



CDA for Credit
Working Group Meeting
February 8, 2022
Minutes

A meeting of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity CDA for Credit Working Group was called to order at 2:00 p.m. via telephone and video conference as permitted by Public Act 101-0640.

Participating in the meeting were: Christi Chadwick, Illinois Board of Higher Education; Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board; Allison Decker, Illinois Community College Board; Sue Maes, Consultant; Zach Allen, Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development; Melissa Batchelor, Lewis & Clark Community College; Carolyn Beal, Southwestern Illinois College; Kate Connor, City Colleges of Chicago (Truman College); Johnna Darragh Ernst, Heartland Community College; Jason Dockter, Lincoln Land Community College; Ireta Gasner, Start Early; Melissa Johnson, Highland Community College; Marcy Mendenhall, SAL Family and Community Services; Nichole Miller, Children's Home & Aid; Joi Patterson, Governors State University; Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College; Linda O'Connor-Knuth; and Lindsay Meeker, Western Illinois University.

ECACE Project Director Christi Chadwick opened the meeting by reading the Open Meetings Act directives for the meeting. The meeting will be recorded, and minutes will be taken; there will be opportunity for public comment toward the end of the meeting. Comments must be entered in chat box by 3:00 p.m. Chadwick shared minutes from the previous meetings on January 11th and 18th and asked for a motion to approve. Motion to approve by Marcy Mendenhall with no comments from group members. Joi Patterson seconded. Minutes will be posted on the IBHE website.

Chadwick shared the legislative charge of the group for review and reminder. The primary goal is deciding how to assign college credit for the incumbent workforce. A lot of time has been spent on this over the last month. Generally, folks seem to be excited about the direction of the work. So as everybody knows we took a set of recommendations to the Consortium on the 25th, which were unanimously approved, and we got some really good comments on the survey. 'Phase 2' begins today. Hopefully the group can talk about the cadence of this work and what they think it's going to take to get through that work. Recommendations will be made to the Consortium at the end of May, with implementation next year. Chadwick reminded the group that they aren't looking for a single model. There is flexibility and room for variation. Reminder of agreed-upon principles of the Consortium that are posted on the website now.

Melissa Szymczak asked what the group is doing with areas of agreement at this point and the need to have more conversations about the idea of 'validating' or 'documentation,' or this thought that the group would be asking, by a process of providing documentation, we are asking them (colleges) to reprove themselves. Do not think there is a consensus around this – conversation still needs to happen.

Chadwick said the group should think about models that align to the fundamental principles and to operationalize and put them into action. Ask ourselves: 'How do you move from 'principle' to operationalizing?' Chadwick sent a chart out to the group the previous night (Feb. 7). She indicated

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she started to put information together with folks the group has already spoken with. Of particular note: 'How many credits are provided?'

The group can use Massachusetts, Nebraska, Colorado, Maryland as models, of whom the group hasn't contacted, yet. Fill out the chart, and then spend some time comparing these models to our fundamental principles as sort of an exercise to say how do these align and helping us to really think through like kind of road test our principles a little bit. What can we pull from these models that seem useful, then return back to Illinois ideas and Illinois models? The group needs to figure out certain things they want to elevate, certain things they don't agree with, and how do they can align these principles. That's where Chadwick explained she wanted to take things over the next few months.

Chadwick then shared her Jamboard links with the group. Marcus Brown asked to that the group members put their questions on the Jamboard, so members can look through this and determine what the biggest pieces that are missing are as they are going through the State conversation.

Mendenhall asked for clarification of what the directives are for the Jamboards, and whether priorities are to be established. Chadwick clarified that group members can continue to put items/questions on the board as the meeting continues for discussion. Chadwick indicated everyone has the link, so feel free to add things as they go through the materials, then see if any of the questions can be answered once we look at other states and models.

The discussion then briefly shifted to credit hours. Melissa Johnson asked about 15 hours and awarding PLA credit at community colleges. Marcus Brown said he didn't know if there will be a barrier to doing that. It shouldn't be an issue, although we may need to do some real clarification around that.

Chadwick shared State/Program conversation information slides with the group at this point.

Szymczak said the group might want to ask from a systems perspective – what is the process? What does the candidate submit in order to earn? She saw that in the spreadsheet, but wondered if the group wanted something more specific about it? Is a CDA/PDA good enough, or what else are we wanting them to submit?

Brown said it would be worth adding what the cost to the applicant is, if any.

Johnson shared concern about going back to the question: 'Are students reassessed for the work?'" Not just from the community college, but from the college perspective, we don't say we 'reassess' their competencies, but the competencies within their courses that have not been met through the CDA. Johnson has a problem with the way it's asked. Chadwick responded that this is how she pulled out information when she held conversations with the different state representatives.

Brown asked if competencies are bundled across courses with additional assessment? And so the question is are we taking that plus other things that we're assessing to give credit across multiple courses is that may be a better way to think through the question and make sure there is an understanding of what is being said.

Ireta Gasner said it would be interesting to know what, if anything, other states do or what the group doesn't want to have people reassess for their CDA competencies, but kind of what they do,

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how they handle that could be useful, as well as how those competencies are aligned within coursework and bundled. Probably a 'both/and' issue.

Chadwick shared a slide on Oklahoma's program and said a lot of time has been spent talking with them. Oklahoma provides scholarships to institutions but requires a CDA pathway to their institutions and requires CDA for their institutions. They provide CDA on the way and credit for clock hours. Their credits lead to certificates and to degrees, as if you get clock or CDA they offer six credits for that. Each institution figures out exactly which courses are covered, although typically intro, health safety, and nutrition. They all have clock or pathways that they run through continuing ed, and they receive financial students receive financial support to use those pathways. Most students go this route. It's 10 modules that are offered over the weekend, some series of weekends up to the hundred and 20 hours. It covers the educational component and professional development so by the time you're finished with this you should be prepared to have met the educational requirements.

Szymczak asked if the modules were through the classes or with continuing ed? The answer is that they are in both.

Chadwick said they have to get a 75% on this assessment to sort of pass their continuing ed and get the nine credits, six credits going forward. They also have to take their CDA. There is financial support from their CCTV go bonds or childcare funds, which is kind of like Illinois' gateway scholarships. They pay for 90% of tuition. Tuition is charged since it's through continuing ed at \$4.35 per clock hour. (The slides elaborate on this information as well). The scholarship support seems to align with how the group is envisioning it would be in Illinois. (100% coverage for books/90% assessment coverage).

Melissa Batchelor asked if there was any rule on moving continuing ed into credit-based? Anybody in the State – what's your process look like? It may have to be tweaked. Would be interesting to know that piece (for Illinois).

Brown said there is not a specific rule that says you can or cannot use continuing ed as credit, but you would have to have an institutional process that outlines it pretty straight-forwardly. May want to set up like PLA.

Johnson indicated students can get the training hours but can get some college credit for doing additional assessment, or that's how she has seen it done in some instances.

Discussion then turned to how to take the pieces from these other state models and tailor them to Illinois and what that might mean in terms of providing appropriate supports for students depending on the path they choose. Oklahoma and Alabama, who do CDA on the way, indicate that providing support for the portfolio is an enormous part of this. It is challenging to leave students to find their own way through the process.

Nichole Miller said she's been supporting her candidates and giving them the layout of the portfolio, talking about the resources that they need. She also pulls resources from programs the students are already working in. Her institution even put together a training to pull a group of candidates together at once, pulling resources and competencies together. This builds confidence and gives the students three or four pieces already halfway written for them.

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Chadwick then turned to the slides on Scott Community College in Iowa. Reference to Scott Community College in Iowa was made a couple times and has come up through these meetings and Chadwick thought it would be important to spend some time talking to them. Chadwick said Scott CC said they thought 18 hours was too much, but it was implemented in the 90's. Primary struggles centered around curriculum and lesson planning.

Mendenhall said she was surprised about the 18-hour requirement. Some teachers were prepared, but some were not.

Kate Connor asked if anyone had looked at Massachusetts. Different colleges are doing it differently, but this is the breakdown of courses looks like the CDA plus at Roxbury and Massachusetts. She is interested in what Roxbury has. It looked like a CDA on the way that kind of aligns with our level two, when looking at the course breakdowns.

Szymczak thought it was interesting that the school said that they thought it was too many (hours), and that they were filling in and adding supports for these students although they had given them credit. She thought the arrangement seemed odd given the constraints involved.

Chadwick said she thought 18 hours was a lot – on the high side.

Mendenhall emphasized that this is one community college in Iowa – not a model for the entire state.

Chadwick shifted talk to the slides on the Jefferson State (Alabama) CDA support program, which is not funded by grant money. They bring together students on a monthly basis and track them based on portfolios. They do both CDA and CDA on the way. Much depends on the type and volume of coursework and financial supports in place to determine length of time for the CDA on the way.

Gasner said this is so much information. Need to sift through and determine whether it's helpful to our state system. This representative would remain a good resource for the group's work moving forward.

Joi Patterson said she believes there are some missing components in the developmental range. Her institution is working on some modules that all of their candidates would have to meet - anyone who starts at GSU as a freshman. How do we piece in the missing gaps for grades 1 and 2?

Brown indicated that an AAS group is looking at providing some background – what levels mean – what a level 4 means and what a level 5 means and understanding expectations of each level. And the partnership and transfer of an AAS degree – not as a course to course as opposed to building on competency levels. How do we build in the gap between level 4 and level 5? In that spirit, interesting across the three examples, a commonality exists around the intro-level course and in terms of what it might mean for us in Illinois, too. What seems common across what other states are doing and what we think we can do here?

Conner wondered do we look at our curriculum that may have a little bit of a broader conversation that covers the CDA competencies versus and making sure that we really highlight a possibility or if we can do it as part of being embedded in the credit program- that credit program may be broader than the CDA, but students will cover the CDA content in that. She wanted to put a plug in

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for that as an option because it keeps the group covering all the things that they are saying is important, within the program within accreditation.

Johnna Darragh Ernst spoke about CDA on the way being 'bi-directional' – sees it as a model component and something reflected in much of the information shared, with the exclusion of a couple of models where there was very much a totality, like the 18 credits- that seems exclusionary. Believes NAEYC Level 1 is clearly aligned to CDA.

Szymczak said some of her CC colleagues would be interested in the next research points or next calls for this working group. A few years ago, through NAEYC, in Pennsylvania, an apprenticeship model starts with the CDA has a lot of CDA supports, so might be a good state to look into- Chadwick agreed.

Connor said there seems to be a lot of changes happening very quickly. She thinks people could make some decisions that maybe aren't best for them long-term, not realizing.

When she talks with childcare workers, they indicate they didn't realize the decision they were making. She would like transparency. When someone is making decision to go CDA route, make sure people are 'eyes wide open' about it. Chadwick thinks the intent of the legislation is to think about what barriers have existed for students and why they are choosing a 'non-credit' pathway. (Time/money/location)

Batchelor said students have to know their options, but that doesn't always mean that it connects for students. No matter what, even if they choose CDA, they don't necessarily understand what it means.

Brown said the other part is that higher ed is going to have to respond in a different timeframe than it historically has. Also be thinking about what in our structure will have to shift in order to have students think realistically to think about the higher ed choice.

Chadwick said she can send a set of questions to use as the group's 'protocol,' and conduct more research with states – perhaps Pennsylvania. Nebraska can talk at 9:00 a.m. Friday, February 11th. She will set up other meetings and make sure of everyone's availability. Begin the process of pulling together pieces and putting together models.

Chadwick asked how often the group wants to meet to get to the end of May deadline, then suggested every two weeks. This seemed amenable to everyone but can always be adjusted as necessary.

Szymczak suggested a couple of other tasks – which CDA are we talking about – infant/toddler vs. preschool? Second question is – we already have a framework that has the CDA competencies aligned to Gateways early childhood put into place by Johnna and others – could we as a group look at that? Might be helpful to be on the same page with that.

Chadwick said she thinks we should ask other states how they are dealing with that, too.

Connor wants competencies aligned to outcomes. That would come out in crosswalk. There is a crosswalk for infant-toddler and preschool that will be shared. Chadwick will speak with Johnna for further information.

Chadwick indicated that the group would meet again in two weeks.

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There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 3:19 p.m.