

**PDAC Steering Committee Minutes**  
**August 7, 2024**

Aja Owasoyo	Kate Connor	Mercedes Mondragon
Carisa Hurley Davis	Lauri Morrison Frichtl	Rebecca Livengood
Gabriel Holmes	Lori Harrison	Roseanna Dorsey
Gail Nelson	Lynn Burgett	Shauna Ejeh
Joellyn Whitehead	Marcus Brown	Toni Porter
Johnna Darragh Ernst	Marsha Hawley	Trinita Winston
		Wendy Williams

### Welcome

- PDAC Chairs welcomed members to the meeting.

### Review of Minutes

- May 1, 2024
  - Lynn Burgett made a motion to accept the minutes.
  - Kate Connor seconded the motion.
    - Minutes approved.

### PDAC Strategic Plan

- Members workshopped in smaller groups to identify the strengths of the plan.
- Looked at implementation of the goals.
  - Who should be responsible for specific goals/objectives?
  - What is the timeline?
  - Identify any potential barriers for the goals.
  - Connect the goals to the new Department of Early Childhood
    - Knowing we have changes happening in the state with the new department, how does the council directly connect PDAC goals to the work of the new department.
- Steering members used breakout rooms to review the Steering Committee's five goals:
  - Ensure PDAC Steering and all PDAC members have awareness of depth, breath, history and importance of PDAC's work.
  - Ensure PDAC continues to be a strong and productive advisory group to the Illinois Department of Human Services through member leadership development.
  - Ensure all relevant state agencies and other needed constituencies are represented on PDAC including those participating in standing up the Department of Early Childhood.
  - Increase information technology representation on PDAC.
  - Gain better understanding of how early care and education workforce has changed post COVID (e.g. generationally, culturally etc.) in order to strengthen professional development supports.
- During the breakout committee members used the following questions to guide their discussion:
  - Identify strengths of the plan
  - Ideas for implementation
  - Identify barriers.

- Connections to the Department of Early Childhood
- Breakout Group 1
  - Discussion regarding a mechanism for PDAC membership At-Large to be able to have a voice in the creation of the new Early Childhood Department (i.e. regional forums).
  - A question: **Can PDAC make recommendations to the new department on what we would like to see addressed regarding critical areas for ECE?**
  - Strength of PDAC is a cross-system view and an understanding of how the workforce in different sectors operates, PDAC has a unique opportunity to help direct how they would work in concert under the new department.
- Breakout Group 2
  - Question: **What can be more public facing with regard to interaction with PDAC so more people/agencies can be aware of PDAC?**
  - Make sure connections are clear, for example: higher education and what PDAC does, the workforce and what PDAC does etc. PDAC facilitates connections between higher education and the workforce, not working in silos, but rather jointly.
  - Time was also spent reviewing success planning.
- Breakout Group 3
  - Spent time on goal 4. Importance of increasing people with IT expertise on PDAC, what is the purpose and why is it needed and how it would be useful.
  - Importance of and how to strengthen the supports the early childhood community needs post COVID.

**General Discussion Topics and Ideas regarding the power of PDAC representing diverse makeup of the early childhood field.**

- Importance of PDAC’s cross-system perspective.
- PDAC has tried to find solutions to issues, and due to our cross-sector work have been able to be successful. PDAC has been able to limit or eliminate barriers because of cross-sector work. (e.g.: Use the Registry to more efficiently support the monitoring process).
- PDAC is an entity to bring issues from the field with a broad representation for finding solutions and can operationalize solutions.
- Need to increase practitioner voice on PDAC, with strong on-boarding practices and sharing of information for a productive experience.
- The new state agency will bring a lot of opportunities to PDAC. The idea is to re-think how we have done things in the past. The new agency gives opportunities for a broader agency to bring recommendations should be looked at as an opportunity for additional engagement, need to be nimble enough to make those adaptations.
- We currently don’t know enough functionally about how the new state agency will work to make great engagement plans, but at the same time PDAC can’t sit and wait, so the idea has to be that PDAC outlines where the engagement needs to be, and who PDAC engages with now. Asking the questions now helps us know what our game plan will be when there is someone permanently appointed at the department.
  - Need to strategize where do we currently have logical partners and where do we have potential for new partners.
  - Committees should be exploring these types of questions within their work, not just Steering.
  - PDAC needs to continue to showcase the unique role it plays in ECE, as there are many advisory bodies in Illinois.
  - State agencies are continuing to be instructed to continue work, don’t stop work as the planning for then new department is in development.

**PDAC Orientation Materials**

- Updated materials have been posted to the Gateways website.

- On the tool bar on the Gateways page scroll down to PDAC, once on the PDAC landing page [PDAC - Gateways to Opportunity \(ilgateways.com\)](#) scroll down to the PDAC Orientation Materials. Materials include FAQ on Gateways, FAQ on PDAC, PDAC Resources, Acronyms and Definitions and Operating Guide Procedures.

### **PDAC at Large Membership Stats FY25**

- Demographic information was collected from the FY25 PDAC membership forms that have been returned over the summer.
- Registry Membership: 32 are registered Registry Members, 21 are not registered.
- PDAC has diverse areas of expertise. The largest number marked was ECE with ITC second.
- PDAC race stats show 8 marked African American/Black, 35 Caucasian/White, 4 Hispanic/Latino, 2 Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 preferred not to answer, and 2 no answer.
- Gender: Female 50, Male 2, and prefer not to answer 1.
- Multi-Lingual: No 41, Yes 10, and didn't answer 2. Languages marked include: Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Russian.
- Office Location: Chicago/Metro 25, Central 16, Northern 4, Southern 3, Western 3, and two respondents didn't answer.
- Number of years on PDAC: 1 year – 6 people, 2 to 5 years – 11 people, 6 to 8 years – 10 people, 12 to 15 years – 9 people, 20+ years – 6 people, 3 people didn't answer, and 1 person marked not sure.

### **PDAC Steering Membership Stats FY25**

- Specific demographic information for PDAC Steering was also shared with the committee:
- Steering Registry Membership: 8 are registered Registry Members, 5 are not registered.
- Steering race stats show 9 Caucasian/White, 1 African American/Black, 1 Hispanic/Latino, 1 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 left the answer blank.
- Gender at this time shows 13 female, 0 male.
- Multi-lingual: 10 no, 2 yes, and 1 didn't answer.
- Office location: 7 Chicago/Metro, 5 Central, 1 Western, 1 didn't answer, with no representation for Northern, Southern or Eastern sections of the state.
- Years on PDAC – 2 to 5 years – 3 people, 6 to 8 years – 2 people, 9 to 11 years – 3 people, 12 to 15 years – 4 people, 20+ years- 2 people, and 1 person didn't answer.
- Areas of expertise – ECE 13, ITC 10, School Age 2, Adm/Director 8, FCC 3, Coach/Mentor 7, Higher Ed 7, State Agency 5, Home Visiting 5, Mental Health 1, and other lists with 1.

### **State Agency Reports**

- **Illinois Department of Human Services – Gabriel Holmes**
  - The Division of Early Childhood is currently working on reporting back to the federal offices regarding the Child Care Development Plan.
  - Under the Bureau of Quality Initiatives with Smart START, Smart START is working on Workforce Grants in which \$13.2 million was awarded to them. The application process ended on July 31, 2024, with more than 4,000 applications received. More than 2,000 have been processed so far: 142 were group family child care homes, 295 were centers, and 988 were family child care homes.
  - Quality Unit: The Unit has been working with INCCRRA and the Division of Early Childhood to support the redesign of the external facing ExceleRate website. Should be live by the end of August.
  - The Navigator position has been maintained at the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. The Navigator will be reported by DEC and in partnership with ICCB and IBHE.
- **Illinois State Board of Education**

- Currently in the process of closing the FY 25 round of RFPs for Preschool for All, Preschool for All Expansion, and Prevention Initiatives. Expect to send award letters out within the next two weeks. Award information will be posted to the ISBE website for 14 days for comments.
  - ISBE received an additional \$75 million in an Early Childhood Block Grant. These funds will be used to award new programs in the RFP round that just closed.
    - Almost 150 applications were received.
- The State has submitted an application for the Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five Renewal Grant.
- ISBE continues to be engaged in conversations regarding the new state Department of Early Childhood.
- **Illinois Head Start Association**
  - Smart START Workforce contracts are having an unintended consequence for Head Start and Early Head Start programs across Illinois. Many childcare partners are choosing to go with the Smart START Workforce Grants rather than stay with the Head Start partnership.
  - Federal budget for FY 25, the Appropriations Committee of the House put forward a \$25 million increase for Head Start. This is an increase from last year when cuts were proposed. The Senate is proposing a bigger increase, a budget will not be decided on before the election in November.
  - New standards include language around pay parity with K – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Head Start will need to increase wages to meet new standards.
  - Head Start/Early Head Start is currently serving 40% less families than they were eight years ago, one of the reasons is the workforce challenge. To attract and retain a workforce, enrollment was cut to keep funding levels in order to pay the workforce.
- **Illinois Community College Board**
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual report will be released in the next few weeks.
  - In regard to the ECACE Act: Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD) appointees will now be appointed by IDHS and/or the Department of Early Childhood.
    - Will move from 4 meetings a year to 2 meetings.
    - Removes language around regional hubs to a more state-wide focus, and it adds the ECACE Scholarship to the actual statute for the scholarship to be in legislation.
  - The funding for (Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity) ECACE through the federal relief dollars ended on June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - Currently looking at state appropriations for the scholarship which was established in law.
  - There is a formal ECACE scholarship this year that was funded at \$5 million dollars. Application period opened about two weeks ago with first round priority deadline will be August 11th, currently have 2,100 applications.
  - The maximum award is \$7,500 per year regardless of school/sector, with priority for students who have received the federally funded EACE scholarship in the past.
  - Details on ECACE Scholarship are available on this slide deck:
    - [https://www.ecace.org/assets/board-meetings/2024/July/Advisory\\_Slides\\_July\\_17\\_2024.pdf](https://www.ecace.org/assets/board-meetings/2024/July/Advisory_Slides_July_17_2024.pdf)

Adjourn





### **Workforce Development and Pathways Goals and Objectives for the PDAC Strategic Plan X**

**Goal 1:** Improve access to education, credentials, endorsements, and degrees for current and potential (prenatal to age 5) workforce members.

Objectives:

1. Identify and recommend needed revisions and/or modifications to the current policies and processes for accessing opportunities.
2. Recommend ways to use technology to improve the current and changing ECE workforces' access to various programs offered.
3. Identify and address workforce entry point challenges.

**Goal 2:** Develop targeted communication and messaging tools.

Objectives:

1. Simplify and streamline communication tools that appeal to a diverse potential and current (prenatal to age 5) workforce members in all early childhood settings.
2. Communicate the mapped career pathways (and associated degrees, credentials, competencies, and endorsements) in a systematic way to educators in all early childhood settings.

**Goal 3:** Develop systems for identifying and sharing high quality, innovative practices that strengthen recruitment and retention for the prenatal to age 5 workforce.

Objectives:

1. Identify innovative and evolving strategies that help employers attract, develop, stabilize, and retain a high quality and diverse workforce.

**Goal 4:** Recommend a system to effect strengthen reciprocity among qualifications and credentials required by multiple state and regulatory systems. (Inform and partner with the Qualifications and Credentials Committee where needed)

Objectives:

1. Identify barriers to reciprocity (e.g. CDA, director credentials (national /state), Montessori, out of state candidates, home visiting).
2. Determine how flexibility of competencies can support reciprocity.
3. Assess and map competencies met by other credentialing programs.





Current Mission: To promote, support and recognize professional preparation and training for all current and future early care and education, school-age, and youth development practitioners.

**Draft Mission: To promote, support and recognize engaging professional preparation and training opportunities for all current and future early care and education, school age, and youth development practitioners.**

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Current Vision: Illinois early care and education, school-age, and youth development practitioners are well-qualified professionals who educate, nurture, and meet the needs of children and youth in partnership with their families.

**Draft Vision: We envision an inclusive and efficient system of preparation and training of early care and education, school age and youth development professionals who nurture, engage, and serve the needs of children and youth in partnership with their families and communities.**

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Current Values: We believe an effective professional development system is inclusive of practitioners in all settings serving children, youth, and families; service providers and program staff; and educators and trainers.

**Draft Values: We believe in an engaging, inclusive and efficient ~~equitable and effective~~ professional development system serves serving practitioners in all settings. ~~and is engaging, inclusive and efficient.~~**

**Engaging:** respects and cultivates education, training, and experience; recognizes and equitably compensates achievements 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.