

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

Contact:

Candace Mueller
217.557.7354
mueller@ibhe.org

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Giving adult students the “credit” they deserve

Board will hold discussion on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) as a path to degree completion and workforce opportunities.

Springfield -- On June 2, the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) will focus on adult learners, a population identified by the Board as key to attaining the goal of 60 percent of Illinois residents with a postsecondary degree or credential by 2025. Approximately 57 percent of adults in Illinois’ current workforce have no two- or four-year college degree. Given Illinois’ demographics, this group of adults will define the state workforce for the foreseeable future. In response to this issue, the Board has established an Action Team focused on examining state-wide strategies to increase degree attainment for adult learners. “Some good work is going on in Illinois, but we need a system-wide effort,” said Dr. James Applegate, IBHE Executive Director. “If we could succeed with even 20 percent of this population it would be a game changer for Illinois.” A group discussion will take place on one of the key strategies identified by this team, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

The discussion with the Board will be led by a panel including Ms. Gabi Zolla, Chief Operating Officer, The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL); Lisa Schumacher, Director, Education Strategies, McDonalds Corporation; Dr. Maria Coons, Vice President, Workforce Strategy Alliances, Harper Community College; and Dr. Daniel Cullen, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, Illinois Board of Higher Education.

“The Board is enthusiastic about the opportunities for college completion that meaningful Prior Learning Assessment provides for adult students in Illinois,” said Lindsay Anderson, IBHE Chair. “Strategies such as this, which can positively affect issues of affordability and time-to-degree, are essential for the attainment of the 2025 goal.”

The IBHE will meet at 1:00 p.m. on June 2 at the Illini Union Ballroom at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 1401 West Green Street, Urbana.

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