

Early Childhood Education
Spring 2022 Advisory Committee

Meeting Date: March 31, 2022

Time: 9:01-10:16am

External Participants: 5

Tina Holtz – Family & Consumer Sciences – DeKalb High School

Kim Lamz – CCR&R Acting Director – 4-C: Community Coordinated Child Care

Samantha McDavid – Family & Community Engagement Team Lead - DeKalb County
Regional Office of Education

Jami Nguyen – Executive Director - Land of Learning Child Care

Kristin Schulz – Interim Director of Campus Child Care – NIU

Internal Participants: 6

Jud Curry – Dean, ACSS

Terry Lyn Funston – Director of Curriculum & Program Development

Anna Harvey – ADJ Instructor, ECE

Kim Jordal – Administrative Specialist II

Jessica Santillan-Reyes – Associate Dean, ACSS

Maria (Lombard) Trotter – Director, Early Learning Center

I. Program Update

- College and program enrollment and historical financial data shared
- Discussion of need for continued flexibility in course offerings due to student employment
- College's participation in the new Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity (ECACE) will bring increased attention and enrollment to ECE statewide
- Presented need for additional ECE adjunct faculty.

II. Curriculum & Instruction Updates

Competency Based Education (CBE) update:

- Competency-Based Education revision of ECE is temporarily on hold due to Early Childhood Education Consortium and Equity (ECACE) curricular work for statewide transferability.
- ECACE will help facilitate statewide focus on Gateways' competencies as core curricular components. It is intended to increase education and credentialing of incumbent workers, to expand ECCE workforce, and to bridge 2-year and 4-year ECE programs/degrees through curricular alignment
- Scholarship and workforce development tasked with higher education navigators to work across counties with staff and help navigate and get started on program applications, scholarships, and pathways which are best for them then pass off to point person from there.
- Kish (and other ECACE participating colleges) has received grant funding to facilitate education of incumbent workforce, to expand course offerings through Illinois Community Colleges Online (ILCCO), and to provide Coach/Mentor position for ECE student support.

- ECACE scholarship funding supports 1st- and 2nd-year students in community colleges, and 3rd- and 4th-year students at 4-year institutions
- Regional Office of Education is leading a community-based planning process focusing on helping DeKalb County.
- The demand for childcare and early childhood education is high, but shortage of qualified teachers leaves centers with decreased hours or classroom space.
- 4-C, NIU and Kishwaukee College have been instrumental in these discussions.

What is the need for Associate of Applied Science in Early Childhood Education?

- For the last few years, the college has not offered an AAS in ECE due to very low student interest and enrollment. The college continued to offer the Level 2 and Level 3 Gateways certifications. Is there employer demand for students with AAS degree?
- All Advisory Committee members affirmed need for AAS (Gateways Level 4)-prepared students as future teachers.

III. Industry Update & Labor Market Discussion

- *What are the future employment opportunities for graduates?*
- *What are your current or projected employment needs of your organization over the next 2-3 years?*
- *What challenges is your industry and organization facing?*
- *Are there any opportunities for current students to engage in work-based learning?*
- *How can we prepare students more effectively for clinical training?*

Advisory discussion addressed the following topics:

- High level of need for AAS-prepared graduates to fill teaching positions
- Employers previously hired many Kish AAS graduates
- Strategies for reaching potential ECE students, if the AAS is offered again: community outreach and build community connections, Spanish-language materials, outreach to DHS high school students
- HS student interest in ECE is present, but parents do not see clear degree path or viable future earnings—need to provide clear degree path through AAS to BA, scholarships, outreach
- Overarching issue of better compensation for early childhood workers is a universal issue—limits ability of employers to hire and retain and limits ability of college to recruit students for ECE
- State and federal support is needed to increase early childhood worker compensation and for investment into early childhood education

It is clear that from this group AAS important to reboot and a clearly defined pathway. How do we get In front of potential students knowing payoff at end of road not what parents, students looking for?

- Tina Holtz is looking to bring back interview piece for portfolio. Need interviewers for 7 students about 10 minutes a piece, if interested reach out to her at tina.holtz@d428.org