



Sen. Cristina H. Pacione-Zayas

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1 AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 2878

2 AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_. Amend House Bill 2878 by replacing  
3 everything after the enacting clause with the following:

4 "Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Early  
5 Childhood Access Consortium for Equity Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly makes all of the  
7 following findings:

8 (1) This State faces a shortage of qualified early  
9 childhood educators, with high vacancy rates in child care  
10 centers, community-based early childhood programs, and  
11 school-based classrooms across this State. Like roads and  
12 bridges, early education and child care is an essential  
13 part of our infrastructure that enables families to work  
14 in all other industries. Beyond addressing the current  
15 need, growing federal and State commitments to expanding  
16 early childhood services, including the recommendations

1 put forth in the Governor's Illinois Commission on  
2 Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding  
3 report in March 2021, suggest that this State must be  
4 prepared to meet the growing demand for a qualified  
5 workforce to deliver these services in the coming years.

6 (2) To meet this growing demand and support this  
7 critical infrastructure, the Illinois higher education  
8 system must support our incumbent early childhood  
9 workforce through credential and degree attainment. The  
10 workforce is overwhelmingly made up of women and women of  
11 color, and many are balancing full-time employment, family  
12 needs, and other responsibilities. Often, traditional  
13 bachelor's degree programs are not accessible to  
14 place-bound, full-time working parents.

15 (3) In this State, there is a history of partnership  
16 among early childhood providers, stakeholders, and higher  
17 education to identify workforce needs and strategies to  
18 help promote access to higher education and degree  
19 completion among the workforce. Illinois institutions of  
20 higher education have taken steps to demonstrate a  
21 commitment to the early childhood field, as well as  
22 underserved student populations. Hybrid program models,  
23 cohort program models, and scholarships and financial  
24 incentives for students help to promote access to many  
25 early childhood degree programs in this State.

26 (4) Over the past 2 decades, this State has attempted

1 numerous strategies to develop and support partnerships  
2 among institutions of higher education that are focused on  
3 this State's early childhood workforce. Through these  
4 broader initiatives, as well as many individual local  
5 partnerships, community colleges and public and private  
6 universities have worked to implement articulation  
7 agreements, credit transfer agreements, and program  
8 delivery models, although not all partnerships have been  
9 maintained. Such initiatives include all of the following:

10 (A) In 2004, this State developed the Associate of  
11 Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree model to promote  
12 articulation among 2-year and 4-year institutions of  
13 higher education. However, with the challenges in  
14 credit transfer contributing to the limited viability  
15 and success of the degree model, the Illinois  
16 Community College Board stopped approving the AAT  
17 degree model and has worked across the higher  
18 education system to discontinue these programs.

19 (B) In 2013, this State dedicated federal Race to  
20 the Top funds to create the Early Childhood Educator  
21 Preparation Program Innovation (EPPI) Grant program.  
22 Among other goals, the EPPI Grant program aimed to  
23 foster the creation or further development of  
24 partnerships between 2-year and 4-year preparation  
25 programs at institutions of higher education, promote  
26 articulation and alignment of the curriculum between

1           2-year and 4-year programs, and support early  
2 childhood educator preparation programs in designing a  
3 curriculum to incorporate new State standards and  
4 program requirements. While the EPPI Grant program led  
5 to some effective partnerships that still remain  
6 intact today, program evaluations found varying levels  
7 of partnership and that, in many cases, successful  
8 agreements were contingent upon individual  
9 relationships or individual leaders within  
10 institutions.

11           (C) Through the Illinois Articulation Initiative  
12 (IAI), there are 3 early childhood courses approved  
13 for articulation among participating institutions.  
14 More than 100 Illinois colleges and universities  
15 participate in the IAI, though challenges with  
16 inconsistent participation and recognition do exist.

17           (D) Most recently, the creation of  
18 competency-based education components for early  
19 childhood education will help ensure that higher  
20 education and credential programs are designed to  
21 prepare early childhood educators to demonstrate the  
22 same critical core competencies. The emphasis on core  
23 competencies could improve educator preparedness and  
24 could ease credit transfer and articulation processes  
25 moving forward.

26           These programs and partnerships continue to benefit

1 many early childhood education students across this State,  
2 but, overall, these efforts have not produced adequate  
3 early childhood degrees to meet the demands in the field.  
4 These types of initiatives are highly contingent upon  
5 relationships and partnerships between specific  
6 institutions and are often impacted if an institution  
7 experiences turnover or program changes. Furthermore,  
8 these partnerships often do not address the geographic,  
9 structural, and economic barriers the incumbent workforce  
10 often faces in accessing bachelor's degree programs while  
11 working full-time in the field. These ongoing challenges  
12 are not new and have been noted in the development of these  
13 previous efforts.

14 (5) As noted in the provisions of Public Act 101-654,  
15 the General Assembly recognizes the critical role of the  
16 early childhood workforce and, in response to challenges,  
17 including staffing shortages and barriers to higher  
18 education, calls upon the Board of Higher Education to  
19 better meet the needs of the early childhood workforce.

20 (6) The General Assembly encourages this State to  
21 consider dedicating federal funds for pandemic relief and  
22 economic recovery efforts to ensure a successful launch of  
23 the Consortium and the opportunities it creates to meet  
24 the needs of the early childhood incumbent workforce,  
25 including student financial support. This State, the  
26 incumbent workforce, and the children in care will benefit

1 as workers enroll, persist, and complete credential and  
2 degree programs.

3 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

4 "Community college" means a public community college that  
5 is included in the definition of "Community Colleges" under  
6 Section 1-2 of the Public Community College Act.

7 "Consortium" means the Early Childhood Access Consortium  
8 for Equity.

9 "Credit for prior learning" means the evaluation and  
10 assessment of a student's life learning through employment,  
11 training, and experiences outside an academic environment from  
12 which skills that comprise terminal objectives are mastered to  
13 an acceptable degree of proficiency for college credit,  
14 certification, or advanced standing toward further education  
15 or training.

16 "Home institution" means the community college or  
17 university at which the student has been admitted.

18 "Incumbent workforce" means an individual or a group of  
19 individuals working or having worked in the early childhood  
20 industry, including family child care and center-based care  
21 settings, Preschool for All school-based settings, and Head  
22 Start, that serves children from birth to age 5 and includes  
23 teachers, assistant teachers, directors, family child care  
24 providers, and assistants.

25 "Member institutions" means the institutions of higher

1 education participating in the Consortium.

2 "Public university" means the University of Illinois,  
3 Southern Illinois University, Chicago State University,  
4 Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University,  
5 Illinois State University, Northeastern Illinois University,  
6 Northern Illinois University, Western Illinois University, or  
7 any other public university or college, other than a community  
8 college, now or hereafter established or authorized by the  
9 General Assembly.

10 Section 15. Creation of Consortium; purpose;  
11 administrative support.

12 (a) The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois  
13 Community College Board shall create and establish the Early  
14 Childhood Access Consortium for Equity.

15 (b) The purpose of the Consortium is to serve the needs of  
16 the incumbent early childhood workforce and the employers of  
17 early childhood educators and to advance racial equity while  
18 meeting the needs of employers by streamlining, coordinating,  
19 and improving the accessibility of degree completion pathways  
20 for upskilling and the sustained expansion of educational  
21 pipelines at Illinois institutions of higher education.

22 (c) The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois  
23 Community College Board shall convene the member institutions  
24 by July 1, 2021 or within 60 days after the effective date of  
25 this amendatory Act of the 102nd General Assembly. The Board

1 of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board  
2 shall provide administrative support for the start up and  
3 operation of the Consortium until a permanent governance  
4 structure is developed and implemented. The Board of Higher  
5 Education and the Illinois Community College Board shall work  
6 with member institutions to establish geographic regional  
7 hubs, including public universities and the proximate  
8 community colleges responsible for serving each regional hub.

9 Section 20. Membership; functions.

10 (a) Membership in the Consortium shall include all public  
11 universities and community colleges in this State that offer  
12 early childhood programs. Membership by private,  
13 not-for-profit universities is optional and conditional on the  
14 acceptance of the terms adopted by the public members, the  
15 related administrative rules, and the provisions of this Act.  
16 For-profit institutions of higher education are not eligible  
17 for membership in the Consortium. Participating institutions  
18 must be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and  
19 entitled to offer Gateways Credentials.

20 (b) The members of the Consortium shall operate jointly  
21 and in cooperation through regional hubs to provide  
22 streamlined paths for students to attain associate degrees,  
23 bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, certificates, and  
24 Gateways Credentials and other licensure endorsements in early  
25 childhood education. The priority shall be to focus on the



1 incumbent workforce, which includes working adults who require  
2 programs of study that offer flexibility in the times courses  
3 are offered, location, and format. The Consortium shall  
4 cooperate in all of the following:

5 (1) Providing course offerings within each regional  
6 hub in online, hybrid, and in-person formats that are  
7 available to any student enrolled in a member institution  
8 in that hub for occasions in which a particular course is  
9 not available at the student's home institution. In this  
10 paragraph (1), "not available" may mean the course is not  
11 offered during a term, at a time, or in a format that works  
12 best for the student. Courses taken at any member  
13 institution shall be accepted toward the student's degree  
14 at any other member institution. Course offerings across  
15 regional hubs may also be provided by an agreement between  
16 Consortium members. All course registration shall take  
17 place in consultation with a student's academic advisor.

18 (2) Shared responsibilities through the Consortium and  
19 within and across regional hubs to expand access for  
20 students.

21 (3) Transfers in accordance with Section 130-10 of the  
22 Transitions in Education Act.

23 (4) The development of standardized methods for  
24 awarding credit for prior learning.

25 (5) The support necessary for student access,  
26 persistence, and completion shall be provided by the home

1 institution, unless otherwise provided by agreement  
2 between Consortium members.

3 (6) Admissions, financial arrangements, registration,  
4 and advising services shall be functions of the home  
5 institution but shall be honored across the Consortium.

6 (7) Member institutions working with their regional  
7 pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and early childhood  
8 employer partners to determine demand throughout the  
9 region.

10 (8) Data-sharing agreements.

11 (9) An agreement that students enrolled in associate  
12 degree programs are encouraged to complete the associate  
13 degree program prior to transferring to a bachelor's  
14 degree program.

15 (10) Development of other shared agreements and terms  
16 necessary to implement the Consortium and its  
17 responsibilities.

18 By January 31, 2022, the Consortium shall decide how to  
19 assign college credit for the incumbent workers who have a  
20 Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and for future  
21 workers obtaining a CDA.

22 (c) The Consortium may facilitate or implement the  
23 following if deemed beneficial and feasible:

24 (1) the creation of an open education resource  
25 library;

26 (2) support and training for program coaches and

1 cross-institutional navigators; and

2 (3) support for the development, implementation, and  
3 participation in a statewide registry system through the  
4 Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral  
5 Agencies (INCCRRA) to provide tracking and data  
6 capabilities for students across the system as they attain  
7 competency through coursework.

8 Section 25. Advisory committee; membership.

9 (a) The Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community  
10 College Board, the State Board of Education, the Department of  
11 Human Services, and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood  
12 Development shall jointly convene a Consortium advisory  
13 committee to provide guidance on the operation of the  
14 Consortium.

15 (b) Membership on the advisory committee shall be  
16 comprised of employers and experts appointed by the Board of  
17 Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the  
18 Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, and the  
19 State Board of Education. Membership shall also include all of  
20 the following members:

21 (1) An employer from a community-based child care  
22 provider, appointed by the Governor's Office of Early  
23 Childhood Development.

24 (2) An employer from a for-profit child care provider,  
25 appointed by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood

1 Development.

2 (3) An employer from a nonprofit child care provider,  
3 appointed by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood  
4 Development.

5 (4) A provider of family child care, appointed by the  
6 Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

7 (5) An employer located in southern Illinois,  
8 appointed by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood  
9 Development.

10 (6) An employer located in central Illinois, appointed  
11 by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

12 (7) At least one member who represents an urban school  
13 district, appointed by the State Board of Education.

14 (8) At least one member who represents a suburban  
15 school district, appointed by the State Board of  
16 Education.

17 (9) At least one member who represents a rural school  
18 district, appointed by the State Board of Education.

19 (10) At least one member who represents a school  
20 district in a city with a population of 500,000 or more,  
21 appointed by the State Board of Education.

22 (11) Two early childhood advocates with statewide  
23 expertise in early childhood workforce issues, appointed  
24 by the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

25 (12) The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and the  
26 Minority Spokesperson or a designee of the Senate

1 Committee on Higher Education.

2 (13) The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson and the  
3 Minority Spokesperson or a designee of the House Committee  
4 on Higher Education.

5 (14) One member representing the Illinois Community  
6 College Board, who shall serve as co-chairperson,  
7 appointed by the Illinois Community College Board.

8 (15) One member representing the Board of Higher  
9 Education, who shall serve as co-chairperson, appointed by  
10 the Board of Higher Education.

11 (16) One member representing the Illinois Student  
12 Assistance Commission, appointed by the Board of Higher  
13 Education.

14 (17) One member representing the State Board of  
15 Education, who shall serve as co-chairperson, appointed by  
16 the State Board of Education.

17 (18) One member representing the Governor's Office of  
18 Early Childhood Development, who shall serve as  
19 co-chairperson, appointed by the Governor's Office of  
20 Early Childhood Development.

21 (19) One member representing the Department of Human  
22 Services, who shall serve as co-chairperson, appointed by  
23 the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

24 (20) One member representing INCCRRA, appointed by the  
25 Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development.

26 (21) One member representing the Department of

1 Children and Family Services, appointed by the Governor's  
2 Office of Early Childhood Development.

3 (22) One member of a union representing child care and  
4 early childhood providers, appointed by the Governor's  
5 Office of Early Childhood Development.

6 (23) Two members of unions representing higher  
7 education faculty, appointed by the Board of Higher  
8 Education.

9 (24) A representative from the College of Education of  
10 an urban public university, appointed by the Board of  
11 Higher Education.

12 (25) A representative from the College of Education of  
13 a suburban public university, appointed by the Board of  
14 Higher Education.

15 (26) A representative from the College of Education of  
16 a rural public university, appointed by the Board of  
17 Higher Education.

18 (27) A representative from the College of Education of  
19 a private university, appointed by the Board of Higher  
20 Education.

21 (28) A representative of an urban community college,  
22 appointed by the Illinois Community College Board.

23 (29) A representative of a suburban community college,  
24 appointed by the Illinois Community College Board.

25 (30) A representative of rural community college,  
26 appointed by the Illinois Community College Board.

1           (c) The advisory committee shall meet quarterly. The  
2 committee meetings shall be open to the public in accordance  
3 with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act.

4           Section 30. Reporting. The Consortium shall report to the  
5 General Assembly, to the Senate and House Committees with  
6 oversight over higher education, to the Governor, and to the  
7 advisory committee on the progress made by the Consortium. A  
8 report must include, but is not limited to, all of the  
9 following information:

10           (1) Student enrollment numbers for the fall and spring  
11 terms or semesters, retention rates, persistence in  
12 relevant associate, baccalaureate, and credential  
13 programs, including demographic data that is disaggregated  
14 by race, ethnicity, and federal Pell Grant status,  
15 reported twice per year. Completion numbers and rates,  
16 employer type, and years worked shall be reported  
17 annually.

18           (2) Tuition rates charged and net prices paid,  
19 reported both as including and excluding student loans, by  
20 enrolled members of the incumbent workforce, reported  
21 annually.

22           (3) Outreach plans to recruit and enroll incumbent  
23 workforce members, reported twice per year.

24           (4) Participation of the incumbent workforce in  
25 outreach programs, which may include participation in an

1 informational session, social media engagement, or other  
2 activities, reported twice per year.

3 (5) Student academic and holistic support plans to  
4 help the enrolled incumbent workforce persist in their  
5 education, reported annually.

6 (6) Evidence of engagement and responsiveness to the  
7 needs of employer partners, reported annually.

8 (7) The Consortium budget including the use of federal  
9 funds, reported annually.

10 (8) Member contributions, including financial,  
11 physical, or in-kind contributions, provided to the  
12 Consortium, reported annually.

13 Section 35. Goals and metrics.

14 (a) By July 1, 2021 or within 60 days after the effective  
15 date of this amendatory Act of the 102nd General Assembly, the  
16 Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan Educator Workforce  
17 subgroup on the early childhood workforce must set goals for  
18 the Consortium for the enrollment, persistence, and completion  
19 of members of the incumbent workforce in associate,  
20 bachelor's, and master's degree programs, Gateways Credentials  
21 in Level 2, 3, or 4, and Professional Educator Licensure by  
22 September 30, 2024. The goals set for the Consortium must be  
23 data informed and include targets for annual enrollment and  
24 persistence.

25 (b) Data from the Gateways Registry, March 2020, indicates



1 that there are 7,670 individuals with an associate degree who  
2 would benefit from progressing to a baccalaureate degree and  
3 20,467 individuals with a high school diploma or some college  
4 who would benefit from progressing to an associate degree. If  
5 the goals cannot be set in accordance with subsection (a), the  
6 goal for the Consortium shall be that by September 30, 2024,  
7 20% of the individuals described in this subsection (b) who do  
8 not have a degree will have enrolled and be persisting toward  
9 or have attained a Gateways Credential in Level 2, 3, or 4 or  
10 an associate degree and, of the individuals who have an  
11 associate degree, will be enrolled and persisting toward or  
12 have attained a baccalaureate degree or will be persisting  
13 toward or have attained a Professional Educator License.

14 (c) Student financial aid, including incentives and  
15 stipends, data-sharing, and professional statewide engagement  
16 and marketing campaign and recruitment efforts are critical to  
17 the Consortium's ability to quickly attract and enroll  
18 students into these programs. Navigators, mentors, and  
19 advisors are critical for persistence and completion. If  
20 federal funds are not appropriated for these purposes and the  
21 other purposes of this Section, the Board of Higher Education,  
22 the Illinois Community College Board, the State Board of  
23 Education, the Department of Human Services, and the  
24 Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development, in  
25 consultation with the advisory committee, shall adjust the  
26 initial target metrics appropriately by adopting challenging

1 goals that may be attainable with less public investment.

2 (d) The Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community  
3 College Board, the State Board of Education, the Department of  
4 Human Services, and the Governor's Office of Early Childhood  
5 Development, in consultation with the advisory committee,  
6 shall determine new metrics and goals for the Consortium as  
7 they relate to the remaining and future early childhood  
8 workforce, to be instituted after the close of the 2024-2025  
9 academic year and going forward. Metrics must take into  
10 consideration that the pipeline depends on sustained,  
11 increased student enrollment and completion rates at the  
12 associate degree level if this State aims to continue with  
13 sustained, increased student enrollment and completion at the  
14 bachelor's degree level.

15 Section 40. Affordability. The institutions participating  
16 in the Consortium and the advisory committee shall work to  
17 ensure that students have the most affordable options for  
18 advancing through and attaining their degree or credentials.

19 Section 90. Rules. The Board of Higher Education and the  
20 Illinois Community College Board may adopt any rules necessary  
21 to administer and implement this Act.

22 Section 500. The Transitions in Education Act is amended  
23 by adding Section 130-10 as follows:

1 (110 ILCS 180/130-10 new)

2 Sec. 130-10. Gateway Credentials; associate degree.

3 (a) A community college student who earns the Department  
4 of Human Services's Gateways ECE Credential Level 4 as part of  
5 an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in early  
6 childhood education that is consistent with the degree  
7 requirements established by the Illinois Community College  
8 Board and the Board of Higher Education, as appropriate, is  
9 deemed eligible for transfer into an early childhood education  
10 baccalaureate program at a public university if the student  
11 meets all of the requirements of the AAS degree program, is  
12 transferring from a program entitled to offer the Gateways ECE  
13 Credential Level 4, and earns a minimum grade point average of  
14 a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.

15 (b) Recognizing that the AAS degree and other associate  
16 degrees provide important pathways into the early childhood  
17 education profession and notwithstanding any other provision  
18 of law to the contrary, a public university shall grant junior  
19 level status in an early childhood education program to any  
20 community college student who has graduated from an Illinois  
21 community college with an Associate of Applied Science degree  
22 in early childhood education. A public university may not  
23 require students transferring pursuant to this Section to  
24 repeat courses taken and completed successfully at the  
25 community college and applied toward the associate degree

1 granted pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section. All  
2 courses completed successfully in the AAS degree program must  
3 count toward baccalaureate degree completion. Students  
4 entering with an AAS may not be required to take a total number  
5 of credits greater than those students first starting in a  
6 baccalaureate degree program. This includes any courses in  
7 which credit for prior learning was used to determine course  
8 equivalency and credit was awarded by the evaluating  
9 institution. Additional coursework may be required if a  
10 student is seeking to add one or more endorsements to the  
11 student's Illinois Professional Educator License.

12 Section 999. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
13 becoming law.".