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ECACE
EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS
CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

CDA for Credit
Working Group Meeting
March 29, 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; Melissa Batchelor, Lewis & Clark Community College; Melissa Johnson, Highland Community College; Johnna Darragh Ernst, Heartland Community College; Ireta Gasner, Start Early; Nichole Miller, Children's Home & Aid; Joi Patterson, Governors State University; Melissa Szymczak, Joliet Junior College; Marlena Constant; Lindsay Meeker, Western Illinois University; Beth White, Illinois State University; Marcy Mendenhall, SAL Family and Community Services; Jean Zaar, College of DuPage; and Beth Smaka, Sauk Valley Community College.

ECACE Project Director Christi Chadwick opened the meeting by providing Open Meetings Act and public comment provisions. Chadwick asked if everyone received the minutes. The group reviewed the minutes. Melissa Szymczak suggested that the language in the last two paragraphs be clarified. Chadwick read the paragraphs to the group with her suggested edits. The group agreed with the changes. The minutes were then approved.

The group reviewed and discussed common themes and information from other states and programs that had been interviewed. Szymczak asked if who was interviewed could be plugged into the chart to provide context and their thoughts, and how the group can follow up with them. Batchelor said it would be great to be able to follow up, specifically, with something the group liked from the other states.

Chadwick said that North Shore in Massachusetts tracked data that indicated 60% of people with credit for the CDA completed their AAS, and of those, about half went on to a 4-year. Pennsylvania indicated that a lot of programs in their state saw this as an 'untapped market.'

Batchelor asked how the data would be collected regarding students with CDAs. Marcus Brown said he thought there were couple of ways to do it:

1. Document on transcript as PLA credit – however the institution tracks PLA; or
2. Documenting how those hours are transferred into the institution. The institution may review each student individually or could make a holistic, programmatic decision to accept. Programs would need to work with ISBE to determine if a program change is needed if every student is going to get credit for the CDA.

Brown said it would probably flow through the Registrar's office. Joi Patterson said that most responsibility (at her institution) will be with the Admissions team. Once they have ability to do that,

APPROVED – 4.12.22

the Admissions Department will give credit, it appears on the transcript, and it will be business as usual. Brown said they need to be clear about what the process would look like in terms of documentation. It may not be admissions, and it will at some point flow through the Registrar to be documented. Institutional decisions to make it work both legislatively and functionally are added to the transcript.

Chadwick moved on to outstanding questions from prior meetings documented on the JamBoard. The group discussed how to respond to each.

Chadwick began by sharing a slide about Expired or Old CDAs. The group generally agreed with the following:

- Will expired CDA be awarded credit: Probably not, but this is up to the institution.
- Does credit expire if CDA does: No.
- What if CDA is old but has been renewed annually: Credit will be awarded.

Brown said it's collectively important for all institutions to implement policies of awarding credit for the CDA and that the group should aim for policies that will work for all institutions, not just their individual institutions. Brown noted that once agreed upon, the group needs to write up an institutional policy framework.

Brown said if the institution implements a process for additional credit, that's an institutional decision, so a student could apply for more credit, but there must be a minimal standard.

The group generally agreed on 6 credits would be awarded upon enrollment, and additional credit may be awarded via PLA, but that the group should return to this after reviewing the models and other questions.

Patterson asked if there are two different types of CDA. Chadwick said Infant/Toddler and Preschool. Patterson asked what CDA is, specifically, being referred to. She asked if the group is making this decision for any CDA, it may be missing pieces of the competencies. It's not a 'one size fits all.'

Brown said the group will likely need to revisit this. 6 credit hours must be awarded in an early childhood program. He expressed that it shouldn't just give elective credit, but credit that counts in the program and needs to be appropriate to the program.

Johnna Darragh Ernst liked the 6 hours, 'and,' aspect of the proposed policy. She noted that having a cap from a model standpoint might be somewhat challenging, but that cap could be 30, and said that coming up with that might be beneficial.

Brown addressed a question Jean Zaar posted in the chat, responding that: 'If the ECE elective credit is in the program, and the program requires that credit, then 'yes,' it is appropriate.

The group discussed whether field experience credit could be provided; Chadwick and Brown shared information from ISBE about requirements for documenting field experiences. Ultimately, the experiences should be documented according to each institution's policy.

The next slide was on Transfer Credit. The group agreed with the following, which was on the slides.

- How will this credit be handled by 4-year institutions, if awarded at a 2-year institution: Any credit that is part of the AAS will transfer into the BA degree, generally.

APPROVED – 4.12.22

- How do we ensure transfer credit: The group already said that this had to be meaningful and be a part of the

degree.

The group discussed whether it would be transferable if part of an AA degree. The group decided that this would likely be on an institution by institution basis, but noted that since the legislation requires credit to be given – then it should be.

There was a discussion about whether AA students are eligible for ECACE scholarship. The answer was not this year, but ICCB is working on a process to determine this on an institutional basis next year.

Timely award of credit: What does it mean to be timely? The group discussed the point that credit has to be offered in a timely way.

Brown wanted 'Also consider agency policy' inserted for clarification and that ICCB would need to revisit the administrative rules. Brown said ICCB can update rules to reflect legislative landscape. He said that legislatively institutions can award credit in their programs as appropriate, but in updating administrative rule, considerations should be made to fit into broader landscape issues related to PLA.

Chadwick referred to consistency issues for the models, noting that the group may want to revisit this once they get closer to the models they will propose.

Brown said an institution can document/outline for the student the credit awarded for the CDA, in the same way institutions can outline what the credit looks like for particular courses. He said that institutions want to demonstrate how credit will be meaningful to students and that it is important to document on transcripts how credit is awarded based on evaluation of the CDA.

Zaar asked about transfer from institution to institution and how credit would be aligned based on requirements from one school to another. Brown said, if credit has been awarded to a student for the CDA and the student comes to an institution, the institution needs to accept that credit. It could be 6 hours for health and safety and practicum, for example, or another model. Darragh Ernst said she agreed with what was said about aligning/awarding credit from institution to institution. She indicated that it's not only the course that would transfer, but those underlying competencies as well. That is what's helpful for things like credentials and badging – not just a course, but what is within the courses.

Chadwick suggested the group come back to the remaining outstanding questions at the next meeting.

The group discussed issues around the approval process for program redesign, if that's needed. Brown said it may be a shorter approval process, if institutions are not doing a formal program change. If they are making significant changes, this might take slightly longer to do.

Ireta Gasner said the group probably does not want to signal that they cannot meet the deadline or requirements at this stage, to which the members agreed.

APPROVED – 4.12.22

There was no public comment. Chadwick concluded the meeting at 3:14pm