



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*The right system for bright futures*

## Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board

### La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

#### Meeting Minutes

##### **Call to Order and Introductions**

The regular meeting of the First Things First – La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council was held **January 28, 2010** at 9:00 a.m. at the Kingman Police Department, located at 2730 E Andy Devine Avenue, Kingman, AZ 86401.

Chairman Allsbrooks called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Guests were invited to introduce themselves.

##### Members present:

William Allsbrooks, Nancy Mongeau, Terri Holloway, Jose Garcia, Riley Frei, Melissa Howell, Alisa Burroughs, Lenore Knudtson, Betsy Lewis, Vijette Saari(telephonically)

##### Members absent:

Debra Weger

##### **Approval of Agenda**

Member Mongeau made a motion to approve the minutes on the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Garcia. The motion carried with a unanimous vote by the members present.

##### **Call to the Public**

Rich Miers of Interagency Council Lake Havasu City gave a brief update to the Regional Council on the success of the Father Hood Now program. The \$30,000 food grant is also a big help to families and all money will be used by May. Mr. Miers expressed his pleasure of the outcome of the programs.

##### **Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda included the minutes of the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009 and January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Member Frei made a motion to approve the minutes on the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Member Holloway. The motion carried with a unanimous vote by the members present.

##### **Address Potential Conflicts of Interest Regarding Items on this Agenda**

No Council Members declared a conflict of interest regarding any item on the agenda.

**Discussion on the Needs and Assets Report Work Plan**

Dr. Michele Walsh of the University of Arizona Evaluation Research and Development Unit (ERDU) summarized the process of the upcoming Needs and Assets Report and reviewed the 2008 report with the Regional Council. Dr. Walsh mentioned that the ERDU has conducted community evaluation work in Mohave County previously and that they are eager to work with the Regional Council to provide useful information for planning. Dr. Walsh presented a draft work plan and solicited input from the Council. Council Members would like to see communities like Bouse, the Fort Mojave Tribe, and Colorado City represented in the study. Also, the Council would like to hear from more parents versus service providers only.

**Presentation from the Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC)**

Vicki McCarty, Association for Supportive Child Care Program Manager provided an overview of programs offered by ASCC statewide. ASCC provides services throughout Arizona that help all levels of child care providers, families and children including: the Arizona Self Study Project, Arizona Kith and Kin project, Child Care Injury Prevention Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Child Care Resource & Referral, Arizona Job Bank, Niño's en Mi Casa, Child Care Professional Training, Reading is Fundamental, Phone Friend, T.E.A.C.H. and Quality First. Margaret Taylor, Early Childhood Program Coordinator, reviewed progress on two La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council regionally-funded programs provided by ASCC, the Professional Development Program and the Access to Quality Care Program. They have recently hired staff, secured office space in Lake Havasu and a professional conference is planned in Lake Havasu at the end of June. Melody Johnson, T.E.A.C.H. Program Coordinator and T.E.A.C.H Specialist, Natasha Lopez gave an update on the status of T.E.A.C.H. scholarships in the region. Member Mongeau expressed concern at the low number of scholarships awarded in the region so far and inquired as to what the barriers have been. Melody explained that with the economy the way it is many Owners/Directors are unable to provide the sponsor's portion (release time and bonus) and that a Hardship Waiver has been implemented to address this issue. Regional Manager Gary Arnold explained that a specialist was recently hired and assigned to work with the region directly and suggested forming a workgroup to look at outreach efforts and create incentives for participation in T.E.A.C.H.

Chair Allsbrooks directed Member Burroughs, Member Lewis and Coordinator Beckett, to work with ASCC to discuss barriers to T.E.A.C.H. participation in the region and bring recommendations back to the Council.

**Discussion of Emergency Child Care Scholarship Balance**

Coordinator Beckett reported to the Regional Council that at the January 26, 2010 State Board meeting the decision was made to return unspent funds from the Emergency Child Care Scholarships to the region. The funds were not spent on scholarship due to an error in estimating when the funds would be spent-out in the region. The amount returned to the region amounts to over \$90,000. The Regional Council will need to determine how to allocate these funds. If the Regional Council makes the determination to leave the funds in Emergency Child Care Scholarships, that can be negotiated with the original vendor. Otherwise, the Regional Council can direct the funds to any existing strategy in the funding plan without further Board approval. Should the Council determine the need for a new strategy, any new strategy put forward by the Council would need to go to the Board for approval.

Chair Allsbrooks suggested Coordinator Beckett develop a plan for the funds which includes a new strategy for the Fort Mohave Indian Tribe and any additional work suggested by the University of Arizona for the Regional Needs and Assets Report. .

**Discussion on Strategy for the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe**

Coordinator Beckett updated the Council that she and Member Lewis have been working together with an advisory committee from the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe with representatives from the Tribal Health Department, Social Services, the Library, Education Program, Domestic Violence Program, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Mohave Valley Elementary School and others who serve Fort Mojave children and families. The hope is to bring forward a recommendation from the group for the Council to consider a new strategy at next month's meeting.

**Coordinator Report and Possible Discussion**

Coordinator Beckett reviewed the Funding Plan Update and mentioned that she is working on a financial and programmatic data report to bring to next months’ meeting that will provide more information on the amount of funds that have been expended by regional grantees to date and some additional information on service numbers. Five additional Quality First slots have been awarded in the region due to the Council’s decision to expand Quality First, one to the Fort Mojave Child Care Center, two in La Paz County (Wenden and Quartzsite) and two in Lake Havasu. The award of these slots significantly improves the equitable geographic distribution of Quality First in the region. A new Quality First Coach was also recently hired. Two of the three school districts for the Pre Kindergarten expansion strategy (Littlefield and Topock) have agreed to the scope of work and the contract negotiations are on track for a March 1<sup>st</sup> start date. These agreements are planned to go the Board for approval in February. Coordinator Beckett will continue to work on the contract with the Quartzsite Elementary School District.

Vice Chair Knudtson reported to Regional Council on the first Infant Mental Health Court Team Training that was held in Kingman on January 13<sup>th</sup>. The response was overwhelmingly positive and there were over 100 attendees. Judge Weiss facilitated the event, which included many FTF grantees and partners, and expressed gratitude to FTF and the Regional Council for supporting the Court’s work with our most vulnerable young children and families.

Coordinator Beckett stated the Emergency Food Strategy contracts are ending April 15<sup>th</sup>, while all the others end June 30<sup>th</sup> because the motion made by the Council when they were approved specified they were to be 12 month contracts. Coordinator Beckett asked if the Council would like to have a discussion on extending the food contracts to end June 30th on next month’s agenda. The Regional Council asked the subject be added to next month agenda. Coordinator Beckett provided a Legislative update. There are discussions in the legislature related to how to address the state budget deficit and one proposal is to send a referendum to the ballot to open the Voter Protection Act. If the voters were to approve it, it would significantly reduce First Things First funding and the sustainability of FTF programs. It would sweep 50% of the fund balance in fiscal year 2010 and 50% of revenues in 2011, 2012 and 2013. By 2013 First Things First would not be able to maintain its current level of programming if this were to be approved by voters. The Governors budget is also proposing a loan from First Things First that would take part of the fund balance and loan it to the State to address the current deficit then be repaid to First Things First. According to analysis by the Finance Division, this proposal would not have an impact on the sustainability of First Things First. Coordinator Beckett provided the Council with an Advocacy Kit to assist them in educating others of the positive impact FTF is having at the local level.

Chair Allsbrooks asked the Council if they had any questions or comments for the State Board for the Chair/Vice Chair meeting in Phoenix February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

**Adjourn**

Member Mongeau made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Member Garcia. Motion to adjourn carried with a unanimous vote by the members present.

There being no further business, Chairman Allsbrooks adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

Minutes **NOT** approved

**SUBMITTED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Della Gray, Administrative Assistant

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
William Allsbrooks, Chair