



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY®
Illinois Professional Development System



Professional Development Advisory Council

Strategic Plan • Phase IX • 2022-2024

The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC)

The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) is a group of highly qualified practitioners, educators, organizational representatives, and advocates from around the state convened and established in December 2002 by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development. PDAC introduced Gateways to Opportunity®, Illinois Professional Development System, for early care and education, school-age and youth development professionals in March 2005.

PDAC is committed to broadening its lens as it continues to develop a fully integrated, cross-sector, statewide professional development system along with its partners. PDAC promotes professionalism within the early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family supports fields, and provides opportunities for professionals to further their education and training.

Vision

Illinois early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support practitioners are well-qualified professionals who nurture and support the development and learning of children, youth and families.

Mission

To develop, support, and promote a professional development system for all early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support practitioners.

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.

We value a Professional Development System that:

- Reaches across all geographic areas.
- Includes diverse representation of culture, linguistics, ability, ethnicity, gender and age.
- Is accessible, affordable, and diverse in opportunities.
- Develops and expands core knowledge, skills and dispositions.
- Respects and cultivates education, training and experience.
- Recognizes and equitably compensates achievements based on levels of competence.
- Supports inclusive, high-quality, culturally responsive care and education for all children, youth and families in all settings.

The Planning Process

The PDAC Steering Committee initiated development for Phase IX of the PDAC Strategic plan in December 2020 and completed in June 2021. The goal was to continue the design and implementation of a comprehensive, growing professional development system inclusive of all sectors and funding streams for the state of Illinois. Goals for each committee within the configuration includes a set of strategic objectives that identify and outline work to be accomplished over the next three years. The work of these committees is integral to achievement of the goals as identified in the PDAC Strategic Plan Phase IX.

PDAC Committees:

- Financial Supports
- Higher Education
- PDAC Steering
- Qualifications and Credentials
- Workforce Development & Pathways

PDAC Financial Supports

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Explore ways to utilize early childhood funding resources to fully compensate staff, including Great START.

- Objective 1: Review Illinois funding commission recommendations around compensation and consensus statement published by GOECD in 2020.
- Objective 2: Partner with Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care Advisory Council and other appropriate workgroups regarding workforce compensation.

Goal 2: Build out financial supports and incentives for Illinois early childhood workforce.

- Objective 1: Create a robust continuum of fringe benefits based on the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Salary and Staffing Survey, and other data/sources of information.
- Objective 2: Fully fund Gateways Credential processing and credential renewals: eliminate the barrier of significant fees for the underpaid workforce.

Goal 3: Increase workforce awareness of existing financial supports to complete degrees and/or Gateways to Opportunity Credentials at all levels.

- Objective 1: Research barriers to advancement on the Career Lattice from entry level/CDA to Credentials and/or degrees.
- Objective 2: Consider the use of Gateways Scholarship for a onetime immediate bonus structure for completion.

Goal 4: Work in partnership with IDHS to improve Gateways Scholarship design and workforce supports.

- Objective 1: Explore funding mechanisms for higher education institutions that supports cohorts and fills the gap remaining after Gateways Scholarship funding, thus increasing participation and completion by targeting underserved geographic, workforce, and credentials instructional RFP.
- Objective 2: Explore benefits and barriers in considering Gateways to Opportunity Scholarships for use only by entitled institutions to incentivize state system participation.

Goal 5: Create a suggested pay differential for multi-lingual workforce.

- Objective 1: Explore what would qualify an individual to receive a pay differential.
- Objective 2: Explore funding mechanisms to support multi-lingual workforce.

Goal 6: In partnership with IDHS, suggest revisions to existing quality improvement funds to improve quality.

- Objective 1: Explore the learnings from offering one-time flexible funding to center-based programs.
- Objective 2: Explore engaging licensed centers and licensed family childcare in an RFP structure for a 2-year implementation window to fund innovative problem solving at the local level.

PDAC Higher Education

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Explore program access and completion (e.g. licensure, transfer, degree, credential) supports for students in the field.

- Objective 1: Identify, review and collect data surrounding barriers for minoritized students.
- Objective 2: Determine and recommend strategies supporting student completion (e.g. transcripts, debt forgiveness, near completion etc.) that meet the unique needs of students new to the field and students incumbent to the workforce and students across diverse geographic settings.
- Objective 3: Identify and recommend strategies and supports for all levels of credential or degree attainment (Associate through Doctorate).
- Objective 4: Determine actionable steps Illinois higher education institutions can take to be inclusive to minoritized students (including, but not limited to: institutional culture and access, ECE curriculum, and student supports).

Goal 2: Cross walk goals, strategies and lessons learned within the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Strategic Plan.

- Objective 1: Identify ways in which Illinois higher education institutions can infuse competency informed approaches as part of programs.
- Objective 2: Explore the role apprenticeships play and create a guide for Illinois higher education institutions and workforce partners looking to implement.
- Objective 3: Work with Illinois higher education institutions to understand what is needed in ECE programs to increase access to high-quality flexible learning modalities (e.g. online/hybrid, cohorts, evenings /weekends, synchronous) programming.

Goal 3: Build sustainable partnerships within higher education systems.

- Objective 1: Expand early college access partnerships.
- Objective 2: Advance and participate in statewide system discussions related to Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) using a model of cross institutional collaboration to leverage access and transfer of PLA.
- Objective 3: Strengthen communication systems with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
- Objective 4: Finalize alignment of Gateways Competencies with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) competencies and accreditation process.

PDAC Higher Education Continued

Goal 4: Develop ways to be competency informed across and within institutions for retention and advancement of the workforce.

- Objective 1: Develop a definition of what it means to be “competency informed”.
- Objective 2: Identify and outline existing communication structure and develop strategies as needed to expand and ensure transparency.
- Objective 3: Develop opportunities for reciprocal input with the State Competency Leadership Team.

Goal 5: Identify and address pathway challenges for new and incumbent workforce (e.g. degree attainment, Gateways Credential attainment, workforce needs).

- Objective 1: Explore all the (workforce) pathways that currently exist and identify gaps.
- Objective 2: Develop strategies to mitigate general credit barriers.



PDAC Qualifications and Credentials

Goals and Objectives

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

- Objective 1: Support the ESL and Bilingual Credential through the final review and credential recommendation approval process.
- Objective 2: Survey existing utilization of credentials, align credentials with existing qualifications in cross-sector systems, and expand credential usage in cross-sector systems when feasible.

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

- Objective 1: Encourage a dashboard of progress within the Gateways Registry Professional Development Record toward competency completion for each credential.
- Objective 2: Support center directors and other leaders in understanding the credential process.
- Objective 3: Identify potential barriers and create multiple strategies to increase participation in Gateways Credentials including incentivizing.
- Objective 4: Increase participation in the credentialing system.

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

- Objective 1: Investigate and expand the utilization of RBPD within cross-sector Professional Development Systems.
- 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.

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.

- Objective 1: Explore alignment of Gateways Credentials with national initiatives.
- Objective 2: Review findings from the faculty driven National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) crosswalk alignment in FY22.
- Objective 3: Enrich Gateways Credential review processes by incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.
- Objective 4: Deepen knowledge of credentialed and noncredentialed workforce through data collection focused on current and emerging demographics and ongoing inequities.



PDAC Steering

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Equity – Ensure that each committee develops recommendations that adopt an equity lens.

- Objective 1: Define “equity” and “equity lens” in alignment with other existing state and national definitions in early childhood or workforce development field.
- Objective 2: Review the PDAC mission, vision, and values with an equity lens.
- Objective 3: Engage in study to deepen understanding and knowledge of equity.
- Objective 4: Develop equity impact analysis framework or tool that can be used by PDAC Committees.

Goal 2: Membership and Leadership – Expand the diversity of the Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) representation to improve and maintain quality and stability of the early care and education and school age and youth development.

- Objective 1: Identify forms of diversity that need to be represented (e.g. role, language, region, race etc.).
- Objective 2: Identify barriers that prohibit participation, and design strategies that mitigate them.

Goal 3: Develop and implement a leadership succession plan that is aligned with PDAC’s equity lens.

- Objective 1: Create a map of existing leadership demographics including strengths, assets, roles, and population served.
- Objective 2: Develop a leadership training plan that shares PDAC protocols and inclusive culture.

Goal 4: Strategic Direction - Set and monitor the strategic direction of PDAC.

- Objective 1: Monitor relevant state and federal plans and initiatives to ensure PDAC works in alignment and able to partner effectively.
- Objective 2: Guide and facilitate statewide, cross-sector collaboration and planning to support an integrated and equitable professional development system.



PDAC Workforce Development and Pathways

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Strengthen alignment of state's professional development system tied to cohesive career pathways that fully support entry and progression across varied sectors of the field.

- Objective 1: Promote (research/define) high-quality job embedded professional development for all early childhood practitioners regardless of program type.
- Objective 2: Create strategies to strengthen and align professional development system tied to cohesive and transparent career pathways that fully support entry and progression across varied sectors of the field.
- Objective 3: Advance intentional/comprehensive opportunities to collaborate and engage in cross-sector professional development planning and implementation.

Goal 2: Explore cohort and other successful models impact on pathways to attainment of the Gateways to Opportunity Credentials and/or degree attainment and/or Professional Educator License.

- Objective 1: Identify and make recommendations to advance or replicate successful models.

Goal 3: Increase access to Gateways programs and services by reviewing data to understand and identify barriers and opportunities of various communities (e.g. rural communities, low-income, race, ethnicity, etc., and workforce access to enrolling in school or Gateways Credentials).

- Objective 1: Review data and identify gaps.
- Objective 2: Review the data and results from the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five (PDG B-5) funded pilot especially related to success rates of rural communities and women of color.

Goal 4: Broaden the workforce pipeline through a range of strategies.

- Objective 1: Explore Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) in partnership with PDAC Higher Education Committee.
- Objective 2: Analyze data to determine individuals close to degree or Gateways Credential attainment.
- Objective 3: Enhance friend, family, and neighbor provider outreach.
- Objective 4: Propose recommendations to further align Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) system requirements to make more cohesive.

Goal 5: Create a range of feedback loops and mechanisms for the workforce to provide input into and to inform programs/processes.

- Objective 1: Identify new and easy ways for frontline practitioners to be heard.
- Objective 2: Create strategies to improve processes/programs based on input collected.

Professional Development Advisory Council Steering Committee Members

Bela Mote	Carole Robertson Center for Learning
Carie Bires	Start Early
Christi Chadwick	Advance Illinois
Gail Nelson	Steans Family Foundation
Johnna Darragh Ernst*	Heartland Community College
Kate Connor	City Colleges of Chicago
Laurie Rhodes	Lincoln Land Community College Child Development Center
Marcy Mendenhall	Skip-a-Long Family and Community Services
Marsha Hawley*	McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University
Rebecca Pruitt	Lewis University
Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro	Latino Policy Forum
Sinthu Ramalingam	TeachPlus
Shauna Ejeh	Illinois Action for Children
Teri Talan	McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University

Illinois Department of Human Services Representatives:

Olga Torres	Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Child Care and Development
Elva DeLuna	Illinois Department of Human Services, Migrant Head Start

Illinois State Board of Education Representatives:

Karen McCarthy	Illinois State Board of Education, Early Childhood Division
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Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development Representative:

Jamilah R. Jor'dan	Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development
Lori Orr	Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

Illinois Board of Higher Education Representative:

Stephanie Bernoteit*	Illinois Board of Higher Education
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Illinois Head Start Association Representative:

Lauri Morrison Frichtl	Illinois Head Start Association
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Staffed by:

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Funders:

Illinois Department of Humans Services

**Tri-Chair*



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