GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY
Illinois Professional Development System

Professional Development Advisory Council's Steering Committee
September 21 & 22, 2023 Strategic Planning Retreat
Minutes

Bela Mote	Joni Scritchlow	Marsha Hawley
Beth Knight	Julie Lindstrom	Rebecca Livengood
Carisa Hurley Davis	Kate Connor	Shauna Ejeh
Hollie Hoole	Lauri Morrison Frichtl	Stephanie Bernoteit
Joellyn Whitehead	Laurie Rhodes	Teri Talan
Johnna Darragh Ernst	Marcus Brown	

September 21, 2023
Welcome – Committee Tri-chairs welcomed attendees to the PDAC Steering Strategic Planning Retreat.
- Mission/Vision/Values were read by committee members.
- Review and approval of August 2, 2023, minutes.
  - Marsha Hawley moved to accept the minutes.
  - Minutes approved.

A look back at the work of PDAC:
- Using the timeline stands that show the events, recommendations, and work of PDAC during the past twenty years, information from the August Jamboard activity was added to posters next to the stands and committee members added additional highlights of the work of PDAC to the posters.
- Committee members were asked to stand next to the year they joined PDAC.
- Members stood next to the poster correlating to the year they joined PDAC and introduced themselves by telling what roles they have had in the ECE field.

Forward Thinking - Potential future impact on the work of PDAC and the field:
Articles sent out in advance for committee members to review to prepare discussion included:
- Artificial Intelligence
- Putting Skills First
- Future Jobs Report
- Workforce and Generations Mental Health and COVID
- Mental health and the pandemic: What U.S. surveys have found

Discussion:
- Post COVID impacts
  - Mental Health: workforce and for families served
  - Workforce demand for remote work/flexible schedules
  - Less educated workforce
  - Fewer workers (world-wide work shortage)
- Mental health overall
  - Services needed to meet increased need
  - State (IDHS) is expanding infrastructure and services
- Shift on work expectations (how/kind/what)
- Overall devaluing of education
  - Implications for pipeline
  - Worth of college and degrees

- o Change in hiring world-wide
- Shift to skill-based (hiring and knowledge)
  - o Movement to competencies as skill indicator
- Importance of technology
  - o Access
  - o Skill development
  - o Rapidity of change and advancements
  - o Impact of the change
- Artificial Intelligence
  - o Most recent: being utilized faster than any previous release
  - o What will be the impact to early childhood classrooms? professional development?
- Need to elevate definition to action of diversity equity and inclusion principles
  - o Need to ensure deep and ongoing understanding
  - o Messaging
  - o Will our field see similar impact
  - o How do we discuss ensure accountability
  - o Need to ensure diversity in practice settings
- Compensation Equity
  - o Increases in minimum wage across the board have left early childhood further behind
  - o What does "equity" look like in relation to job (education) requirements?

PDAC as a connector and partner activity
- Members were asked to write down one place where they connect on each sticky note and place on themselves to show the connections that committee members bring to PDAC.
- Discussed importance of bringing information to PDAC and "carrying water" from PDAC to other organizations, councils, groups.

Federal Initiatives & Landscape
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and Educator Preparation - Hollie Hoole
  - o Hollie highlighted Proposed Rulemaking Information
    - Illinois along with other states and tribes had the opportunity to comment on the Federal Proposed Rule from the Administration of Children and Families.
    - Illinois submitted comments to our Federal partners for review and consideration.
    - Overall, IDHS is in support of the proposed rules but requested further clarification on defining some of the specific terms in the proposed rules.
    - IDHS also requested funding considerations to implement some of the proposed rules as they would require regulatory change and could potentially impact existing programs funded through CCDF without additional funds.
    - Illinois requested a phase in period for planning, developing, and implementation.
- Federal ACF Grant: Preschool Development Grant-Birth to Five Planning Grant - Carisa Hurley Davis
  - o Preschool Development Grants Birth to Five (PDG B5) will end on December 31, 2023. However, there is an opportunity for a no-cost extension for projects that are not complete by December 30, 2023.
  - o Hired Nicole Kraft to oversee the grant.
  - o This grant began on January 1, 2023. However, ISBE received notification of award late in January 2023.
  - o There may be another federally released round of grants. Uncertain at this point.
- Competency Movement – Educational System - Stephanie Bernoteit
  - o Nationally – more disciplines have moved/are moving to a competency basis
  - o Gaining federal recognition which will help advance Competency-Based Education

- o PDAC can look at how the competency movement is currently implemented and accessed by learners in other disciplines. Example: The Nursing field has incorporated competency-based systems to better prepare learners for their entry level roles.

STATE Initiatives/Current Landscape
- Illinois Department of Human Services – Hollie Hoole
  - o Division of Early Childhood Strategic Goals
    - ▪ Enhance access and enrollment
    - ▪ Strengthen Quality ECEC delivery
    - ▪ Optimize data and technology
    - ▪ Build capacity
    - ▪ Evaluate and adjust funding
- Smart Start is built upon the innovations tested during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each IDHS program is in a different stage, focusing on studying, testing, and scaling innovative approaches to equitable funding.
- Smart Start Home Visiting
  - o Funding: Salary increases to floor, expand slots beyond federal relief fund expiration.
  - o Planning: Develop strategy to increase number of slots in highest need communities.
  - o IDHS has integrated three home visiting programs: Healthy Families Illinois (HFI), Parents Too Soon, and the federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) – in order to ensure higher quality services and stronger programs through increased workforce compensation, higher quality data, and unified program standards.
- Smart Start Child Care
  - o Funding: Smart Start Transition Grants (*formerly Strengthen and Grow Child Care grants)*
  - o Planning: Prep for contract rollout via ad hoc committee and cost model validation.
  - o 7,700 licensed childcare centers and homes in Illinois. 6,000 currently receive CCAP.
  - o 233,000 (age 0-13) children are cared for in licensed childcare centers and homes.
  - o 124,000 Children (age 0-13) in CCAP (licensed and licensed exempt programs).
  - o IDHS is beginning a year of planning for Smart Start Child Care Contracts.
    - ▪ Throughout this year of planning, IDHS will administer Smart Start Transition Grants and the Smart Start Quality Program, which will help providers to transition from federal relief funded grant programs to Smart Start Child Care.
- Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity - Marcus Brown
  - o 419 scholarships awarded with $5 million in scholarships.
  - o Expect to release all funds in FY24 for scholarships.
  - o More applications in the first 8 weeks in FY24 than in all of FY23.
  - o The ECACE annual report was shared with the meeting materials.
- Illinois State Board of Education - Carisa Hurley Davis
  - o $75 million dollars to eliminate deserts in Illinois and expand access to preschool in Smart Start Illinois. ISBE will exceed the goal to increase preschool slots by 5,000 seats in FY24.
  - o Continue to look at childcare deserts and target those areas in the FY25 Request for Proposal.
- Illinois Action for Children - Shauna Ejeh
  - o Congressional senate members introduced the Child Care Stabilization Act to extend federal child care stabilization funding, which is set to expire at the end of this month.
  - o Goal is to see $16 billion invested per year in response to fed money expiring and to stave off shrinking child care spots staffing shortages and rising prices.
  - o The Illinois Early Childhood Apprenticeship pilot is a partnership between IDHS, UIC, and IBHE to support and strengthen the early childhood workforce.

- **The Training Landscape** - Beth Knight
  - o i-learning
    - ▪ 118 trainings offered in English

- - - 49 trainings offered in Spanish
    - Sudden Infant Death Training – 32,525 training participants in English with 1,574 in participants Spanish.
  - In fiscal year 2023 304,963 trainings were completed online.
  - The ECE Credential Level 1 High School Program started in 2007-2008 school year with 2 schools and 30 students, the 2022-2023 school year included 120 high schools and 4,300+ students.
  - Gateways ECE Level 1 – Health and Safety Requirements
    - Child Development, Health and Safety Basics was specifically developed to meet federal requirements for CCAP providers.
    - Tier 1 (ECE Modules 1, 2a, 2b and 2c) also meets these health and safety requirements with over 5,000 – 7,000 completions of each module during FY23.
- **Trends in the ECE Workforce** – Joellyn Whitehead
  - Using the Illinois' Early Childhood Education Workforce Reports and other data trends are showing that the ECE field is losing more highly degreed teachers and replacing them at lower levels.
  - Trends for ECE teachers: (Excluding the Gateways ECE Level 1):
    - In 2015, 4.1% percent of teachers held a Gateways Credential, in 2020, 23.3% held a Gateways credential and in 2023, 20.4% held a Gateways credential.

What are the next big things in professional development for PDAC to focus on activity
- Committee members were asked to take 5 note cards and write the most important and realistic ideas or goals that should be part of the strategic plan.
  - Needs to be realistic, within the timeframe of the upcoming strategic plan, and within the scope of the work and role of PDAC.
- Cards were collected and assimilated onto larger groupings for next day's session.

Succession Planning for PDAC activity
- Committee members were asked to share when they plan to retire. Groupings were formed of those retiring in fiscal years: 2024, 2028, 2031 and 2035.
- Half of the committee members present will be gone by the time the Strategic Plan in 2028 ends.
  - Discussed/identified those who will need to implement the plan.
- Succession Planning visually: new members will need to be identified to join PDAC and will need to cultivate existing members into leadership roles.
  - Suggestion: Could provide shadowing or mentoring opportunities for newer members during the next year.
  - Need to build a pipeline of leadership for committees.
  - What areas or sectors should recruitment focus on to continue to have diversity on the membership roster?
  - Review onboarding tools.

Day 2
September 22, 2023

Opening – Recap yesterday's work thoughts on yesterday
- The introduction exercise of where we came from and says a lot about the strength, depth, and breadth of PDAC Steering members.
- Have had shifts/retirements in the workforce.
  - Really need to think about the next generation of the workforce.
    - Next generation expectations are so different, need to be forward thinking to meet both needs and expectations of the next generation.
- Overview from the state agency representatives helped to make connections for on-going work.
- The succession planning activity was eye-opening and helped to set the timeline for the next few years.
  - Provided real impetus to succession planning.

- Opportunity is now to intentionally invite people to be a part of the process.
- This strategic planning session gives the opportunity to be focused and intentional.
- The value of coming together in person to share and exchange ideas is key to success.

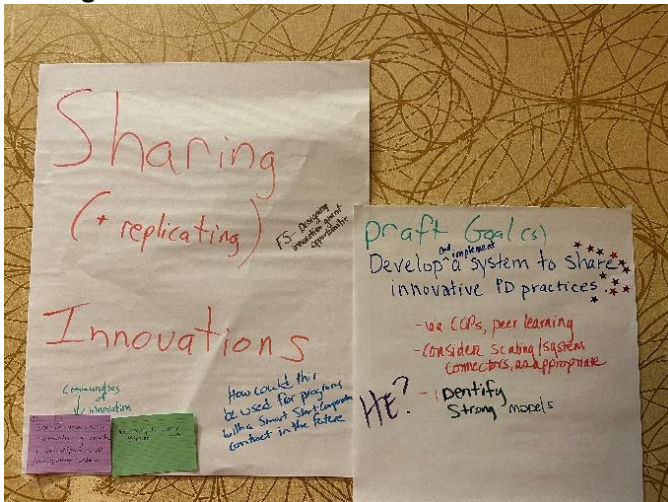**Update from Illinois Head Start** – Lauri Morrison Frichtl
- Recent visit to Washington, D.C. regarding funding for Head Start programs.
- Possible government shutdown, maintaining current level of funding will be considered a win.
- Cuts to Head Start have been included in the House but are not in the Senate budget proposals.
- Senator Warnock is planning to introduce the Headway Act, which concentrates on the ECE workforce, apprenticeships, and the CDA.
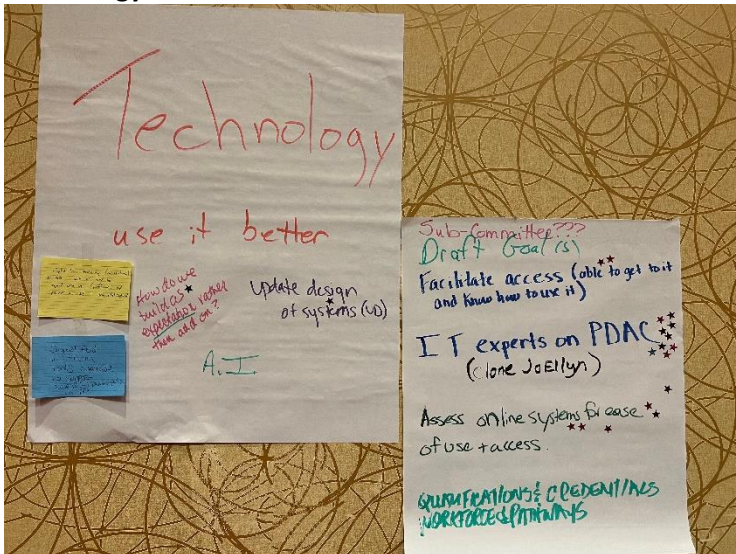
Priorities for PDAC Strategic Plan:
- Using the ideas generated on note cards yesterday, the Tri-chairs reviewed and placed information into specific categories. Overarching topics were placed on posters around the room.
- Committee members were asked to write additional thoughts on the posters to give more details and direction for possible inclusion into the PDAC strategic plan.
    - High levels goals are the desired end result of the exercise.
- Stars were placed on areas or goals that committee members identified as most important/should be a focus.
- If appropriate, goal statements or clarifying statements were included on the sheets.
- Each of the posters were read-out to the attendees and further coalescing of topics was made by grouping posters together to show similarities or themes.
- Committee Chairs and other attendees reviewed the posters and wrote down their committee on the poster if they felt their committee could/should be a landing place for the topic(s) on the poster.

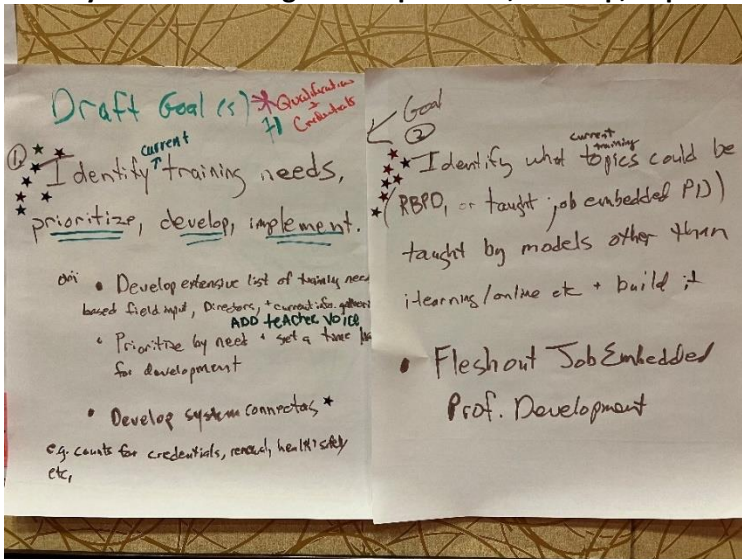Pictures taken of the posters from around the room:
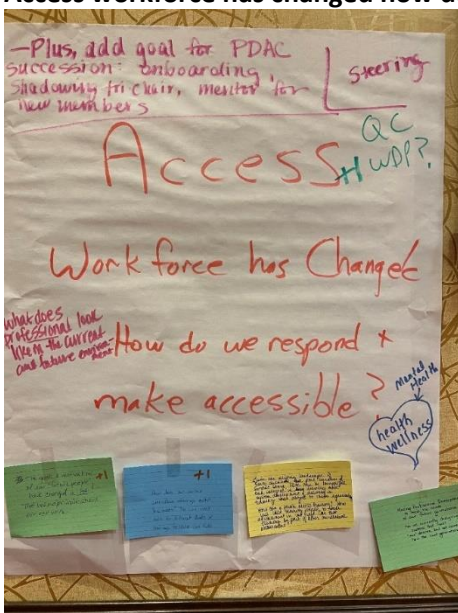
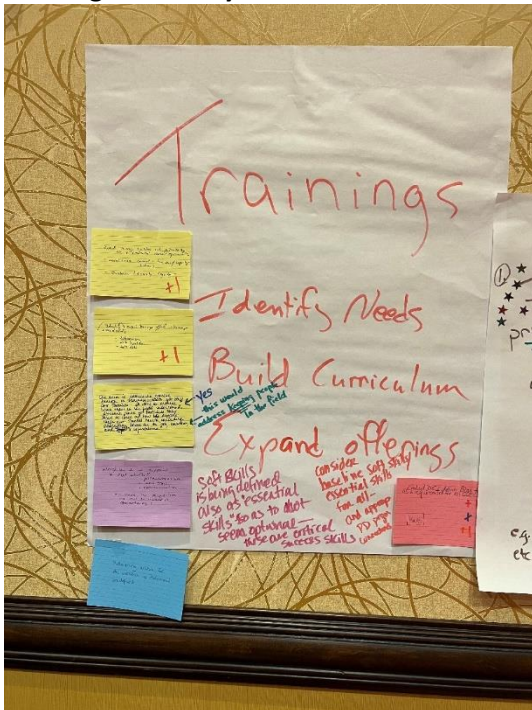**Sharing Innovations**

Technology use it better

Technology

use it better

How do we build as system rather than add on?

Update design of systems (UD)

A.I.

Sub-Committee???
Draft Goal(s)
Facilitate access (able to get to it and know how to use it)

IT experts on PDAC
(clone JoEllyn)

Assess online systems for ease of use + access.

QUALIFICATIONS & CREDENTIALS
WORKFORCE PATHWAYS

Identify current training needs - prioritize, develop, implement

Draft Goal (s) → Qualifications & Credentials

① Identify current training needs, prioritize, develop, implement.

- Develop extensive list of training needs based field input, Directors, + current info gathered
  ADD TEACHER VOICE
- Prioritize by need + set a time line for development

- Develop system connectors
e.g. counts for credentials, renewal, health safety etc.

Goal ②
Identify what current training topics could be (RBPD, or taught job embedded PD) taught by models other than ilearning/online etc + build it

- Flesh out Job Embedded Prof. Development

Access workforce has changed how do we respond.

—Plus, add goal for PDAC succession: onboarding, shadowing tri chair, mentor for new members → steering

Access QC
H WDP?

Workforce has Changed

what does look professional like in the current and future environment

How do we respond + make accessible?
Mental health
health wellness

Trainings – identify needs

Explore workforce flexibilities
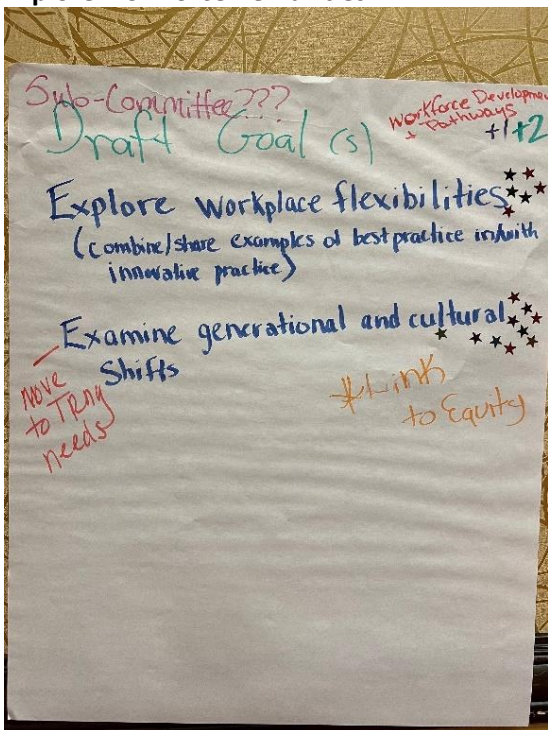
Entry Points/clarify and modify on ramps to the field

Messaging Communication and System Mapping
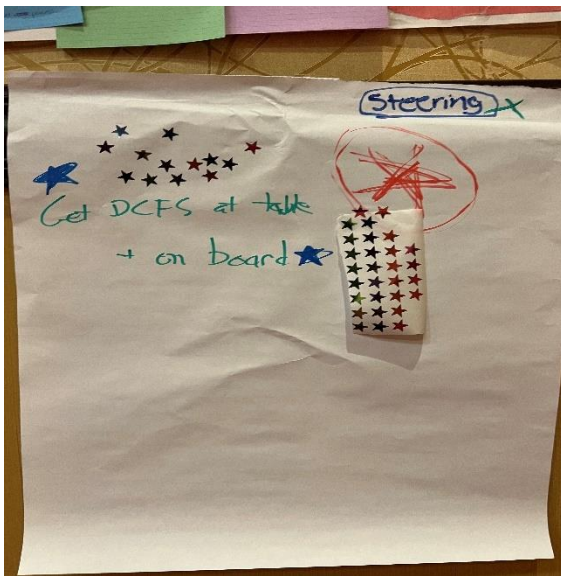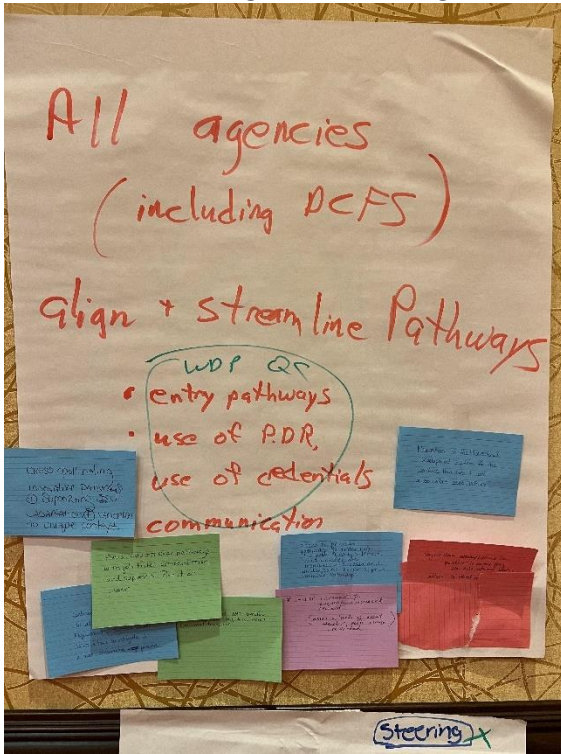
Evaluation
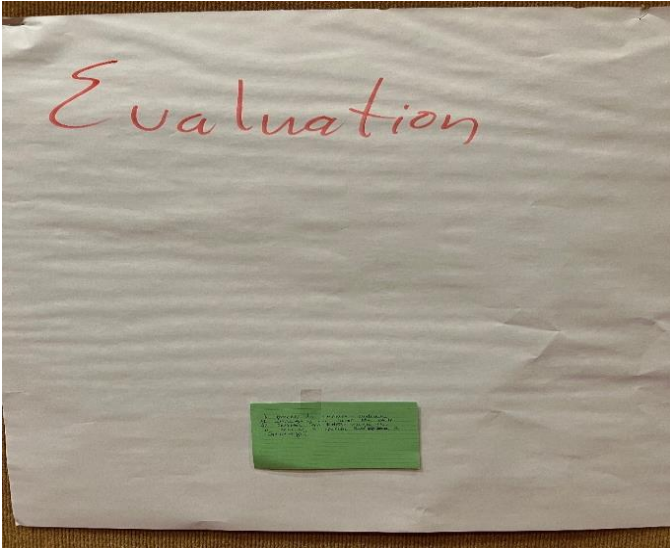
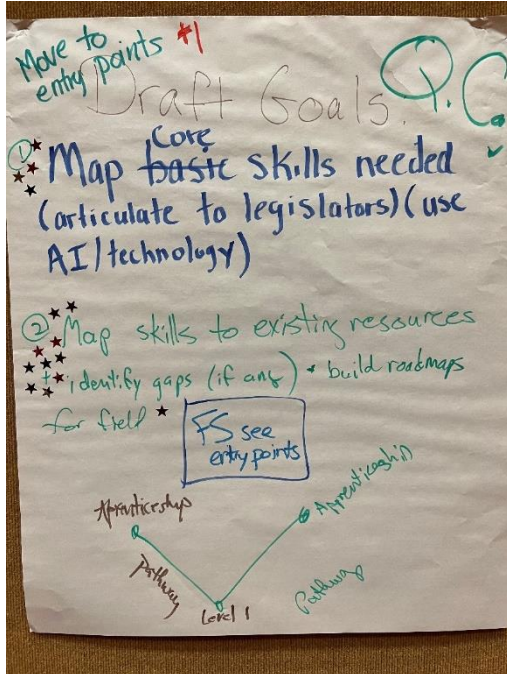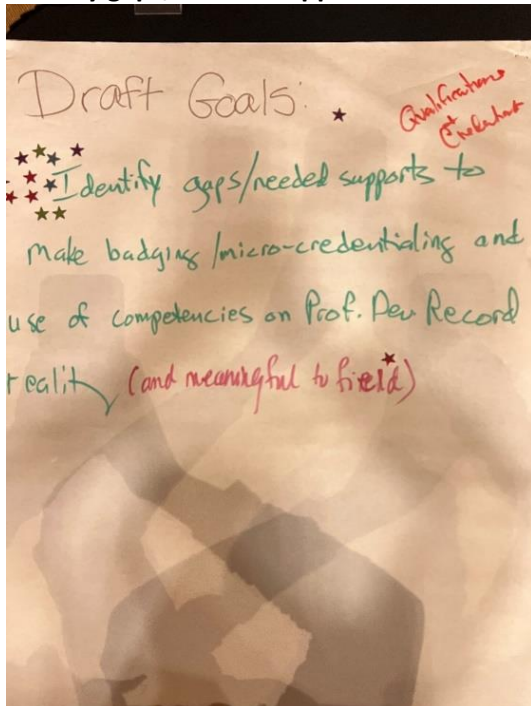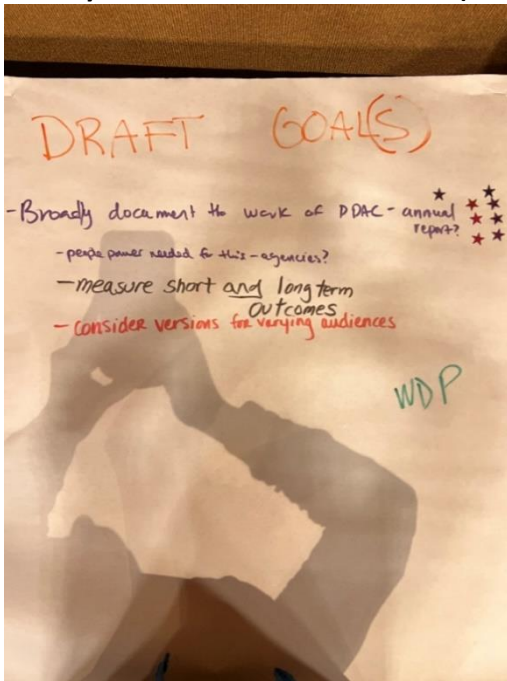**Badging, Micro Credentialing, Professional Development Record**
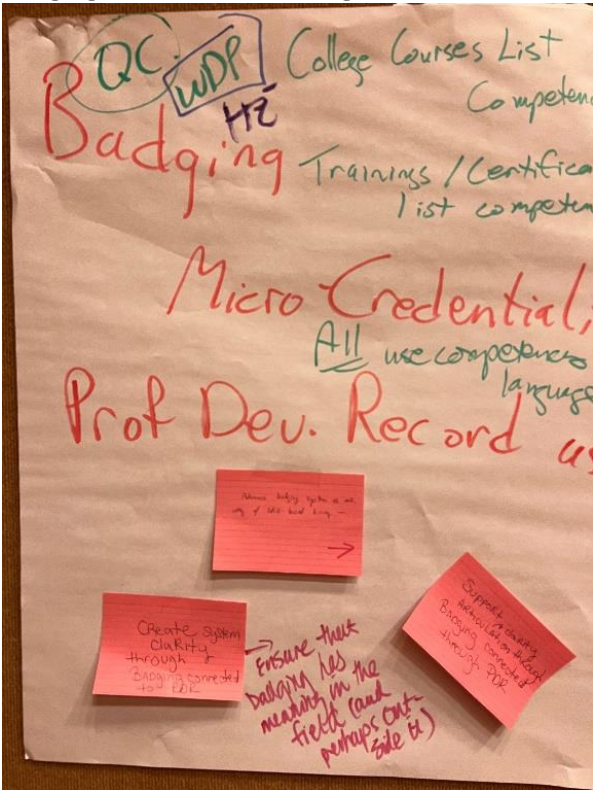
Map core skills needed –tie to entry points

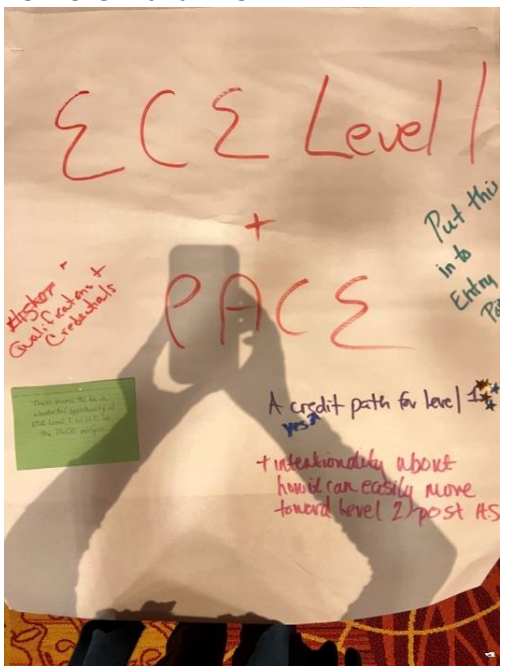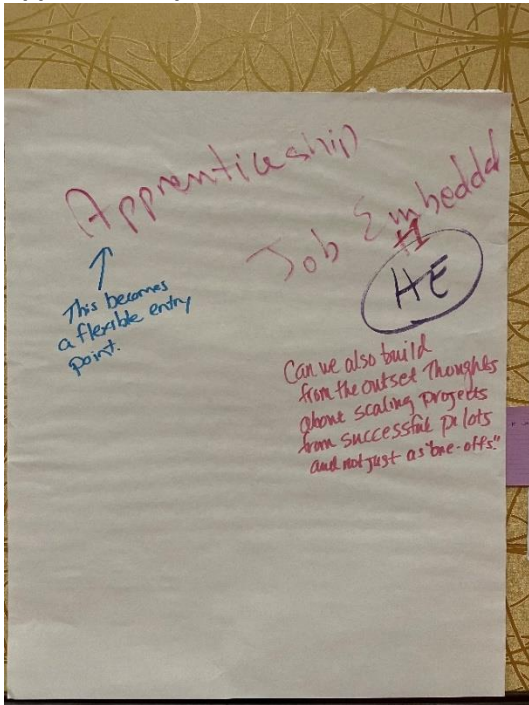**Identify gaps/needed supports to make badging use of competencies /PDR**
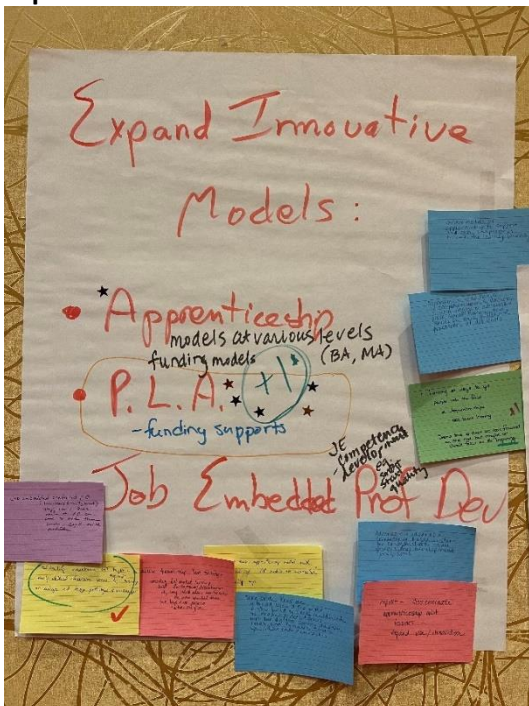
Broadly document the work of PDAC (annual report)

DRAFT GOAL(S)

-Broadly document the work of PDAC - annual report?
    -people power needed for this - agencies?
    —measure short and long term outcomes
    — consider versions for varying audiences

WDP

ECE Level 1 and PACE

ECE Level 1
    +
PACE

#History + Qualifications + Credentials

Put this into Entry...

There seems to be a wonderful opportunity of ECE level 1 to tie to the PACE program

A credit path for level 1
yes

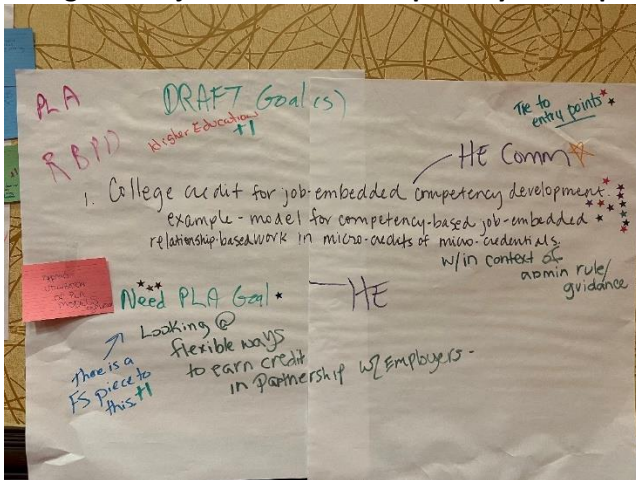+intentionality about how we can easily move toward level 2 post HS

Apprenticeship /Job Embedded

Expanded innovative models

**College credit job embedded competency development**

PLA

DRAFT Goal(s)

Tie to entry points*

RBPD   Higher Education +1

— HE Comm

1. College credit for job-embedded competency development ***
   example – model for competency-based job-embedded **
   relationship-based work in micro-credits of micro-credentials **
   w/in context of admin rule/guidance

***
Need PLA Goal *   — HE

There is a FS piece to this +1

Looking @ flexible ways to earn credit in Partnership w/ Employers

Access and development financial supports

Draft Goal(s)

Assess + develop financial supports for PLA, Apprenticeship and others.

FIN SUPPORTS
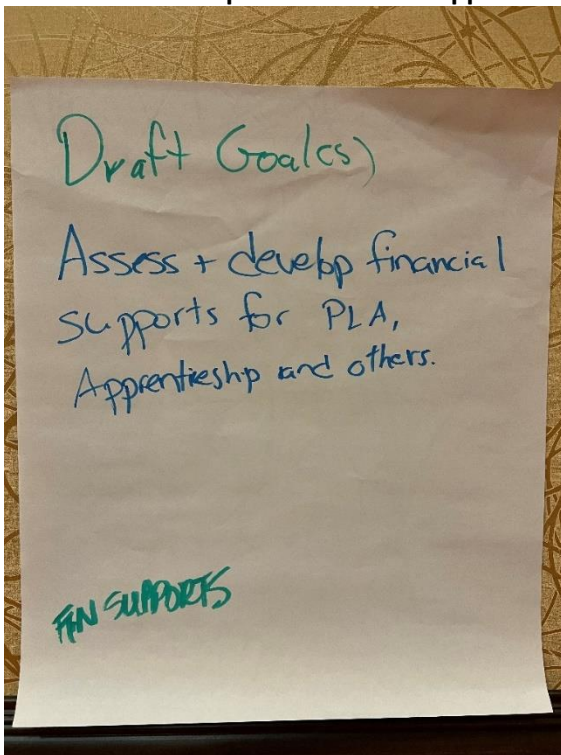
Flexible and individualized access
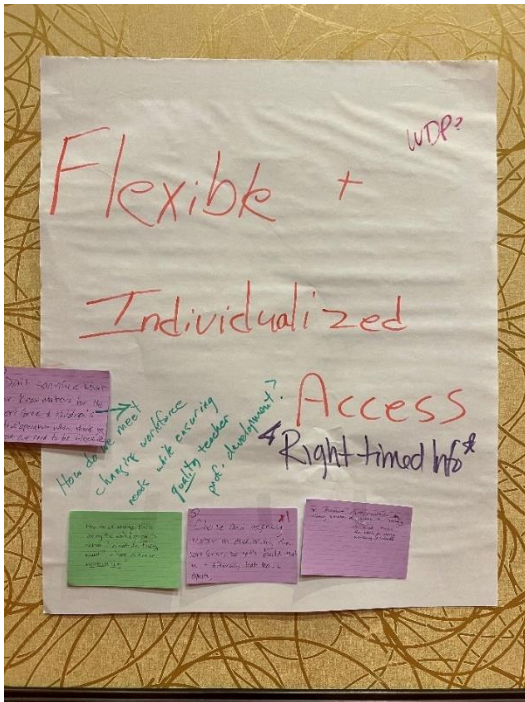
Mentor delivery (RBC)
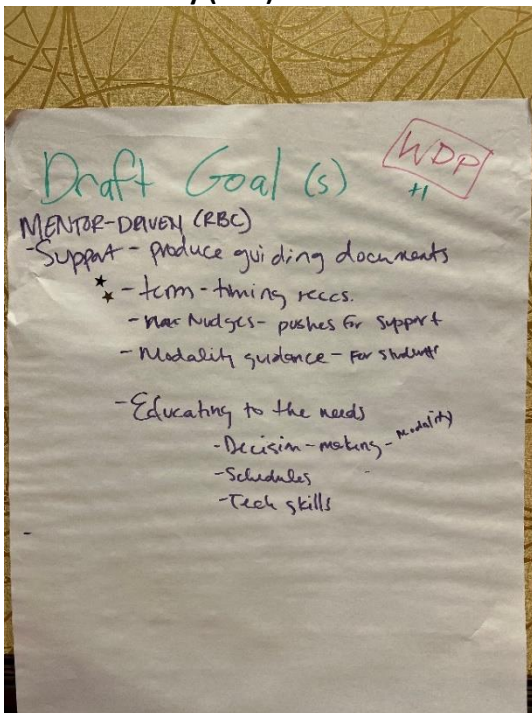
Next Steps
- Timeline handout was shared for the development of the strategic plan.
    - PDAC Steering will meet on October 25 regarding the Strategic Plan.

Final Thoughts
- Committee members shared their thoughts from the work of the strategic planning meeting.

Adjourn

Possible Ad Hoc/short term group under QC or WDP

Goal:
1. **Identify current professional development training needs based on field input (teachers, Directors, current information gathering systems)**
   a. **Prioritize by need**
   b. **Establish timelines for development**
   c. **Expand trainings offered to field**

QC:
2. **Strengthen system connectors to trainings**
   a. **Increase trainings that support credential attainment**
   b. **Increase number of trainings that address mental health challenges and consider requiring for renewal**

3. **Review existing/current training topics that could be taught through job embedded PD (models in addition to i-learning/online)**
   a. **Prioritize**
   b. **Develop and implement**

4. **Define Job-Embedded Professional Development**
   a. **Identify successful state or national models**
   b. **Develop definitions for Illinois**