the full Press Release: <https://dcfs.illinois.gov/es/news/press-release.27179.html> (Attachment A).

PDAC Strategic Planning Phase X – **Bela Moté, Elva DeLuna, & Teri Talan**

- The PDAC Steering Committee met in person in late September to discuss the vision and future of the next PDAC Strategic Plan.
 - The breaking news announcement of a central state agency will be important to include in PDAC's Phase X Strategic Plan.
 - Should QC meet in person at the INCCRRA office for the December 19th meeting?
 - A large majority of the committee is in favor of an in-person meeting in Bloomington.
 - The December 19th meeting will be rescheduled as an in-person meeting.



PDAC Strategic Plan Phase IX – *Bela Moté, Elva DeLuna, & Teri Talan*

- Attachment B shows QC's progress in the current strategic plan.
- **GREEN = COMPLETE, Yellow = Next Steps/Focus, and Orange = ongoing work.**
 - Goal 1 included embedding Gateways Credentials into DCFS licensing as options to meet educational requirements.
 - Should QC revisit the DCFS/Credential Crosswalk this Strategic Plan phase? The current Phase IX ends June 30th, 2024.
 - Goal 2 ongoing work includes encouraging a dashboard of progress within the Gateways Registry Professional Development Record toward competency completion for each credential.
 - QC has been having ongoing discussions with Joellyn Whitehead on this progress.
 - Unfortunately, IDHS has other priorities, and these updates are not as crucial.
 - How can QC expedite this to make it a priority?
 - Goal 3 includes Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPD) to support competency attainment and achievement of Gateways Credentials.
 - In partnership with the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, ExceleRate® Illinois had a pilot program to model Job Embedded Professional Development (JEPD).
 - It's possible that QC can make a recommendation before June 30th, 2024.
 - JEPD would need to be added to the Gateways Credential frameworks.
 - Goal 4 included deepening QC's knowledge of the Credentialed and non-Credentialed workforce.
 - This data analysis could still be completed before June 30th, 2024.

Welcome New Members – *Stephanie Hellmer, INCCRRA*

- Gwendolyn Moss from the Illinois Afterschool Network (IAN) – formerly Curtis Peace, Jr. was in this role.
- Stormy Udell from the Illinois Associate of Community Action Agencies (IACCA) – previously Christine Westerlund was in this role.

Thank You Retiring Members – *Joni Scritchlow, INCCRRA*

- After many decades of volunteering and shepherding the field of ECE, Teri Talan will be rolling off PDAC. She joins us as a guest to share her expansive knowledge and expertise with the QC Committee.
- Also, Joni Scritchlow is retiring from INCCRRA after 18 years of dedicated service. Her last day with INCCRRA will be December 20th, 2023.
- Congratulations to Teri and Joni on their upcoming retirements.

Shared Information/Data/Announcements

- The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership's Leadership Connections Conference will return to an in-person format February 7 – 10th, 2024 in Wheeling. There will be a family child care summit on Saturday 10th.

Adjourn



Gov. Pritzker Announces Proposal to Create Unified Early Childhood State Agency

Press Release - Tuesday, October 24, 2023

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Gov. Signs EO to Initiate Transition, Education Expert Ann Whalen to Lead Effort

CHICAGO — Today, Governor Pritzker was joined by Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, Deputy Governor Grace Hou, Deputy Governor Martin Torres, elected officials, and state agency directors at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning to announce a proposal to create a new state agency to house all early childhood programs and funding. The new unified agency will provide a more equitable, integrated, and holistic system of services for young children and families in Illinois.

"We need a governance system that is unified in its approach to serving families, working with providers, and promoting equity," **said Governor JB Pritzker**. "Our Smart Start Illinois plan served as the catalyst for this transition, but this new agency will cover so much more. From ISBE's Early Childhood Block Grants and DCFS' day care licensing program to DHS' child care, home visiting and early intervention services, soon all of these programs will be administered under the same agency."

The proposal builds on Governor Pritzker's work to make Illinois the best state in the nation for families raising young children, with the nation's best early childhood education and childcare system. Currently, services are housed in three separate agencies—the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

To initiate the multi-year process, Governor Pritzker is signing an Executive Order, and will work with the General Assembly on legislation in the spring of 2024.

Early Childhood Transition Director Ann Whalen

Education expert Ann Whalen will serve as Early Childhood Transition Director, working out of ISBE and in close collaboration with state agencies and the governor's office.

Ann Whalen has served as the Director of Policy for Advance Illinois since 2019, where she works on education advocacy issues including addressing Illinois' teacher shortage, the improved use of data to drive decision making, social-and-emotional learning, education funding, and more. She has an extensive background in education policy and implementation at the local, state, and federal levels.



Before joining Advance, Ann spent two years at Denver Public Schools focused on academic administration. Previously, Ann served as the Director of the United States Department of Education Implementation and Support Unit, helping to administer the Obama administration's Race to the Top program. Additionally, she served as Acting Assistant Secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education where she focused on improving academic outcomes. Prior to her work in Washington, Ann was Deputy Chief Education Officer at Chicago Public Schools. She holds a BA in Political Science from Stanford University.

Advisory Committee

Governor Pritzker is establishing an external advisory committee to seek input from stakeholders across the state in preparation for the proposal. The committee will be chaired by Bela Moté and work closely with Ann Whalen.

Bela Moté is the Chief Executive Officer of the Carole Robertson Center for Learning, one of the largest early childhood and youth development organizations in Chicago, serving close to 2,500 children through their childcare centers and affiliate programs. She previously led the Early Childhood Funding Commission.

Early Childhood State Agency Proposal

The new unified agency will unify the following programs under a single agency:

- The Early Childhood Block Grant at ISBE, which funds Preschool for All and the Prevention Initiative home-visiting program
- The Child Care Assistance Program, Home-Visiting, and Early Intervention services at DHS
- Day care licensing currently managed by DCFS

Governor Pritzker established the [Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding](#) ("Early Childhood Funding Commission") to analyze and make recommendations on funding goals and mechanisms to provide equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care services for all children from birth to age five. The Commission concluded its efforts in 2021 with the recommendation to consolidate all early childhood programs into a new agency, making it a more accessible system for providers and families.

The unified agency will address the difficulties that providers and families experience when navigating three different agencies. Having a governance system that is unified in its approach to serving families, working with providers, and promoting equity is why several states—including Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Oregon, and New Mexico—already created new state agencies dedicated solely to early childhood.

The change will further advance the Pritzker administration's transformative investments in comprehensive early childhood education and care, including Smart Start Illinois. Beginning with a \$250 million investment this year, Smart Start Illinois is a multi-year plan to eliminate preschool deserts, increase funding to childcare providers to raise wages and quality, and reach more vulnerable families with early support.

Smart Start Illinois demonstrates the state's ongoing commitment to children, families, teachers, and childcare providers. The \$250 million investment in FY24 includes:

- \$75 million additional for the Early Childhood Block Grant to put Illinois on a path to creating more than 20,000 new Pre-K spots for every child who wants one
- \$130 million for nation-leading Childcare Workforce Compensation Contracts that will stabilize providers and give childcare workers a raise
- An additional \$40 million for Early Intervention programs to enhance services for families and give providers a raise
- \$5 million to expand the Illinois Department of Human Services' Home Visiting Program so more families who want it can receive this early support

In addition to Smart Start investments, other investments being made in the early Childhood Education Space include:

- \$100 million in capital dollars for early childhood providers to expand existing facilities and build new facilities
- \$70 million for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)
- \$12 million in new funding for scholarships and apprenticeships to expand the childcare workforce
- \$1.6 million to launch the [Dolly Parton Imagination Library](#), a statewide literacy initiative to send free books to children from birth-through age five

"As a working mom, I know how important it is for families to be able to navigate getting access to quality, affordable childcare and early learning programs," **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** "Today's announcement isn't just about the system, but the people within this system—parents, families, educators and most importantly, the children who will have greater access to resources they need to thrive. By creating a more efficient and equitable system, we are better serving our Illinois family."

"Our shared mission across State agencies is enhancing equitable access to early childhood programs and services in support of holistic development for all children," **said Dulce Quintero, Secretary, Illinois Department of Human Services.** "We are so proud to be a part of this historic investment in Illinois children and their shared futures."



"Illinois is a national leader in expanding and investing in early childhood. Illinois has truly set the bar for the nation," **said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders**. "But we also recognize that our current model of governance and administration can be confusing for families looking for care and for providers looking for funding or guidance. Today, under the leadership of the Pritzker Administration, ISBE looks forward to collaborating on improving coordination, equity, and outcomes for the many excellent early education and care providers across the state and the young minds they serve."

"The department has always been proud of our role and setting high standards as it relates to licensing," **said Marc D. Smith Director of Illinois DCFS**. "When change has been needed in Illinois, the Governor has led the way through innovation and bold action; we are pleased to work alongside the team creating best practices under this new agency."

"The foundation of a child's success and well-being is built starting the moment they are born," **said Senate Majority Leader Kimberly A. Lightford (D-Maywood)**. "As a state, it is our duty to provide the necessary support and resources to build such stability. The creation of this unique agency will break ground on our transition to a whole, trauma-informed approach to meeting children's diverse needs."

"A new state agency completely dedicated to the young child that will blend the important elements of early childhood education and care into one department to create bright futures for Illinois children," **said State Sen. Julie Morrison (D-Deerfield)**. "These coordinated supports will make it easier for families and providers in Illinois and I am excited to work with Governor Pritzker and his team to get this agency up and running."

"As a strong advocate for education, I'm committed to prioritizing early childhood education that encourages children to be lifelong learners," **said State Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel (D-Shorewood)**. "This will streamline services and access for all early childhood providers and families across the state. I thank Governor Pritzker for putting our students first and making early childhood education a priority here in Illinois."

"Illinois' children deserve access to the best early childhood education and care services, and this transformation will have a notable impact across the state," **said State Senator Lakesia Collins (D-Chicago)**. "I am grateful to Governor Pritzker and everyone that is collaborating to make this change possible."

"Early childhood care and education are key to creating a strong foundation for learning and success," **said House Deputy Majority Leader Elizabeth 'Lisa' Hernandez (D-Cicero)**. "I look forward to collaborating with Governor Pritzker to ensure that we continue making Illinois the best state in the nation for families, with equity at the center of every policy."

"We want to make sure that every child receives the attention and prioritization they deserve," **said House Assistant Majority Leader Camille Lilly (D-Chicago)**. "I appreciate the partnership from Governor Pritzker and his administration with the Early Childhood Funding Commission, and I'm excited to see the strong impact this new agency will have across Illinois."

"Over the past year, I've spent considerable time with families and providers, listening to their experiences, struggles, and needs," **said State Rep. Joyce Mason (D-Gurnee)**. Having one agency dedicated to ECEC will make it easier for families to explore their options and for providers to navigate funding and standards. Most importantly, it will better ensure that every child in Illinois will receive equitable, high-quality education and care. Together with the SMART START Illinois initiative introduced this year, Illinois is working hard to be the very best state for families to raise their children."

"Children in all corners of the state deserve high quality early childhood education," **said State Rep. Maura Hirschauer (D-Batavia)**. "Helping families and children by expanding access to child care and early childcare education will dramatically impact their future success. Establishing an office of early childhood education and housing all resources under one 'roof' will provide better support for daycare providers and families, ensuring that Illinois is the best place for families to raise their children."

"Uniting the efforts of public servants under a dedicated agency devoted to strengthening early childhood conditions for all Illinois kids is a major step forward," **said State Rep. Mary Beth Cany (D-Arlington Heights)**. "This step is by no means the end to lawmaking efforts working towards a better life for our children. However, this team of professionals with the work already being done in the General Assembly creates the opportunity to grow further partnerships and find smarter solutions to the challenges facing Illinois families, rather than our current siloed approach."

"I am thrilled to see Governor Pritzker take this extremely important step towards improving outcomes for both children and parents across Illinois," **said State Rep. Laura Faver Dias (D-Grayslake)**. "The creation of an agency to oversee early childhood programs will help Illinois manage out-of-control childcare costs, provide a better quality of care, and improve childcare access to parents across Illinois. The strength of Illinois' unified childcare efforts will make Illinois a better place to raise a child."

Attachment B

PDAC Qualifications and Credentials: Goals and Objectives Strategic Plan IX

GREEN = COMPLETE! Yellow = Next Steps/Focus Orange = ongoing

Goal 1: Support implementation of all Gateways Credentials within state systems

1. **Objective 1: Support the ESL and Bilingual Credential through the final review and credential recommendation approval process. COMPLETE!**
 - ESL & Bilingual Credential rec. passed by QC 10/21/21. Signed by IDHS 2/2/22.
 - ESL & Bilingual Credential Career Lattice rec. passed by QC 11/29/22. Signed by IDHS 3/29/23.
2. **Objective 2: Survey existing utilization of credentials, align credentials within the existing qualifications in cross-sector systems, and expand credential usage in cross-section systems when feasible.**
 - Shared Credential survey data on an ongoing basis.
 - Revisit DCFs/Credential Crosswalk

Goal 2: Promote and incentivize mechanisms that advance incremental steps to increase attainment of Gateways Credentials at all levels.

1. **Objective 1: Encourage a dashboard of progress within the Gateways Registry Professional Development Record toward competency completion for each credential.**
 - Ongoing discussions with Joellyn Whitehead.
2. **Objective 2: Support center directors and other leaders in understanding the credential process. COMPLETE!**
 - QC Support and review of Gateways Credential Resources
 - The Gateways YouTube channel and Gateways website have been updated with the following video and resource guides. [Video](#), [Applicant Guide to Credentials](#), [Director's Guide to Credentials](#)
3. **Objective 3: Identify potential barriers and create multiple strategies to increase participation in Gateways Credentials including incentivizing. COMPLETE!**
 - Access: Rec. for All Gateways Credential apps online 2/15/22. IDHS approved 11/15/22 (pending funding) COMPLETE!
 - Barrier: Cost/Fee – Signed by IDHS 7/1/22. COMPLETE!
 - FS/QC joint rec. to add ESL & Bilingual Credential to Great START. IDHS approved 1/30/23. COMPLETE!
4. **Objective 4: Increase participation in the credentialing system. COMPLETE!**
 - Barrier: Cost/Fee – Signed by IDHS 7/1/22.
 - ESL &/or Bilingual PEL endorsement = ESL/Bilingual Credential Level 4 passed by QC 4.11.23. Signed by IDHS 7/13/23.

Goal 3: Identify how Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPd) can support competency attainment and achievement of Gateways Credentials.

1. **Objective 1: Investigate and expand the utilization of RBPd within cross-sector Professional Development Systems.**
 - Job Embedded Professional Development: McCormick IDC competency pilot.
 - Apprenticeship pilot ongoing.
2. **Objective 2: Research innovative strategies supporting Prior Learning Assessment credit (Higher Education Committee) including Relationship Based Professional Development (RBPd) efforts to support students and practitioners in gaining college credit.**
 - Job Embedded Professional Development pilot – ready to make a recommendation?

Goal 4: Ensure Gateways to Opportunity Credentials align with state and national initiatives, incorporate current research and validated practices, and are responsive to workforce needs.

1. **Objective 1: Explore alignment of Gateways Credentials with national initiatives (see below).**
2. **Objective 2: Review findings from the faculty driven National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) crosswalk alignment in FY22. COMPLETE!**
3. **Objective 3: Enrich Gateways Credential review processes by incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. ECE/ITC COMPLETE**
4. **Objective 4: Deepen knowledge of credentialed and non-credentialed workforce through data collection focused on current and emerging demographics and ongoing inequities.**
 - Next Steps – collect and analyze Registry data on Credentialed/Non-Credentialed workforce.