



Advisory Committee
November 3, 2023

Meeting Minutes

WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING

ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham, and ECACE Advisory co-chair, welcomed attendees. Dr. Durham checked for quorum to vote on two sets of meeting minutes from May 2023 and August 2023.

AGENDA ITEM #2 OPEN MEETINGS ACT AND QUORUM CHECK TO APPROVE MINUTES

IBHE's Executive Director Ginger Ostro, and ECACE Advisory co-chair, reviewed OMA, Housekeeping and Ground rules.

Dr. Durham provided an overview of the meeting's agenda. Dr. Durham introduced new ICCB employee, Senior Director for Early Childhood Education and Teacher Education Pathways Dr. Adrienne Pickett, a former preschool teacher, childcare coordinator, university lecturer, and higher education administrator.

ICCB's Nyssa Westermeyer confirmed we did not yet have a quorum. Dr. Durham moved on with the agenda.

AGENDA ITEM #3 STATE-LEVEL WORK: IDHS APPRENTICESHIPS LORI HARRISON, IDHS AND KAREN YARBOROUGH, UIC AND ISBE'S SMART START UPDATE CARISA HURLEY-DAVIS

IDHS's Associate Director for Childcare Trish Rooney introduced speakers Lori Harrison of IDHS's Division of Early Childhood and Karen Yarborough of UIC's College of Education to speak on IDHS's Apprenticeship Pilot Program. Included on the team is INCCRRA, City Colleges of Chicago, and participating employer program sites Carole Robertson, Heartland, Skip-A-Long, and It Takes a Village. The purpose of the Pilot is to combine scholarship investments (ECACE, Gateways, and Chicago Early Learning Scholarships) and learn about innovative ways to address compensation, including Strengthen and Grow Child Care (SGCC) and Quality Improvement Pilot site contracts tied to Gateways Credentials. Five Key Components define the Registered Apprenticeships Pilot: Employer Involvement; Financial Rewards for Credentials and Degrees; Classroom-based Instruction; Structured On-the-Job Learning; and Industry Recognized Credentials, Degrees, and Licenses.

Question:

Dr. Durham acknowledged an audience member's question.

Jim Reed, ICCTA Trustee: How are Community Colleges included in the development of the Illinois Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program?

Karen Yarborough: Institutions of Higher Education across the state offer the coursework leading to the Gateways to Opportunity credential. This project pilots three 2-year schools and three 4-year schools working with specific early childhood providers and employers to help prepare apprentices for admission to ECE programs, provide information about existing scholarships, holistic academic advising and student support via mentors.

Program funds can be used to enable the implementation of the wage scale based on the credential and degree earned by not only apprentices but also onsite staff. Supplies and other supports will be provided to apprentices and mentors, and the salary scale will be implemented, based on Center for Early Learning Funding Equity estimates.

To date, the Pilot has met several goals, including the registration of three sets of apprenticeship standards with the U.S. Department of Labor, Gateways ECE Levels 2, 4, and 5, recruited approximately 35 apprentices, and developed a credit-bearing course for site-based mentors. Next steps include starting Communities of Practice for Program Leaders, Higher Education Partners, and Mentorship/Coaching Course for Site-based Mentors.

ISBE's Jason Helfer introduced the Smart Start video Carisa Hurley Davis created to give an implementation update. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, no sound could be detected for the video. Dr. Helfer then discussed the implementation of Smart Start Illinois and the focus on equity in Early Childhood Education and Care. The Governor committed to expanding the number of seats in early childhood deserts by 5000 pupils and the program has exceeded that goal. ISBE has fine-tuned their definition of what constitutes an early childhood desert by identifying geographic areas with at least 80% of families living at or below the 200 percent federal poverty level. Continued funding for Smart Start will aim at sustaining and expanding slots in preschool deserts, increasing ECEC wages, and investing in service delivery.

AGENDA ITEM #4 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY WORK: COLLEGE OF LAKE COUNTY SPANISH-LANGUAGE PROGRAM AND ECACE MENTORS

Dr. Pickett introduced the College- and University-level work with ECACE. The first presentation was College of Lake County's Spanish Language Program. Dr. Diane Schael and Dean Stephanie Santos Gray have established a Bilingual program, which began in January 2023 with 26 students accepted and enrolled, though 75 students applied. They created a robust student support system, including partnerships with community organizations serving the Latinx community, hiring bi-lingual coordinators, and building an ECEC learning lab. All materials and instruction are delivered in Spanish. CLC is a Hispanic-Serving Institution, with 39% Hispanic ECE students. The need for English Language Learning and Bilingual Education is expected to increase, given the demographic shift in Lake County. The program has strong retention (one student left the program), which is the highest of all CLC programs. CLC is hiring additional instructors to fill the needs of the 25 enrolled students, who will be Gateways Level II Credential certified by the end of Fall 2023 semester.

Ginger Ostro (Co-chair) Question: Regarding the limit of enrollees, is this due to overall capacity or the limited number of faculty?

Dr. Schael: The Bilingual program is supported by philanthropic partners paying for tuition, fees, and salaries for hired faculty, so the number of enrollees remains smaller to ensure all student costs and faculty salary can be covered.

Dr. Durham introduced the panel discussion on Mentorship. Laurie Marmorstone from Harper, Rebecca Hitpas from Kaskaskia, Micheala, a student from Kaskaskia, Kira from IVCC, and Melissa from ISU. Dr. Durham selected questions for panel members:

Who is the ECACE mentor and what is their role at the institution? Rebecca is an ECACE-hired mentor, who conducts outreach to local ECEC centers and recruits and advises incoming students, providing holistic supports for ECACE students, many of whom are adult learners returning to college.

What services and supports do mentors provide with ECACE support? Kira is an ECACE-hired mentor who, alongside her program coordinator Tammy has created pathways for CDA, PLA, and the Associates, and created a resource center for students to study and collaborate in. She is a one-stop shop, who has learned the institutional resources to assist adult learners with getting connected to academic and support services.

What has been the benefit of having the ECACE mentor role at institutions? Melissa is a mentor who is a recruiter, academic advisor, and student-teaching support services lead, and a career coach. ISU had to build systems of support to meet adult student needs. ISU also created funds to support students

academically, socially, and personally. ISU also needed to support students during the process of qualifying for licensure.

What prompted you to create the ECACE Mentor Community of Practice? Lauri is an ECACE hire for Harper. Many ECACE mentors were new to the position and built a support network across the state to share best practices and provide one another holistic support. They are 40+ members from 2-year and 4-year institutions that come together, share ideas, and clarify requirements for the grant.

What has your experience been with an ECACE mentor? Micheala is a second-year student at Kaskaskia. Mentors are like cheerleaders and coaches. Her mentor, Rebecca, has been the person to provide accountability. Micheala is grateful for the mentor support she receives. The key support mentors provide is working with students to support them as they complete academic work, even if they need an extension to complete coursework.

What are the crucial pieces that contribute to the ECACE mentor program's success? Melissa notes mentors can support students through filling out financial aid applications, content test study preparation, digital literacy, prepping faculty to teach courses online, student teaching/clinicals to assist students with finding placement and connecting students to institutional services. The first graduating class of ECACE students numbers close to 70 students. Kira notes the relational part of her job and the need to be knowledgeable of institutional resources as well as the learning management systems affiliated with ECACE courses. She makes herself available around the clock to her students.

Dr. Jill Andrews (SIECAT), question: Are the mentors members of the field?

Yes, mentors have a background in Education.

Dr. Durham reminded participants that if anyone wants to do Public Comment, they need to say so in the chat.

AGENDA ITEM #5 AGENCY UPDATES

IBHE's Christi Chadwick, ECACE Director, reports the growth in scholarship adoption. The ECACE Scholarship covers tuition and fees, and up to the full cost of attendance. In AY 2021-22, \$5.7M was awarded to 412 students. In AY 2022-23, \$29.6M was awarded to over 2100 students. In AY 2023-24, the scholarship eligibility was expanded to serve students with a bachelor's degree who needed an additional credential or degree. Applications and awards are growing. As of August 2023, there was over 4,300, up from more than 3,600 from AY 2022-23. As of October, 4800 applications were received, with 3800 students pre-qualifying for the scholarship. \$20M has been paid in scholarships so far this fall, even as institutions are still requesting payment (October 2023).

Dr. Durham welcomed State Agencies to make announcements. None provided any.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MEETING MINUTES

The meeting still did not have Quorum by the end of the meeting, so we may revisit how we approve minutes as a body.

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| 1. Alicia Geddis, Absent | 9. Francis Godwyll, Present |
| 2. Ashley Harms, Present | 10. Ginger Ostro, Present |
| 3. Avis Proctor, Present | 11. Jennifer Buchter, Absent |
| 4. Brian Durham, Present | 12. Jill Andrews, Present |
| 5. Carolyn Beal, Present | 13. Jim Reed, Present |
| 6. Dale Fowler, Absent | 14. Joi Patterson, Absent |
| 7. Emnet Ward, Absent | 15. Joni Scritchlow, Absent |
| 8. Evelyn Osorio, Present | 16. Karen Yarbrough, Present |

17. Kate Connor, Absent
18. Ken Trzaska, Absent
19. Kimberly Mann, Absent
20. Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Absent
21. Laurie Elish-Piper, Present
22. Leslie Mckinily, Absent
23. Lisa Downey, Present
24. Martina Rocha, Absent
25. Maurice West II, Absent
26. Meredith Palmer, Present
27. Michael Kim, Present

28. Michael Marron, Absent
29. Mike Shackelford, Absent
30. Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, Absent
31. Rochelle Golliday, Present
32. Stephanie Neuman, Present
33. Stephanie Schmitz-Bechtler, Absent
34. Susan Orozco, Absent
35. Tom Phillion, Absent
36. Jason Helfer, Present
37. Trish Rooney, Present

PUBLIC COMMENT

IBHE's Jennifer Hernandez, Assistant Project Director for ECACE, announced Public Comments opening. Government Relations Director from Advance Illinois gave a comment, applauding ECACE work, recognizing the Smart Start investment, and the state's investment in access to Higher Ed and the Recruitment and Retention efforts of underserved adult student learners.

Dr. Durham opened the discussion to Advisory Committee members to offer any comments. There were none.

Start Early entered a comment. IBHE and consortium members must work together to maintain support for the Early Childhood Educator Workforce.

NEXT STEPS

Dr. Pickett announced the next meeting would be held in mid-late March 2024.

Dr. Durham adjourned the meeting with 20 minutes remaining.