



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC)

What is PDAC?

The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) is made up of highly qualified practitioners, educators, and advocates around the state whose strategy is to improve the quality and stability of the early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support workforce through increased professional development and improved opportunities for career advancement.

When was PDAC formed?

PDAC was created in December 2002 by the Bureau of Child Care and Development in the Illinois Department of Human Services. The professional development system, through the Gateways to Opportunity website, was introduced statewide in March 2005. The current PDAC mission is “to develop, support, and promote a professional development system for all early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support practitioners.

What is the role of PDAC?

The role of PDAC through its membership is to act as a collective advisory body made up of stakeholders who work with and for children, youth and families that collaborate to develop recommendations in keeping with PDAC’s vision, mission and values pertaining to professional development.

Has the scope of PDAC always included school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners?

In 2006, PDAC expanded beyond professional development for early care and education practitioners to include those who serve children from birth to 21. The PDAC mission was expanded to include school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners in June 2009.

How is PDAC structured?

PDAC membership represents the diversity of Early Childhood and School and Youth Development, and Family Practitioners in Illinois. Committees develop and implement a strategic plan designed around goals for each committee. Each goal area has the support of a committee structure and a set of strategic objectives that identify and outline work to be accomplished. Following is a list of the five PDAC Committees, current strategic goals, and current chairs.

Financial Supports Committee

Chairs: Laurie Rhodes, Marcy Mendenhall and Gail Nelson

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

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

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

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

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

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

Qualifications and Credentials Committee

Chairs: Bela Mote and Elva DeLuna

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

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

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

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.

Workforce Development and Pathways Committee

Chairs: Lori Morrison Frichth, Christi Chadwick and Lynn Burgett

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.

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.

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).

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

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

Higher Education Committee

Chairs: Kate Connor and Marsha Hawley

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

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

Goal 3: Build sustainable partnerships within higher education systems.

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

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

PDAC Steering Committee

Tri-Chairs: Shauna Ejeh, Johnna Darragh Ernst and Carisa Hurley Davis

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

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.

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

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

When does PDAC meet?

PDAC can hold up to four statewide virtual meetings a year. The PDAC standing committees listed above schedule additional meetings as required by their committee's goals and objectives.