



Advisory Committee  
May 19, 2022

Meeting Minutes

## WELCOME

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Dr. Jamilah Jor'dan, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, welcomes everyone to the meeting on behalf of co-chairs and advises of the Open Meetings Act guidelines and that the meeting is being recorded and materials will be available on the Consortium website ([www.ecace.org](http://www.ecace.org)). Dr. Jor'dan specifies the public comment process.

Dr. Jor'dan reviews the meeting agenda and turns the meeting over to Dr. Carmen Ayala, Illinois State Board of Education.

## MEETING NORMS AND EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

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Dr. Carmen Ayala reviews the Ground Rules and Guiding Principles established by the committee, reminding everyone of the importance of keeping the workforce, young children, and families at the center and maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Dr. Ayala introduces Stephanie Neuman, owner and director of Kountry Kids Learning Center in New Berlin and Rushville, IL. She discusses the challenges of keeping classrooms open due to staffing challenges from the pandemic. She expresses that she would rather keep classrooms closed than open more slots with less qualified staff.

Dr. Ayala introduces co-chair, Ms. Karen Yarbrough, Illinois Department of Human Services, to discuss opportunities and barriers the incumbent workforce experiences in accessing higher education. Advisory Committee members introduce themselves and their organization.

## ADDRESSING EC WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES: WORK OF THE CONSORTIUM

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Ms. Yarbrough summarizes some challenges shared at the last meeting and connects these challenges to the work of the Consortium and other initiatives.

- Financial Challenges
- Navigating the System
- ISBE Licensure
- Higher Education Pathway Challenges and Opportunities
- Compensation of the Workforce

Ms. Yarbrough notes that workforce compensation is not under the purview of the ECACE Consortium, but recognizes how integral worthy wages and benefits are to attracting and retaining the workforce and illuminates some of the ongoing IDHS work that addresses compensation.

### Financial Challenges

Ms. Yarbrough reviews some of the financial challenges this group mentioned in the last meeting: tuition costs to attend, debt preventing release of transcripts, other scholarships (Gateways) not fully funding tuition or funding fees and books, and other scholarships may have more stringent requirements in terms of

access and availability. She then shares some possible avenues to alleviate the financial challenges, including the ECACE Scholarship and institutional funding for the release/funding of financial holds.

**Navigation of the system: Navigators and Mentors**

Next Ms. Yarbrough discusses the challenges with navigating the system for students. Last meeting members shared how challenging it can be to navigate the system, especially for those who are working full time. To help with these challenges, navigators have been put in place to act as a “guide on the side” to proactively connect with and support students. Through the initiative, institutions are also hiring mentors to support students on their journey.

Ms. Yarbrough turns meeting over to Dr. Jen Kirmes, Illinois State Board of Education to discuss opportunities and challenges for early childhood teachers earning a Professional Educator License.

**ISBE Early Childhood Licensure**

Dr. Kirmes shares the multiple pathways to licensure ISBE allows, which include earning a Professional Educator License (PEL) with Early Childhood Education (ECE) endorsement, as well as alternative routes to licensure, including short-term approval that allows an educator to immediately begin teaching while working towards full licensure. Dr. Kirmes explains that per Public Act 100-0645, educators holding an Illinois Gateways Level 5 Credential, or an Educator License with Stipulations-Transitional Bilingual Educator (ELS-TBE) can now acquire an ISBE Professional Educator License (PEL) while gaining valuable experience in an ISBE Preschool for All (PFA) program.

Dr. Kirmes says that ISBE has been working to remove barriers facing students trying to get educator license such as the basic skills test. Public Act 101-0220 eliminated the requirement that teacher candidates pass a test of basic skills to receive a Professional Educators License. More information found at [SB1952-Test-of-basic-skills.pdf \(isbe.net\)](https://www.isbe.net/Portals/0/SB1952-Test-of-basic-skills.pdf).

Other barriers towards ISBE licensure that were addressed include:

- **Student Teaching**
  - **Pay:** Student teachers may be compensated for their services per Illinois Administrative Code Section 25.620(f).
  - **Grade Range:** For an early childhood education endorsement, individuals may student teach in a setting with children from birth through grade 2. Already in effect.
  - **Supervision:** In progress Part 25 rulemaking will allow an educator with a Level 5 Gateways credential (rather than a PEL) to serve as cooperating teacher for candidates seeking early childhood licensure. Pending JCAR.
  - **Field Work:** In progress Part 25 rulemaking clarifies field work expectations. Pending JCAR.
- **General Education Requirements**
  - In progress Part 25 rulemaking will strike requirements for science and social science coursework for licensure as this content is part of national standards to which programs are already aligned. Pending JCAR.
- **EC Licensure Content Test**
  - Question by question response analysis has been completed.
  - Some question removal and bias panel convening to revise questions.

Dr. Kirmes then introduces Ms. Ginger Ostro, Illinois Board of Higher Education, to talk about Higher Education Pathways and Access.

**HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS AND ACCESS (BEYOND FINANCIAL):**

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Ms. Ostro says that the JamBoard session at the last meeting recognized that the incumbent workforce often faces challenges enrolling, persisting, and completing degrees and credentials beyond the cost to attend. Advisory Committee members mentioned issues such as credit loss when students transfer, being

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unable to find programs or courses at the time, location, and in the format that students need it, and local programs not offering summer classes or the classes are taught infrequently.

Opportunities for helping the incumbent workforce included job-embedded learning; credit for prior learning, competencies, and experience; online and hybrid models; aligning competencies and coursework; and collaboration across institutions and with community partners.

She explains the key things that the Consortium was designed to address:

- Higher education institutions across the state are looking at their programs and thinking about how to make these more accessible and provide smoother pathways to degrees and credentials.
- Four-year institutions are redesigning programs to ensure that students with an associate's degree will not lose credit and thinking about how students can best access these programs.
- Two- and four-year institutions are thinking about credit for prior learning and how to recognize the experience and competencies of the workforce.
- The state is using federal childcare dollars through IDHS to support 2- and 4-year institutions to develop more seamless pathways and provide supports for students.
- IBHE and ICCB have released information about grant funding to institutions. For this grant, collectively, 2- and 4-year institutions will receive nearly \$49m in funding for this work.
- There will be additional funds released through competitive processes on faculty side for educating graduate students.

Ms. Ostro opens the agenda to a brief question and answer period.

Ms. Emmet Ward says she has been told staff cannot be awarded an ECACE Scholarship if they are not part of a Preschool for All program. Ms. Chadwick responds that funding is not limited to PFA programs. Staff can be in any type of setting if they are working in an eligible position.

Ms. Jill Andrews asks about exclusions for staff at for-profit child care providers accessing the ECACE scholarship. Dr. Marcus Brown and Ms. Chadwick clarify that while for-profit institutions of higher education are ineligible from the Consortium, working at a for-profit child care center does not make workforce members ineligible for the scholarship.

Ms. Ward asks if there is a portal for scholarship information. Ms. Chadwick responds that information is on the ISAC website and will send link to everyone after meeting.

### AWARDING HIGHER EDUCATION CREDIT FOR THE CDA

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Dr. Durham discusses the legislation that established this Advisory charged the Consortium with deciding how to award higher education credit for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential by January 31, 2022. The intent of the legislation is to provide credit for competencies already demonstrated by the workforce. He says that in January, a working group presented a set of Fundamental Principles for how credit would be awarded and recommended that the Consortium charge them with bringing back more information and structure for the CDA and some models to implement the CDA by May 31, 2022. The group is still finalizing this work and will present these recommendations to the Consortium in June.

Dr. Durham turns meeting over to Dr. Marcus Brown, Illinois Community College Board, who introduces Ms. Marcy Mendenhall, President and CEO of SAL Family and Community Services, to give an employer perspective on this work.

Ms. Mendenhall says she has 250 employees and is grateful for CDA and the dollars scaffolded around incumbent workforce to make sure they get what they need. Ms. Mendenhall says the CDA is golden ticket because is needed for staff so centers can stay open and children get quality care, and that the CDA is an off ramp for them to being a professional and shows a foundational level of competency for working with

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young children. It helps the incumbent workforce to move forward in education and in the field and gives them confidence to go to college because they feel valued for what they know have done for years. She notes that her staff with CDAs are given a raise. Ms. Mendenhall explains that students are currently attending for-profit colleges to get credit for the CDA, and that those students could be going to community colleges and public/non-profit four-year institutions. She emphasizes the importance of doing right by students, families, and workforce.

Dr. Brown then introduces Ms. Christi Chadwick to discuss what the CDA is and what has the process been to determine how to provide credit.

Ms. Chadwick explains that a working group of two- and four-year institutions, employers, CCR&R representatives, and advocates have been meeting weekly/bi-weekly since December to address the task of awarding credit for the CDA.

The group:

- Looked at crosswalks of CDA competencies to Gateways competencies;
- Interviewed states (OK, MA, PA) and institutions about how they are awarding credit;
- Reviewed history of CDA;
- Looked across programs for commonalities;
- Dug into programs to see where competencies reside in higher education courses; and
- Considered how this might work in different institutions and programs.

She noted that initial agreements prioritized students/workforce and respect for needs of other stakeholders including employers, etc. and worked on a set of fundamental principles to be standard across institutions with other more flexible, optional elements that are aligned to those fundamental principles.

Ms. Chadwick turns the meeting over to Ms. Lindsay Meeker, a working group member from Western Illinois University, to discuss how this work impacts higher education.

Ms. Meeker discusses how research has shown that students awarded credit for prior learning are more likely to go on and get a degree and stick with education, and that the CDA is an on-ramp to higher education for an untapped population who add value to the classroom experience.

Ms. Chadwick then turns the meeting over to Kate Connor, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs at Truman College, to discuss the fundamental principles of the CDA and “stickiness”

Ms. Connor briefly states the fundamental principles as follows:

- Meaningful credit that can be applied to the next certificate and AAS
- Students do not have to “re-prove” themselves for the competencies they have; institutions recognize and provide credit for this
- The process is transparent to the student
- Standard range or number of credits
- Timely and affordable, meaning can’t be awarded over a long period of time or cost as much as coursework

Ms. Connor also share the stickiness comes as have been working through operationalizing this, raising questions such as, how do we value student learning and experience and make it work in our programs, and what is a good enough fit for a student to earn credit in a course?

Ms. Connor then turns it over to Dr. Marcus Brown to discuss the key pieces of framework and possible models.

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Dr. Brown explains that there is not one model proposed for institutions to award credit for the CDA, but a few key shared pieces. Everyone will be implementing this in a way that fits the needs of their students and the context of their institution, with some common elements across institutions. The basic framework includes:

- 6 credit hours in early childhood or related coursework that must apply to the degree, certificate, or credential a student is earning.
- Credit is not contingent on other factors.
- A few exceptions exist, like when students have an AAS or BA already.
- While implementation is scheduled for January 2023, institutions may choose to implement various CDA in a phased approach, to allow for more time for redesign, if needed.

Dr. Brown facilitates a JamBoard activity, in which members are to share what they are excited about and what they would like to know more about or have additional question on the CDA.

Dr. Brown turns meeting over to Ms. Chadwick. Currently no one signed up for public comments but the opportunity is offered.

Dr. Brown then turns meeting over to Dr. Ayala.

### REVIEW AND APPROVE MEETING MINUTES:

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Dr. Ayala holds a roll call vote for approval of the previous meeting minutes. Ms. Ashley Harms motions to approve the minutes and Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas seconds the motion. Members vote to approve the minutes is as follows.

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| 1. Alicia Geddis, absent         | 20. Karen Yarbrough, yes                    |
| 2. Ashley Harms, yes             | 21. Kate Connor, yes                        |
| 3. Avis Proctor, yes             | 22. Ken Trzaska, absent                     |
| 4. Brian Durham, yes             | 23. Kimberly Mann, absent                   |
| 5. Bryan Stokes, II, absent      | 24. Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, yes             |
| 6. Carmen Ayala, yes             | 25. Laurie Elish-Piper, yes                 |
| 7. Carolyn Theard-Griggs, absent | 26. Lisa Downey, yes                        |
| 8. Cristina Pacione-Zayas, yes   | 27. Martina Rocha, yes                      |
| 9. Dale Fowler, absent           | 28. Maurice West II, no response            |
| 10. Emnet Ward, yes              | 29. Meredith Palmer, absent                 |
| 11. Evelyn Osorio, yes           | 30. Michael Kim, no response                |
| 12. Francis Godwyll, yes         | 31. Michael Marron, absent                  |
| 13. Ginger Ostro, yes            | 32. Mike Shackelford, absent                |
| 14. Jamilah Jor'dan, yes         | 33. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, yes         |
| 15. Jennifer Buchter, absent     | 34. Rochelle Golliday, no response          |
| 16. Jill Andrews, yes            | 35. Stephanie Neuman, yes                   |
| 17. Jim Reed, absent             | 36. Stephanie Schmitz-Bechtler, no response |
| 18. Joi Patterson, no response   | 37. Susan Orozco, absent                    |
| 19. Joni Scritchlow, yes         |   |

### PUBLIC COMMENT

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Written comment from Ms. Danyle Watkins, Lincoln Land Community College: "When will licensing meet the standards we are requiring of our workforce? If I don't need an AA or BA, why would I go get one, even for free. We are not respecting our workforce by creating all these pathways and not finding a way to pay them or provide them livable wage. When will pay be addressed?"

Dr. Jor'dan reads question and asks if anyone would like to address. Ms. Yarbrough says we've acknowledged this and IDHS has employed some strategies and will be a conversation at next advisory meeting.

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#### **NEXT STEPS**

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Dr. Jor'dan then thanks everyone for presentations and contributions and appreciates the partnership. The next meeting is August 10, from 1pm-3 pm.

Dr. Jor'dan adjourns the meeting at 2:58 p.m.