



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions

The regular meeting of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council meeting was held on **Tuesday, March 3, 2009** at the Diné for Our Children, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 48 West Highway 264 - Quality Inn Office Complex, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

Paula Curley, Chairperson for the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council, called the meeting to order, at approximately 12:08 p.m.

Members Present In Person: Paula Curley, Marie Allen, Paula Seanez, Dorothy Yazzie, First Lady Vikki Shirley, Jenny Rodgers, Spencer Willie

Members Present by Phone: None

First Things First Staff Members Present: Director Elliot Hibbs, Assistant Director Michelle Katona, Communications Director Mary Jo West, Northeast Regional Manager AdiShakti Khalsa, Northeast Administrative Assistant Ellen Majure

Guests: Nadine Mathis Basha (First Things First State Board Chair), David Schwartz (Consultant for GoodmanSchwartz), Teresa Honahni (Parenting Arizona), Julie Fitzgerald (Outreach Specialist for Association of Supportive Child Care), Dolly Begay (Navajo Nation Board of Education)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council (hereafter referred to as the Council) reviewed the February 03-2009 meeting minutes. **A motion was made by Member Paula Seanez to approve the minutes as corrected.** Seconded by Member Spencer Willie. The motion carried.

Strategic Plan Presentation and Discussion

Elliot Hibbs, First Things First Executive Director, thanked the Council for their efforts and hard work. Director Hibbs reviewed with the Council the Vision and Mission of First Things First and discussed the First Things First Strategic Plan. Michelle Katona, First Things First Assistant Director, reviewed the Statewide Initiatives and Needs and Assets reports.

AdiShakti Khalsa, First Things First Northeast Regional Manager, reviewed with the Council the Arizona Parenting Kit and explained how the kits will be distributed. Currently there are no agreements in place across the Navajo Nation for distribution. Member Paula Seanez suggested that the Council be involved in reviewing the contents of the kits, making sure they are culturally relevant and that they utilize resources that already exist on the Navajo Nation. AdiShakti will bring the kits to the next Council meeting.

Roles and Responsibilities Presentation and Discussion

Regional Manager Khalsa discussed with the Council the roles of First Things First Board and staff and the Regional Partnership Councils. The Regional Partnership Council's are to be considered the local decision makers.

Update on Coordinator Position

Regional Manager Khalsa shared with the Council that the Navajo Nation Regional Coordinator position is posted in the Navajo Times for two weeks and on the State of Arizona Jobs Website and she asked the Council for recommendations for potential applicants for the Coordinator position. Member Seanez and Member Jenny Rodgers volunteered to sit on the interview committee for the Coordinator position.

The Regional Partnership Council then discussed finding another office location for the Regional Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. First Things First staff will continue to pursue the best possible office location.

Update on the State Budget

Chairperson Curley shared information on the State of Arizona budget situation. The Council discussed the State Budget issue and getting information out across the Navajo Nation about the First Things First budget issues. Member Rodgers and Chairperson Curley will begin talking to the Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Nation Chapters about this issue. Member First Lady Vikki Shirley volunteered to work with Regional Manager Khalsa to follow up on radio spots/interviews/PSAs.

First Things First Discretionary Funds - Discussion and Possible Approvals

Chairperson Curley updated the Council about the First Things First state board meeting last week when the Board approved the Economic Response Proposal to utilize First Things First discretionary funds to respond to the present economic crisis. The Council reviewed the Economic Response Proposal document. Regional Manager Khalsa explained that the Economic Response Proposal focuses on the following: stabilizing working families (through providing child care scholarships), preventing hunger in young children (through distribution of food boxes) and supporting families to prevent abuse and neglect. This is a decision and vote agenda item. Regional Manager Khalsa asked the Council if they want to participate in these recommendations.

The Council discussed A)Stabilizing Working Families including the child care scholarships for licensed and/or regulated child care providers. The issue was raised that there are very few licensed child care providers on the Navajo Nation and if those funds will only go to licensed care providers, then Navajo Nation children will not benefit from those funds. Member Seanez suggested that the Council make a request that more information is needed on how Navajo Children will be helped by these funds. Chairperson Curley suggested that the Council should support this even if the funds can't be used for Navajo Nation children right now and the Council can then look into how to navigate the system so Navajo Nation children can be served. First Things First Assistant Director, Michelle Katona, wants the Council to know that First Things First wants to work with the Regional Partnership Councils to make sure the funds reach the families that need the scholarships.

Chairperson Curley explained how the food box program will work. The Council then discussed B-Prevent Hunger in Young Children approval. Specific organizations will be identified to distribute the food boxes. Chairperson Curley asked Regional Manager Khalsa if the Council is voting on all three items. Regional Manager Khalsa clarified that the Council is voting on A and B. Member Seanez made the following motion: **We support the board's recommendations to stabilize working families with requesting additional information on how this would work on Navajo Nation lands. We also support the prevent hunger in young children using discretionary funds to fund that. Again with our Regional Council's input in making sure that all areas of the Navajo Nation receive these resources.** Seconded by Member Shirley. The motion was carried.

Regional Manager Khalsa then explained that the Council can also fund support to working families by redirecting existing strategies. The Navajo Nation will get an additional half million dollars for the Frontier Adjustment. The Frontier Adjustment funds may be allocated to existing strategies, utilized for the Emergency Response Strategies, or used to fund new strategies. Chairperson Curley believes that the Council cannot decide at the moment and they

need to be more thoughtful about this and reflect on the information from prior meetings about the funding plan and meet again soon to decide on this funding. The Council then discussed the options for how the funds would roll out in a Request For Grant Application process or through a government to government agreement. Member Allen motioned **that we have a special meeting to discuss the C section that speaks to support families to prevent abuse and neglect and the use of frontier allotment and our strategy dealing with family support either in a full meeting or a finance committee meeting.** Seconded by Member Seanez and Member Rodgers. The motion carried.

Spencer left the meeting at that time (2:05pm).

Funding Plan

Chairperson Curley updated the Council on the funding plan approval by the state board. Two strategies need further discussion and refinement; Strategy #2 and Strategy #5. The Council needs to review these two strategies at the next meeting after reviewing the questions posed by Assistant Director Katona about those strategies. **Member Seanez motioned that we deal with strategies 5 and 2 regarding wage enhancement at the next meeting whether it's a finance committee or a full council to address these along the same lines as the emergency response funds.** Seconded by Member Rodgers. The motion carried.

Quality First! Discussion and Possible Approval of Regional Selection Criteria

Regional Manager Khalsa explained how the Quality First selection criteria will work. The Council then discussed the criteria. Regional Manager Khalsa agreed to email the Council the number of centers on the Navajo Nation that have applied for Quality First. Regional Manager Khalsa and Member Seanez will work together to determine how to ensure through the selection criteria that there is wide geographical representation on the Navajo Nation.

Upcoming Meeting Date

April 7, 2009 @ 1:00 pm at the Diné For Our Children - 2nd Floor Conference Rm., Window Rock, Arizona.

Call to the Public

Teresa Honahni, with Parenting Arizona, talked to the Council about her concern regarding the state cuts to the Healthy Families program that she runs from Tuba City. Chairperson Curley asked Ms. Honahni for a more specific breakdown of the funds needed. Ms. Honahni agreed to email Regional Manager Khalsa the funding breakdown. Julie Fitzgerald, Association for Supportive Childcare, then updated the Council about her program.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:50pm.