



Professional Development Advisory Council

Strategic Plan • Phase X • 2024-2027

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 professional 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

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.

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.

Values

We believe in an engaging, inclusive and efficient professional development system serving practitioners in all settings.

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.

The Planning Process

The goal of strategic planning is not to generate a lot of new information, but rather to verify and clarify information among members about the purpose and direction of the organization of PDAC. One of the most powerful outcomes from the planning process is that it ensures complete understanding and agreement of information among all members of the PDAC, regardless of whether that information is entirely new or not.

What is most important is to recognize the difference between “What is important to accomplish?” (goals or objectives) and “How to accomplish it?” (ongoing strategies and tactics). The PDAC Steering Committee initiated development for the 10th Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan Phase X) in person at a 2-day retreat on September 21, and 22, 2023, and was completed on June 5, 2024. 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 include a set of strategic objectives that identify and outline work to be accomplished over the next three years. This list is not all inclusive and will continue to be a focus of ongoing development and evaluation. The work of these committees is integral to the achievement of the goals as identified in the PDAC Strategic Plan Phase X.

PDAC Committees:

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



Financial Supports Committee

Goal 1: Identify and advance potential new financial supports.

Objectives:

- 1. Strengthen the ECE workforce through financial supports for learner models (e.g. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)/Apprenticeship).
 - a. Educate the committee on PLA and Apprenticeship models and the required fees.
 - b. Consider Child Development Associate (CDA) and the barriers and fees related to obtaining a CDA and moving the CDA into college credit.
- 2. Expand existing funding opportunities.
 - a. Educate the committee on Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE), Gateways to Opportunity Scholarship and Chicago Early Learning Scholarship eligibility and priority populations.
 - b. Monitor programs and changes in funding that could affect program participation.
 - c. If funding is lowered, recommend protection of certain groups or prioritization.

Goal 2: Identify and support ways to advance compensation for the field.

Objectives:

- 1: Monitor impact of The Smart Start Quality Support Program – intended and unintended financial consequences.
- 2: Consider intersection and integration of Gateways Initiatives (e.g. Great START, Gateways Scholarship) and Smart Start.
- 3: Identify quality support levers for bilingual staff and explore pay differential models.
- 4: Compare and contrast pay scales across programs throughout the state.



Higher Education Committee

Goal 1: Developing systems for identifying, sharing, and promoting flexible and innovative higher education early childhood/child development program models.

Objectives:

- 1. Identify information related to policy and how innovations, flexibilities and barriers affect higher education systems that will inform the work of the committee.
- 2. Identify audiences that benefit from innovative practices (e.g. program directors, early childhood educators, professional development providers (faculty and trainers), PDAC, etc.).
- 3. Review and identify successful systems (state or national) for sharing innovations (e.g. peer learning, communities of practice, etc.) and determine metrics for success.
- 4. Implement and test systems for sharing innovative practices and innovations among various audiences.
- 5. (If funding is available) Participate in shaping the agenda for the Gateways to Opportunity Higher Education Forum.

Goal 2: Expand (scale up) identified successful innovative professional development higher education Early childhood/child development program models.

Objectives:

- 1. Develop a process of review and metrics to evaluate effectiveness that includes student voice and insight.
- 2. Make recommendations for statewide scale-up of models that provide guidance for effective practices.
- 3. Partner with Financial Supports Committee for recommendations needed to provide funding to bring to scale identified successful and impactful models.

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.

Objectives:

- 1. Areas of investigation:
 - a. Early college (dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities)
 - b. Current state of marketing in the workforce (e.g. centers, schools etc.).
 - c. Apprenticeship models
 - d. Head Start in local communities
 - e. Prior Learning Assessment (strategies to help the cost and strategies for access for prior learning credit)
- 2. Create a strategy to gain an understanding of the roles of the incumbent workforce in centers for easier transition (support role transitions in the ECE field).
- 3. Review statewide access for high need credentials.

Goal 4: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways to Opportunity Credentials by increasing transparency.

Objectives:

- 1. Communicate with stakeholders about the competencies and credentials and the way these systems interact in the early childhood field. (includes, but not limited to)
 - a. Illinois Articulation Initiative
 - b. Illinois State Board of Education
 - c. Specialized accreditors
 - d. Illinois Department of Human Services
 - e. Department of Early Childhood

Steering Committee

Goal 1: Ensure PDAC Steering and all PDAC members have awareness of depth, breadth, history, and importance of PDAC's work.

Objectives:

- 1. Review existing onboarding process for new PDAC members.
 - a. Identify gaps/areas for expansion.
- 2. Develop a more structured onboarding process for new PDAC members.
- 3. Capture history of PDAC and incorporate into onboarding.
 - a. Document the work of PDAC.
- 4. Review and decide whether to bring back former assigning of mentors to new PDAC members.

Goal 2: Ensure PDAC continues to be a strong and productive advisory group to the Illinois Department of Human Services through member leadership development.

Objectives:

- 1. Identify and review succession planning protocols used successfully by other groups and councils.
- 2. Determine if succession planning protocol should be established for PDAC.

Goal 3: Ensure all relevant state agencies and other needed constituencies are represented on PDAC including those participating in standing up the Department of Early Childhood.

Objectives:

- 1. Engage and contribute in the development and transition to the new Department of Early Childhood.
- 2. Engage with Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) as a needed and valued partner.
- 3. Enlarge IDHS representation in areas that are under-represented.
- 4. Review other states and identify successful ways teacher and workforce voice is incorporated into system design and development.

Goal 4: Increase information technology representation on PDAC.

Objectives:

- 1. Scan current members for information technology expertise.
- 2. Recruit PDAC members with technology knowledge and skillsets to inform PDAC's work.

Goal 5: 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.

Objectives:

- 1. Review existing current workforce demographics. Compare to previous workforce demographics to ensure understanding of workforce changes.
- 2. Identify gaps in knowledge and creative ways to capture additional knowledge needed for informed decision making.
- 3. Ensure mental health needs, diversity, workforce work and life balance, generational, cultural, education, value placed on educational attainment, and other key factors and demographics related to workforce are captured and integrated.

Qualifications and Credentials Committee

Goal 1: Utilize PDAC approved definitions for Relationship-Based Professional Development (RBPDP) and Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) by placing within Gateways Credential frameworks to expand opportunities for workforce development.

Objectives:

- 1. Review and identify the agreed upon definitions for relationship based professional development (RBPDP) and Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD).
 - a. Compare and contrast similarities and differences between RBPDP and JEPD.
 - b. Identify ways to promote the consistent use of existing competency infrastructure and language across state agencies and stakeholders.
- 2. Review competencies and/or training topics that could be taught through RBPDP and JEPD.
 - a. Prioritize training development recommendations.
 - i. Provide guidance for best practices that includes evaluative components.
- 3. Integrate RBPDP/JEPD into Gateways Credential frameworks.
 - a. Review all RBPDP or JEPD pilots held throughout the state.
 - b. Provide consistency in application of competency attainment through RBPDP and JEPD models that leads to Credentials for the workforce.
 - c. Make recommendation(s) for statewide scale-up of successful models.

Goal 2: Inform and refine existing efforts to expand use of competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials (in partnership with Higher Education Committee).

Objectives:

- 1. Expand the readily accessed Professional Development Record (PDR) to include opportunities that highlight competency attainment.
 - a. Build upon structures already in place.
- 2. Review micro-credentialing and badging systems to determine relevancy to Illinois' work.
 - a. Determine if use of micro-credentials 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.

Goal 3: Utilize and maximize Illinois' well-developed existing competency infrastructure for Gateways Credentials by making it accessible and transparent to the field.

Objectives:

- 1. Standardize all professional development (RBPDP, JEPD, and trainings) to identify content using competency language.
 - a. Training(s) list competency/competencies on certificates (where applicable)

Goal 4: Monitor and document progress of recommendations made to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (IDCFS) to streamline pathways through utilization of Gateways Credentials in licensing to increase access and transparency for the workforce.

Objectives:

- 1. Provide information and documentation to the state transition director of the recommendations.
- 2. Engage/partner with key state agency representatives (e.g. Department of Early Childhood, DCFS, IDHS, etc.) to support the progress of the recommendation.

Workforce Development and Pathways Committee

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 (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 strengthen reciprocity among qualifications and credentials required by multiple state and regulatory systems. (Inform and partner with Qualifications and Credentials Committee where needed).

Objectives:

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



Professional Development Advisory Council Steering Committee Members

Bela Moté	Carole Robertson Center for Learning
Gail Nelson	Steans Family Foundation
Johnna Darragh Ernst*	Heartland Community College
Kate Connor	City Colleges of Chicago – Truman
Laurie Rhodes	LLCC Child Development Center
Lisa Downey	National Louis University
Lynn Burget	The Center: Early Childhood Professional Learning
Marcy Mendenhall	SAL Community Services
Mercedes Mondragón	Start Early
Rebecca Pruitt	Lewis University
Shauna Ejeh*	Illinois Action for Children
Teri Talan	McCormick Center For Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University

Illinois Community College Board Representative:

Marcus Brown

Illinois Department of Human Services Representatives:

Elva DeLuna

Gabriel Holmes

Hollie Hoole

Illinois State Board of Education Representative:

Carisa Hurley Davis*

Illinois Board of Higher Education Representatives:

Christi Chadwick

Marsha Hawley

Stephanie Bernoteit

Illinois Head Start Association Representative:

Lori Morrison Frichtl

Financial Supports Committee:

Erika Mendez

Gail Nelson*

Jill Bella

Laurie Rhodes*

Marcy Mendenhall*

Medina Bailey

Mellissa Ferguson

Nichole Miller

Sue Murphy

Higher Education Committee:

Anne Pradzinski	Kate Connor *	Marilyn Toliver
Christie Easley	Kristin Walley	Mikki Sherwood
Emily Dorsey	Leslie Layman	Natalie Vesga
Julia Auch	Marcus Brown	Rebecca Pruitt*
	Marie Ann Donovan	Thomas Pavkov

Qualifications and Credentials Committee:

Barbara Christmas	Elva DeLuna *	Miranda Lin
Barbara Volpe	Emma Vibber	Paula Schnicker-Johnson
Bela Moté*	Faith Arnold	Sandy Young
Brooke Walker	Gwyndolyn Moss	Sharyl Robin
Carole Franke	Heidi Elliott	Steven K. Sharp
Cerathel Burgess-Burnett	Jamie Nichols	Stormy Udell
Connie Shugart	Jennifer Kemp Berchtold	Tamara Notter
Danen Busch	Joan Longtin	Tammy King
Debbie Jaye	Malia Owens	Wendy Connell
Denise Monnier	Marilyn Toliver	

Workforce Development and Pathways Committee:

Christi Chadwick*	Larissa Mulholland	Ruth Kimble
Cindy Berrey	Lauri Morrison Frichtl*	Sara J. Beach
Danen Busch	Lynn Burgett*	Sara Mixer
Gail Nelson	Marie Ann Donovan	Sinthu Ramalingam
Jacqueline Melendez	Mercedes Mondragon	Thomas Pavkov
Keri Anderson	Pam Womack	Tina Wiegel
Kimberlee Hendricks		

Staffed by:

Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Funder:

Illinois Department of Human Services





1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, Illinois 61701 | Telephone: (866) 697-8278 | www.ilgateways.com

Gateways to Opportunity is administered through INCCRRA and funded by the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Early Childhood and the McCormick Foundation. Gateways to Opportunity, the arch logo and Illinois Professional Development System are registered trademarks of INCCRRA. PD394© 2024 INCCRRA