



APPROVED 10.27.23

Minutes

Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Meeting

April 24, 2023

Submitted for: Action

Summary: Minutes of the April 24, 2023, Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity held at Illinois State University at the Bone Student Center.

Action Requested: ECACE approve the minutes of the April 24, 2023, Consortium meeting.



EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY

Consortium Meeting

Agenda
April 24, 2023
10:00 am

Illinois State University

A meeting of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity was called to order at 1:04pm in Brown Ballroom III at Illinois State University, Bone Student Center on April 24, 2023.

The following institutions and their representatives were present:

Institution	Voting Member	Institution	Voting Member
Black Hawk College	Amy Maxeiner	Malcom X College	Not present
Blackburn College	Cindy Rice	McHenry County College	Dawn Katz
Chicago State University	Lavada Taylor	Moraine Valley Community College	Pam Haney
College of DuPage	Jean Zaar	Morton College	Michael Rose
College of Lake County	Diane Schael	National Louis University	Leslie Layman (delegate)
Danville Area Community College	Penny McConnell	Northeastern Illinois University	Tom Phillion
DePaul University	Marie Donovan	Northern Illinois University	Laura Hedin (delegate)
Eastern Illinois University	Laretta Henderson	Oakton Community College	Marc Battista
Elgin Community College	Kristina Garcia (delegate)	Olive Harvey College	Mario Wright (delegate)
Governors State University	Megan Walsh (delegate)	Olivet Nazarene University	Lance Kilpatrick
Greenville University	Laura Schaub	Parkland College	Amy Kilgus Chamley (delegate)
Harold Washington College	Theresa Carlton	Prairie State College	Janice Kaushal
Harper College	Kathleen Nikolai	Rend Lake College	Kim Wilkerson
Heartland College	Johnna Darragh-Ernst	Richard Daley College	Patricia Aumann
Highland Community College	Melissa Johnson	Richland College	Jessica Pickel
Illinois Central College	Allison Schweickert (delegate)	Rock Valley College	Amanda Smith
Illinois Eastern Community College	Robert Conn	Rockford University	Kimberlee Wagner
Illinois State University	Linda Ruhe Marsh	Roosevelt University	Jin-ah Kim

Illinois Valley Community College	Tammy Landgraf	Sauk Valley Community College	Jon Mandrell
John A. Logan College	Melanie Pecord	South Suburban College	Anna Helwig
John Wood Community College	April Darringer	Southern Illinois University Carbondale	Christie McIntyre
Joliet Junior College	Rebecca Caldwell (delegate)	Southern Illinois University Edwardsville	Natasha Flowers
Judson University	Not present	Southwestern Illinois College	Carolyn Beal
Kankakee Community College	Paul Carlson	St. Augustine College	Curtis Webster (delegate)
Kaskaskia College	Margo Wagner (delegate)	Triton College	Susan Campos
Kennedy King College	Patricia Armstrong	Truman College	Kate Connor
Kishwaukee College	Judson Curry	University of Illinois Chicago	Kathryn Bouchard Chval
Lake Land College	Tanille Ulm	University of Illinois Urbana Champaign	Anne Pradzinski
Lewis & Clark Community College	Not Present	Waubonsee Community College	Sharon Garcia
Lewis University	Rebecca Pruitt	Western Illinois University	Lindsay Meeker (delegate)
Lincoln Land Community College	Kalith Smith		

Conveners: Others present include the following from the convening agencies:

Illinois Board of Higher Education: Ginger Ostro, Stephanie Bernoteit, Christi Chadwick, Allie Horan, Marsha Hawley, Toni Potenza, Eric Lichtenberger, Jose Garcia

Illinois Community College Board: Brian Durham, Marcus Brown, Amanda Lemanski, Mackenzie Montgomery, Nyssa Westermeyer, Matt Berry, Nathan Wilson

I. Welcome, Housekeeping, and Opening Remarks
Ginger Ostro opened the meeting and went over the guiding principles, introduced organizations that were present, and introduced Dr. Francis Godwyll, Dean of the ISU College of Education, who shared encouraging words about ECACE. Brian Durham welcomed everyone on behalf of the ICCB and thanked everyone for the effort that has been put into ECACE. Durham acknowledged the other agencies involved. Christi Chadwick shared the goals of the meeting and the agenda. Chadwick introduced Dr. Teresa Ramos, First Assistant Deputy Governor for Education, to speak about Smart Start Illinois
II. Smart Start and the Role for Higher Education
Ramos shared background information about herself. She spoke about a rally at the Capital where early childhood education was promoted. Ramos gave statistics on Smart Start Illinois, Governor Pritzker’s plan to make early childhood education accessible to 250 million children. Ramos explained that workforce compensation contracts will work on salary for providers and expanding pre-school in Illinois depends on this consortium. She shared a story about the importance of letting people know about the scholarship and encouraging others to apply for it. Ramos emphasized that institutions must be

aggressive in recruiting students who dropped out back into college and expanding services across the State while the funds are available. The Governor's Office is excited to see what this grant will bring for the future.

III. Afton Partners Needs Assessment

Chadwick introduced Kaitlyn McGovern and Megan Bock, both Directors from Afton Partners, to talk about the Consortium needs assessment results and recommendations. The needs assessment was used to evaluate the strengths and challenges to use for opportunities in the future. A series of focus groups were conducted where institutions responded as a team. Surveys and interviews were also utilized. The needs assessment found that institutions appreciated the collaboration ECACE has created between institutions. Incredible progress has been made in implementing positive changes. Some institutions are experiencing challenges. Institutions want more structured opportunities to connect and learn from each other. Afton discussed the way the grant has created growth and student support. Afton shared which topics institutions think they need more assistance from ICCB or IBHE and which methods the institutions think would be valuable. They also gave suggestions on how the Consortium staff can grow and help the institutions more.

Afton turned it over to Chadwick to introduce the next activity. Consortium members worked together at the tables to go over specific questions about needs assessment results to discuss thoughts in small groups. Table discussions included suggestions about recruiting more students, and ideas institutions use, such as requiring students to meet with them twice per semester as part of their grade. Chadwick introduced Marcus Brown to discuss the importance of institutional teams. Brown reviewed who institutions should contact if they have questions about the grant funds. Brown directed them to their financial team and gave examples of what they should be working on within their teams.

IV. Table Discussions

Lunch offered information and networking opportunities for attendees. Following lunch attendees were invited to select smaller groups for table discussions. Topic selection included Innovative Spending for Student Support, Scholarship, Transfer and General Education Alignment, Standardized Prior Learning, and Strong Navigator and Employer Relationships. Resources were provided for each group with questions to consider about each topic with notes taken and provided back to IBHE to aggregate and share out later.

V. Reporting and Table Discussions

Brown welcomed everyone back from lunch and talked about the overview of legislatively required reporting, with one report in May, one in October. Part of the framework are the quarterly reports, meetings and institutional check-ins, historical information, surveys, and data reported by institutional research offices to ICCB and IBHE. The approach to the first report was to share an overview of ECACE work from July 2021 through December 2022. Once complete, the report will highlight successes, note any significant barriers or challenges, and set the tone for future reports.

Next, Eric Lichtenberger spoke on bridging the necessary information together. Lichtenberger explained that since higher education agencies did not currently have a system for verifying who is an incumbent member of the early childhood workforce, that led to using the Gateways Registry to obtain incumbency status since a process had already been established for verifying ECACE scholarship eligibility. This became part of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) and uses the Centralized Demographic Dataset Administrator (CDDA), which is housed at NIU Education Systems Center and is supported by all state agencies participating in the ILDS. This system facilitates matching across disparate datasets, creating a single ID that could be used for research across all agencies and eliminates the need to share additional personal information. It also supports longitudinal research and data analysis.

Lichtenberger explained that persistence was found to be more student-centric and necessary to account for the unique nature of students enrolled in early childhood. Non-linear and completion patterns are becoming more common and traditional measures have not kept up and tend to focus on first-time, full time undergraduate students.

The next steps include finalizing the first report, which will be released in May. Next steps also include figuring out how to automate the ingestion of the new information and automatically generating reports for sustainability. Producing information regionally, thinking of ways to provide value to ECACE member institutions, and deciding how to define persistence. The next required report highlighting fall 2022-23 will be available in the late summer/early fall.

Next, Chadwick talked about academic and holistic supports. She explained how mentors/coaches are intentionally and intensively supporting students to persist through regular outreach, monitoring academic progress, and stepping in when students are struggling with responsive support. Mentors/Coaches work with students when and where they need it, support students from the first warm welcome through to completion, and develop relationships inside and outside the institution. Institutions are saying that mentors are making all the difference. Other supports institutions are providing include writing tutors, study groups, content test preparation and financial support for tests, childcare, materials and supplies, academic success plans, bilingual coaches, as well as instilling confidence. Challenges to providing academic and holistic supports have included finding qualified mentors, mentor availability when needed for students, students unable to take advantage of the supports, lack of time to form relationships with navigators, and students dropping/failing classes.

Chadwick turned the discussion to programmatic changes, including access and modality. Some exciting models included classes provided in multiple modalities, formations of cohorts, various term lengths, and student teaching at workplaces. Challenges in this area included heavy course loads, students struggling with different modalities and term lengths, limited opportunities to engage with faculty and peers, and course availability. Chadwick turned the meeting over to Brown.

Brown spoke about ILCCO Course Sharing modifications to add ECACE course markers. 79 ECACE program courses from 14 colleges are now available. ECACE course sharing began with the Spring 2023 semester.

Table Discussions were opened, asking delegates to discuss what they are seeing in terms of persistence at their institutions, what has helped ensure student success, and what challenges they are experiencing. Consortium members brought up the challenge of providing support without doing it, like time management, using embedded academic success coaches, and every other week coaching seems to be working best.

After table discussions, Brown addressed outreach and participation efforts. Strategies employed by institutions included recruitment fairs/open houses, sessions with childcare centers, presentations, and booths at conferences, partnering with local community organizations, and partnerships between 2-year and 4-year institutions and with navigators. Additional outreach from institutions included social media campaigns, videos, newspaper articles, bulletin boards, websites, email blasts, and direct mail. Outreach from agencies was also provided in these forms, as well as technical assistance provided by navigators. Engagement and responsiveness to employer needs by institutions included allowing students to complete student teaching in their workplace, providing employer information on ECE boards, cohort programs at the workplace, direct outreach, and partnering with school districts and childcare centers for direct job placement.

Brown discussed the CDA, and how all institutions reported having a plan in place to award credit for the CDA. All universities have programs that support the AAS transfer. Institutions are adhering to the “transfer cap” and some institutions have adjusted program content and approach. Brown turned the meeting over to Stephanie Bernoteit.

Bernoteit recapped what was talked about during the entire meeting. She reflected that Smart Start and ECACE are intertwined and talked about feedback from Afton partners. Bernoteit ended by opening discussion about the reports gathered by the Consortium members.

VI. Minutes: Review and Approve

Brown asked for minutes to be approved. Paul Carlson from Kankakee Community College made a motion to approve, and Dawn Katz from McHenry County College seconded the motion. All Consortium members present approved the minutes as submitted.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Next Steps and Adjourn

Brown concluded the meeting by reminding everyone of the date and time of the next meetings. Advisory Committee Meeting is May 23, 2023, from 1-3 pm and in-person Consortium October 27, 2023, from 10-3 pm. Based on feedback in October, time was increased for engagement at today’s meeting. Brown asked members to complete the exit survey.