



GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY

Illinois Professional Development System

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC)

What is PDAC?

The Professional Development Advisory Council (PDAC) is made up of highly qualified practitioners, educators, and advocates around the state whose strategy is to improve the quality and stability of the early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support workforce through increased professional development and improved opportunities for career advancement.

When was PDAC formed?

PDAC was created in December 2002 by the Bureau of Child Care and Development in the Illinois Department of Human Services. The professional development system, through the Gateways to Opportunity website, was introduced statewide in March 2005. The current PDAC mission is “to develop, support, and promote a professional development system for all early care and education, school-age, youth development, and family support practitioners” (mission statement included in *PDAC’s Strategic Plan Phase VII 2015–2018*). The mission of PDAC has been modified between 2002 and the present.

Has the scope of PDAC always included school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners?

In 2006, PDAC expanded beyond professional development for early care and education practitioners to include those who serve children from birth to 21. The PDAC mission was expanded to include school-age and youth development practitioners and family support practitioners in June 2009.

How is PDAC structured?

PDAC is structured around six goal areas. Each goal area has the support of a committee structure and a set of strategic objectives that identify and outline work to be accomplished. Following is a list of the five PDAC Committees, their goals and current co-chairs. Specific committee objectives for each goal can be found in the *Strategic Plan Phase VII 2015–2018*.

Financial Supports Committee

Goals:

- *Build consensus across the state about equitable compensation, benefits and workplace conditions.*
- *Broaden parameters for the Gateways Scholarship Program.*
- *Analyze current financial supports for efficiency and effectiveness in alignment to state partner agencies priorities.*

Co-chair: Deborah Rogers-Jaye, Adjunct Faculty, University of Illinois at Chicago, e-mail: djaye222@gmail.com.
Laurie Rhodes, Director, LLCC Child Development Center, e-mail: Laura.Rhodes@llcc.edu.

Information and Trends

Goals:

- *Identify key research questions related to Gateways to Opportunity Illinois Professional Development System.*
- *Establish and implement a framework for disseminating information.*
- *Synthesize available information, trends, research and policy around issues critical to professional development and professional development systems.*
- *Explore innovative professional development practices in other states.*

Co-chairs: Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Executive Director, Illinois Head Start Association, e-mail: lfrichtl@ilheadstart.org.
Dawn Thomas, Associate Director, Early Childhood & Parenting Collaborative, e-mail: dthomas3@illinois.edu

Qualifications and Credentials

Goals

- *Pilot, review, develop and implement Gateways to Opportunity Credentials.*
- *Improve access and incentivizing of Gateways to Opportunity Credentials.*
- *Determine if current coursework and training is sufficient to meet the needs of practitioners to achieve Gateways to Opportunity Credentials.*

Co-chairs: Teri Talan, Director of Policy Initiatives & Professor, McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, e-mail: teri.talan@nl.edu.

Diana Rosenbrock, Professional Development Coordinator, Collaboration for Early Childhood, e-mail: drosenbrock@collab4kids.org.

Workforce Development and Pathways

Goals

- *Develop a more comprehensive career lattice that clearly articulates varied pathways in the system.*
- *Analyze stackability of credentials, and how they are offered and utilized, with the goal of providing multiple pathways.*
- *Explore how levers and supports, including scholarships and Great START, can be used to strengthen credentials.*
- *Create continuity between DCFS and credentials.*
- *Explore responsive practices for direct and entitled routes and supporting credential attainment.*
- *Support state efforts for meaningful articulation between 2- and 4- year institutions.*

Co-chairs: Cerathel Burnett, Executive Director, Carol Robertson Center for Learning, e-mail: burnettc@crcl.net,
Johnna Darragh- Ernst, Professor, Heartland Community College, e-mail: johnna.darragh@heartland.edu

PDAC Governance

Goals

- *Create and implement a leadership development plan.*
- *Maintain well-defined processes and protocols to support PDAC.*

Co-chairs: Deb Widenhofer, Director of Learning Institute, Baby TALK, Inc., e-mail: deb@babytalk.org
Marsha Hawley, Director, Lead Learn Excel, Ounce of Prevention Fund, e-mail: MHawley@ounceofprevention.org.

PDAC Steering

Goals

- *Build effective relationships with state agencies, advocates, and key stakeholders to support professional development in Illinois.*
- *Set the strategic direction of PDAC.*
- *Maintain a diverse, fully cross-sector PDAC membership.*

Co-Chairs: Deb Widenhofer, Director of Learning Institute, Baby TALK, Inc., e-mail: deb@babytalk.org.

Marsha Hawley, Director, Lead Learn Excel, Ounce of Prevention Fund, e-mail: MHawley@ounceofprevention.org.

When does PDAC meet?

PDAC holds five statewide meetings a year: September, November, February, April, and June. One meeting each year is an annual meeting, which serves to update all those who are stakeholders in PDAC but may not be able to attend other yearly meetings. The PDAC standing committees listed above schedule additional meetings as required by their committee's goals and objectives.



1226 Towanda Plaza | Bloomington, Illinois 61701 | Telephone: (888) 548-8080 | www.ilgateways.com

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