

APPROVED 2/8/22



CDA for Credit Working Group Meeting
Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity
January 11, 2022 Minutes

A meeting of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity CDA for Credit Working Group began at 1:00 pm 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; Amanda Gnadt, Consultant; Sue Maes, Consultant; 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; Ireta Gasner, Start Early; Jason Dockter, Lincoln Land Community College; Kelsey Swanson, CCRR; Melissa Johnson, Highland Community College; Lindsay Meeker, Western Illinois University; Marcy Mendenhall, Child Care Resource and Referrals of SDA 7 & 8; Ashley Nazarak, Carole Robertson Center for Learning; Joi Patterson, Governors State University; Rebecca Swartz, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville; Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College; Nichole Miller, CCRR; and Jean Zaar, College of DuPage.

ECACE Project Director Christi Chadwick welcomed the CDA for Credit Ad Hoc Working Group alongside attendees from the general public. Prior to discussing the objectives of this meeting, attendees were informed how to submit public comments. No new members joined the working group, so in an effort to conserve time, introductions were bypassed.

Chadwick ran through the charge and purpose of the consortium and highlighted language from the establishing legislation that mentions how, “by January 31, 2022, the Consortium shall decide how to assign college credit for the incumbent workers who have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and for the future workers obtaining a CDA.” Beyond the assignment of college credit for incumbent workers with CDA credentials and future workers seeking a CDA, this Consortium is charged with advancing racial equity in Illinois institutions of higher education and improving the accessibility of degree completion for CDA seeking students. Lastly, the Consortium is charged to develop “standardized methods for awarding credit for prior learning”. Chadwick then outlined the charge of the CDA for Credit Ad Hoc Working Group and detailed the timeline to the January 25th Consortium meeting, at which the working group intends to present recommendations. By January 18, the working group should come to a consensus around fundamental principles, timeline, and date to operationalize. By January 21, recommended language should be sent to the Consortium for early review and by January 25, the working group should bring their recommendations for an approach and/or approaches to the Consortium for consideration. Therefore, the primary purpose for this meeting was to shift the conversation from ideal principles to fundamental principles. It is to note that the working group acknowledges that they may not find a single model that should be the standard for stakeholders as there may

be variation by institution and variation by whether a student has a CDA or is seeking one. There is a possibility that some aspects of this model might be seen as fundamental, while others allow for more flexibility.

Chadwick presented the results from a survey sent prior to the meeting. The survey was based on the JamBoard activity and discussion that took place during the meeting on 1.4.22. Chadwick summarized comments on the JamBoard into principles for the group to discuss. The group discussed each of the principles and indicated whether the principle met the conditions and intention of legislation and guiding principles whether changes should be made to the statement.

Jean Zaar from College of DuPage spoke about how the *Credit for CDA* pathway should be a stepping stone that counts towards the credential and degree of students. In doing so, Zaar believes students would ultimately see the benefit in the pathway and would not view it as a program that “counts for random credit”. In relation to this conversation, Melissa Szymczak of Joliet Junior College detailed the barriers and/or drawbacks if these “random credits” did exist in the program. While “random credits” do not aim to purposefully harm students, too many outlier credits do not help in their effort to obtain a certain credential or degree. There is a strong possibility that these credits could have taken the place for credits that are seen as more beneficial for the chosen career path of that said student. Szymczak reiterated how important it is to make sure that the *Credit for CDA* pathway is meaningful for the students. Overall, the working group believed that the credit that will be awarded for the CDA needed to be transparent to the students so that they know what they are earning.

Following the conversation around students obtaining credit for this program, the working group reasoned through how incumbent workers with CDAs would demonstrate their competencies without needing to “reprove themselves”. Since the CDA competencies have been crosswalked with Gateways competencies, competencies demonstrated as met through the CDA could be identified in coursework. As a means for accomplishing how one might accomplish this task, the working group wrestled with how competencies can be measured when some outcomes might be in a course, but not all of them. Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board, and Kate Connor, City Colleges of Chicago (Truman College), agreed that students might need to take an assessment, of some sort, to prove their comprehension of other competencies in the course without needing to retake a course in its entirety.

The group agreed that the *Credit for CDA* pathway should be affordability and timely. As stated, “awarding credit for the CDA must be timely and affordable and cannot cost the same as taking a class, if awarded after a student earns CDA”. With this language in mind, Marcy Mendenhall with Child Care Resource and Referrals of SDA 7 & 8 then questioned how the group could ensure the cost of the program was adequately reflected in the number of courses by the end of articulation. Connor proposed that the CDA should be embedded in credit and inquired how students seeking a CDA should be welcomed to the field in the most financially ethical way. The working group agreed that if an incumbent worker had a CDA already, they should not be

APPROVED 2/8/22



charged for the cost of a CDA in order to receive credit. Students who are seeking a CDA, on the other hand, might be charged for full tuition; however, that should be a decision ultimately left up to the institution in terms of affordability.

There was a brief consideration around what should be the route that students take in terms of entry point.

In regard to the *CDA on the Way: High School + Dual Credit* program, after much deliberation, the working group found that these principles/ program should be optional or “not fundamental”. The success of this program primarily depends on the capacity, resources and willingness of an institution; a decision that only they can determine.

The group agreed with the principles generally, and Chadwick said she would bring back statements for the next meeting, with edits to reflect the conversation.

There was no public comment.

Chadwick and Brown thanked the participants for their contribution to the discussion. The meeting c at 2:30 pm.