

**PDAC Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2024**

Aja Owasoyo
Bela Mote
Gabriel Holmes
Gail Nelson
Gwyn Moss
Johnna Darragh Ernst
Joyce Gronewold

Julie Lindstrom
Kate Connor
Lauri Morrison Frichtl
Laurie Rhodes
Lori Harrison
Lynn Burgett
Marcus Brown
Marcy Mendenhall

Marsha Hawley
Rebecca Livengood
Rebecca Pruitt
Rosie Dorsey
Shauna Ejeh
Toni Porter
Trinita Winston
Wendy Williams

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the Tri-Chairs.

Approval of the Minutes

- October 9, 2024
 - Bela Mote moved to accept the minutes.
 - Kate Connor seconded the motion.
 - Minutes were approved.

Recommendation

Gateways English as a Second Language & Bilingual Renewal Recommendation from the Qualifications and Credentials Committee:

- **RECOMMENDATION:** For the renewal of the English as a Second Language & Bilingual Credential is to have training or coursework with topics related to teaching linguistically diverse children with culturally responsive practices. A minimum of 15 clock hours of training (or 1 semester hour of coursework) must be in this topic.
- **RATIONALE:** All Gateways Credentials must be renewed every five years. These renewal requirements provide consistency for the applicant whether seeking renewal of one credential or multiple credentials.
 - This recommendation was approved.
 - The recommendation moves to full PDAC for review and potential approval.

Potential for a PDAC Steering Meeting in Spring 2025

- Steering members agreed that an in-person meeting would be beneficial and would make arrangements to attend the meeting.
- The meeting will be held in Bloomington on May 14, 2025.
- Details will be shared closer to the meeting date.

Strategic Plan X Year 1:

Qualification and Credentials Committee

- Priority landing on Goal 2: Objective 2: Review micro-credentialing and badging systems to determine relevancy to Illinois work.
 - a. Determine if use of micro-credentialing to award educational advancement in smaller increments would be beneficial to the field.
 - b. Identify gaps and supports needed to create a badging system for competencies.

- c. Would like to invite Joellyn Whitehead to the next committee meeting on 2/17/2024 for data sharing.
- Goal 3: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials by making it accessible and transparent to the field.
 - d. Standardize all professional development to identify content using competency language. Trainings list competency/competencies on certificates (where applicable).
- A common theme in recent committee conversations revolves around what information is available, in what form, how to access information, and what are the questions to ask to get information.
- Need to use research, information, and data to show the importance and impact of educational attainment and credentials on child outcomes as we move into the new Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

Higher Education Committee

- Goal 1: Developing systems for identifying, sharing, and promoting flexible and innovative higher education early childhood/child development program models.
 - a. Consider how this could be a resource for employers, a knowledge center on PDAC's website, increase access to the field.
 - b. Use the Higher Education Forum to bring out Innovation and Reaching the Workforce.
- Goal 3: Gather and disseminate information on approaches to support new and/or incumbent early childhood professionals in entering or sustaining the field and/or workforce.
 - c. Find ways to welcome new faculty.
 - d. Find ways to highlight credit for prior learning as an advocacy effort to bring in the workforce.
- Committee members are helping plan the Gateways Forum in April 2025. This is the first time since 2019 the Forum will be held in person.
- The committee has recently welcomed new members, would like to add additional members to help build out representation and bring additional voices to the work.
- Higher education institutions document a lot of their work for various agencies, the committee wants to look at how it can leverage and share these reports across the field.
- Members of the committee are also serving on the new PLA Advisory Committee being formed by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), this will allow sharing of information between the groups.
 - The PDAC Higher Education Committee would like to engage with other PDAC committees regarding thoughts on funding opportunities for learners who are interested in the PLA.

Workforce Development and Pathways

- Goal 1: Improve access to education, credentials, endorsements, and degrees for current and potential (prenatal to age 5) workforce members.
 - a. Goal 1 is important for Head Start as they struggle to find individuals to fill positions. Identify what barriers are keeping individuals out of the profession. The other goals and objectives of the plan blend into Goal 1.
 - b. Goal 1 will help the Committee decide what should be communicated to the field. Need to see what works and identify successes, then identify the barriers and look for solutions, and communicate what works best.
 - c. Need to identify and address workforce entry point challenges, are the barriers identified in the action steps the only items or will others need to be explored?
- Goal 4: Recommend a system to effect reciprocity among qualifications and credentials required by multiple state and regulatory systems. (Inform and partner with the Qualifications and Credentials Committee where needed).
 - d. A first step would be to identify who has expertise in the different types of credentials (i.e. home visiting, Montessori) to begin to identify barriers.
 - e. Starting with data next steps for the Committee:

- i. What data does INCCRRA/Gateways have
 - ii. Which higher education institutions are entitled and offer Infant Toddler Credential
 - iii. Compile a list of high schools offering the CDA
 - iv. Reach out to the Council for data on the CDA
 - v. Staff will reach out to Joellyn for data and will contact INCCRRA staff on high school data regarding the CDA
- The committee is focusing on access and the pipeline in order to grow the workforce.
- The committee has gathered information on the workforce including the Gateways Registry, and from the Council on Professional Development on the CDA. The committee would like to further explore the CDA and CDA in high school settings.
- The Workforce Development and Pathway chairs would like to work with the Financial Supports Committee to explore the Apprenticeship Program and how this work could offer opportunities and pathways for the field.

Financial Supports

- Goal 2: Identify and support ways to advance compensation for the field.
 - a. Monitor impact of Smart Start – intended and unintended financial consequences.
 - b. Consider intersection and integration of Gateways Initiatives (i.e. Great START, Gateways Scholarship) and Smart Start.
 - c. Identify quality support levers for bilingual staff and explore pay differential models.
 - i. Made a recommendation in September to link the Gateways ESL/Bilingual Credential to a pay increase using the base salary of the SMART START Quality Supports Wage Scale.
 - d. Compare and contrast pay scales across programs throughout the state.
- The committee has put forward two recommendations including the ESL/Bilingual recommendation from today.
- The committee is looking at the intended and unintended consequences of the SMART Start grant on the workforce and field.

Steering Committee

- Goal 1: Ensure PDAC Steering and all PDAC members have awareness of the depth, breadth, history and importance of PDAC's work.
 - a. Review onboarding process for new PDAC members.
 - b. Develop a more structured approach for new PDAC members.
 - c. Capture history of PDAC and incorporate into onboarding.
- For new Steering members a buddy or mentor might be beneficial to help with onboarding.
- Steering members were encouraged to share any additional ideas that could help the onboarding process or new members as they learn about the different facets of PDAC.

State Agency Reports

- Illinois Community College Board
 - Ongoing training with community colleges related to early childhood, transfer, and student services.
 - Organizing two working groups:
 - A work group regarding ECACE Scholarships to prioritize completers.
 - A working group focused on Credit for Prior Learning, this group will continue to work through the spring.
 - Next Consortium meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2024.
 - Ongoing work regarding the budget. Working with Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), with final budget recommendation being presented at the January ICCB board meeting.

- Illinois Head Start Association
 - Concern regarding the possibility of mass deportations for children and families served by Head Start. Staff have been working on scenarios planning.
 - The Congressional Review Act allows the incoming administration to rescind the new performance standards currently being implementing.
 - The budget is currently under a short-term funding resolution, next vote on the budget is expected in late December 2024.
 - An act of Congress is needed to remove the Head Start program, not an executive order.
- Transition Advisory Committee
 - Dr. Teresa Ramos is the inaugural secretary of the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.
 - New committees are being stood up:
 - Data, Analytics and Insight
 - Working with children and families from multilingual homes and those with special needs.
- Illinois State Board of Education
 - Ongoing RFP planning for the Early Child Care Block Grants (ECBG) for PFA, PFAE and PI.
 - Held 10 grant writing workshops that concluded in November.
 - Held 2 listening sessions to facilitate feedback from attendees. Information from the listening sessions will help with priorities as the next round of RFPs are drafted.
 - Illinois Department of Early Childhood with Director Ramos as Secretary will become fully active in July 2026, at that time ECB Grants will move over into the new department. Projected to release the next RFP in spring 2025.

Adjourn



Attachment A

