



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board

Draft Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the First Things First – Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board was held on February 24, 2009 at the First Things First Board Office, 4000 N. Central Ave., Ste. 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Chair Mathis Basha called the meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m.

Members Present:

Nadine Mathis Basha, Steve Lynn, Rhian Evans Allvin, Dr. Eugene Thompson, Hon. Cecil Patterson, Dr. Pamela Powell and Dr. Arturo Gonzalez

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Linda Blessing, =Mary Ellen Cunningham and Amy Corriveau

Absent:

Vivian Saunders

Consent Agenda

The items on the Consent Agenda include the Minutes of the January 27, 2009 Board meeting. A motion was made by Member Thompson to adopt the Consent Agenda, seconded by Member Evans Allvin. Motion approved.

Board Member Reports/Updates

Chair Mathis Basha welcomed Ex-Officio Board member Dr. Linda Blessing, interim Director of Department of Economic Security. Dr. Blessing was instrumental in helping to organize First Things First in the early stages.

Chair Mathis Basha thanked staff, Council members and local dignitaries on the first of many trips across the state to present symbolic checks to the children of First Things First Regions on behalf of the voters of Arizona. The first stop on this journey was to Kingman and Yuma on Friday, February 20, 2009.

Call to the Public

Anthony Bruno, Chair of the South Pima Regional Partnership Council and Director of the food bank in Pima County stated to the Board his support in a possible partnership with the food banks and First Things First in offering proper nutrition and food security to children 0-5.

Linda Houtkooper, Assistant Director of the Co-operative Extension at the University of Arizona commended the Board on creating the right system for children. Ms. Houtkooper talked to the Board about the Extension's parent and caregiver training, and Advocacy for Child Care Excellence.

Brian Spicker, Director of the Valley of the Sun United Way stated to the Board the United Way's support for the Board's long-term strategies while looking forward to continuing partnership with First Things First. Mr. Spicker

urged the Board to consider using discretionary funds to fill the gaps that are critical for children in the communities.

Dana Naimark, Chair and CEO of Children's Action Alliance, thanked the Board for their consideration on the agenda for discretionary funding and urged the Board to target the needs of child care providers and families with discretionary funding to assist in addressing the state legislature's massive cuts to child care in Arizona. She urged the Board to act immediately in earmarking discretionary funds and issuing monies.

Bruce Liggett, Director of Arizona Child Care Association, talked with the Board about a huge decrease in enrollment in child care centers, leaving providers at risk of layoffs. Mr. Liggett urged the Board to use discretionary monies to provide child care scholarships to help prevent layoffs.

Jim Pitowsky, Director of the Arizona Community Foundation, stated to the Board that the Foundation supports the work of First Things First and stands as a partner.

Rebecca Ruffner, Director of Prevent Child Abuse Arizona, stated that as of March 1, hundreds of layoffs will take place, and home visitations will be canceled. Ms. Ruffner urged the Board to do what they can, and consider discretionary funds to address the massive cuts for children in Arizona.

Communication

Mary Jo West, Assistant Director of Communications, updated the Board on past and current activities that will occur through June 30, 2009. Ms. West discussed the First Things First web site, statewide initiatives including Parent Kits and Quality First, the Statewide and Regional Awareness Campaign, PBS awareness spots, parent tips during news broadcasts, and Expect More Arizona. Tiffany Erickson presented to the Board the First Things First branding and messaging plan. The process to develop the plan was based on research as well as feedback from several internal and external workgroups which included national early care and education professionals, representatives from all of the divisions within First Things First, Regional Council members, community partners and other communications professionals in the state. It was the decision of the Board that Communications bring back the branding and messaging plan in March and present messaging that addresses the current conditions of the state of Arizona in regard to budget cuts and impacts on Arizona's children.

Legislative Update

Sandy Carpenter, Governmental Affairs Specialist, updated the Board on state and federal legislative issues. Ms. Carpenter gave information on where to find a copy of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act document which is located on the Arizona State Legislature web site under JLBC, and stated that the monies were in the area of \$787 billion to the states and \$1-2 billion going to Arizona. Ms. Carpenter stated at this time, very few bills are being heard, because the state budget is the legislature's number one priority. Ms. Carpenter stated that there is also talk of a possible special election to overturn the voter protection law, but it is not known at this time when a special election may occur.

Policy Updates

Statewide Initiatives Update

Sandy Foreman, Assistant Director for Policy and Research, gave the Board an update on Quality First, TEACH Arizona, Child Care Health Consultation, and Parent Kits. Ms. Foreman updated the Board that the newly branded Parent Kits will have their first shipment to hospitals throughout the state on February 9, 2009. Outreach meetings with the contract consultant and all Arizona birthing hospitals have been completed except for Tribal hospitals. A letter is being prepared to send to Tribal Councils explaining the program prior to initiating contact with Tribal hospitals.

Ms. Foreman stated that the Child Care Health Consultation training is scheduled for spring of 2009. Intergovernmental agreements between First Things First and the Pima County Health Department to provide recruitment, training and quality assurance is awaiting final signatures. Ms. Foreman reported to the Board that Policy and Finance are completing the RFGA for the Compensation and Retention administrative home, which is

due for release on March 16, 2009 with the award date on July 1, 2009. Ms. Foreman reported that a Quality First coordinator was hired and will start February 23, 2009. As of February 11, 2009, 559 applications were received to fill the first 300 slots available through statewide funding. Selection will be made and applicants notified between March 2 and 15, 2009, with continued outreach planned for regions with fewer applications. Current work on the database is continuing, with the ability to determine eligibility of applicants and to select participants based upon selection criteria due for completion soon.

Health Strategies Recommendations

As a follow up to the January Board meeting, Ms. Foreman gave an outline of the key elements contributing to the gaps in the health care system and the recommended statewide strategies to fill in gaps in Arizona's health care system for children birth through age five. Ms. Foreman stated Arizona's public and privately funded system of health care resources does not serve all children well or is simply not accessible to children birth through age five and their parents. As documented in the January 2009 First Things First Board briefing document, the health care system gaps fall into three categories: access to health care; screening and early identification and workforce readiness and supply.

Statewide Competitive Grants

A motion was made by Member Lynn that the Board approve the staff recommendation for award of three (3) grants for Fiscal Year 2009 to provide statewide programs under the Statewide Competitive Grant Program. The grants recommended are as follows:

- RFGA# FTF-STATE-09-INOV-0003-01 in the amount of \$492,191
- RFGA# FTF-STATE-09-INOV-0003-02 in the amount of \$616,917
- RFGA# FTF-STATE-09-INOV-0003-03 in the amount of \$90,000

These grants are awarded beginning March 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2010 with an additional two (2) twelve-month renewal periods available based on performance. Seconded by Member Evans Allvin. Motion approved.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Presentation

Sharon Brady, Program Coordinator for T.E.A.C.H. Arizona Early Childhood, gave an overview of the T.E.A.C.H. program. Ms. Brady stated that T.E.A.C.H. ARIZONA is a comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce with access to educational opportunities. There are four components to all T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Programs:

- 1) Educational scholarships: support for tuition and books, a travel stipend, and paid release time
- 2) Formal education: a set amount of college coursework leading to a credential or degree
- 3) Compensation: providing an incentive in the form of a bonus and/or raise
- 4) Commitment: requiring a commitment to continue working at one's current program for a specified period

Regional Administration Presentation

Regional Partnership Council Member Applicants

A motion as made by Member Evans Allvin that the Board appoint the Regional Partnership Council members recommended by staff for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and approve the request of the Northwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council to shift the appointment of Council member Kimberly Rimbey, presently in the Faith-Based seat, to the Philanthropic seat. Seconded by Member Lynn. Motion approved.

Regional Report

Michelle Katona, Assistant Director for Regional Administration, gave an update to the Board on Regional issues. Ms. Katona stated a total of 311 Regional Council seats are filled. There were two resignations in January. Two individuals are being recommended to the Board for appointment for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe Regional Partnership Council. Ms. Katona reported that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council will present their funding plan to the Board for approval. The full funding plan and summary sheet were provided in the board book. Pinal, Santa Cruz, and Southeast Maricopa Regional Councils submitted their strategies that required further development to

the Board for approval. Ms. Katona reviewed with the Board a series of events across the state to present awards to all 31 Regional Partnership Councils. A key message around these events is that in tough economic times we cannot lose sight of our most valuable asset, our children.

Discretionary Funding

Elliott Hibbs, Executive Director of First Things First, along with Karen Woodhouse, Deputy Director, and Michelle Katona presented to the Board introductory remarks, approach and staff recommendation for the distribution of First Things First discretionary funding. It was stated that staff has prepared a proposed breakdown of discretionary dollars based on the priorities enumerated by Regional Partnership Council Chairs and Vice-Chairs and the Executive Committee of the First Things First Board. Those priority distributions are:

1) *Baseline Adjustment* -- To ensure each Regional Partnership Council is able to fund one strategy, the Cocopah and Hualapai Regions would be given sufficient funds to fully execute their only funded strategy. First Things First staff proposes setting aside sufficient funds to allow those Regional Partnership Councils with \$50,000 or fewer in Population-Based Allocations to gain the ability to implement at least one priority strategy based on their initial indications of discretionary funds needed.

2) *Frontier Communities Adjustment* – First Things First staff proposes that Regional Partnership Councils that lie within areas deemed by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2000 to be “Frontier Communities” be given an additional allocation from discretionary funds. The total amount to be allocated in this manner is based on the number of children five and under in designated “Frontier” regions relative to the total of all children five and under in the state. The resulting percentage would be applied against total discretionary dollars to determine the amount to be provided to “Frontier” regions, with the apportionment to each region based on their share of the total children five and under in all “Frontier” regions. The “Frontier” adjustment would provide \$6,300,000—approximately 21 percent of discretionary monies—for the affected regions as shown on the Discretionary Table. The definition for “Frontier Communities” used by the U.S. Census Bureau is determined using a variety of criteria including population density and availability of services relative to the number of miles needed to be driven to reach the service. A full explanation of the latest census definition of a Frontier Community is located at: <http://www.frontierus.org/documents/consensus.htm>.

Twelve of Arizona’s counties are considered “Frontier” based on the 2000 Census list of Frontier counties (<http://www.frontierus.org/2000census.htm>). This includes all counties except Maricopa, Pima (portion thereof) and Pinal counties. However, the National Center for Frontier Communities designates part of Pima County as a Frontier Community, as per the University of Arizona’s Rural Health Office. For this proposal, First Things First staff followed the definitions as provided by the National Center for Frontier Communities and have designated all Regions outside of Maricopa, Pinal (fully contained within) and Pima Counties, with the exception of the South Pima Regional Partnership Council, Pascua Yaqui Reservation and the Tohono O’Odham Reservation, which meet the definition of a Frontier Community as staff understands it.

3) *Needs & Assets/Evaluation Distribution* – This is a distribution of funds sufficient for Evaluative services across regions. First Things First staff recommends \$1,000,000 as a set-aside for this purpose and intends to allocate an additional \$620,000 from Administrative Account funds to Program Account funds to provide for the costs of the basic regional Needs & Assets development.

4) *Additional Discretionary Funding* – First Things First staff recommends allocating \$22,873,000—the remaining Discretionary Funds available for FY 2010, to be distributed among Regional Councils as the Board deems necessary. First Things First staff will continue to develop potential strategies that will address the most immediate needs and have the greatest impact on children and communities, particularly those aspects of services most negatively impacted by the economic recession.

A spreadsheet was made available to show potential funding amounts for each Regional Council and the new total allocations.

A motion was made by Member Evans Allvin that the Board approves the staff recommendation for use of discretionary money and that staff seek emergency approval to bypass the normal bid process in order to accelerate the use of discretionary and regional funding to provide families with young children critical services they need during this economic crisis. In addition, the Board instructs the Executive Director to send a letter to the Governor and legislative leaders urging them to quickly utilize the federal stimulus funds to reinstate services for families of young children. Seconded by Member Lynn. Motion approved.

Regional Funding Plans and Strategies Requiring Further Development

Pinal

Aimee Kempton Sarosi, Coordinator of the Pinal Regional Partnership Council, presented to the Board an overview of the Pinal Regional Funding Plan Strategies #8 and #10.

A motion was made by Member Evans Allvin that the revised strategies #8 and #10 submitted by the Pinal Regional Partnership Council be approved. Seconded by Member Patterson. Motion approved.

Santa Cruz

Diane Umstead, Regional Manager, and Teresa Morales De Phillips, Coordinator of the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council, presented to the Board an overview of the Santa Cruz Regional Funding Plan Strategy #6.

A motion was made by Member Evans Allvin that the revised strategy #6 submitted by the Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council be approved. Seconded by Member Lynn. Motion approved.

Southeast Maricopa

Beth Coons, Chair, and Terri Duhart, Coordinator of the Southeast Maricopa Regional Partnership Council, presented to the Board an overview of the Southeast Maricopa Regional Funding Plan Strategies #9 and #10.

A motion was made by Member Evans Allvin that the revised strategies #9 and #10 submitted by the Southwest Maricopa Regional Partnership Council be approved. Seconded by Member Thompson. Motion Approved.

Navajo Nation

Paula Curley, Chair of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council, presented to the Board an overview of the Navajo Nation Regional Funding Plan. Florinda Jackson, Coordinator, supported Chair Curley's review of the funding plan.

A motion was made by Member Evans Allvin that the Funding Plan submitted by the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council be approved with the exception that funding set aside for strategies #2 and #5 be held pending further work by the Council and First Things First staff. Seconded by Member Lynn. Motion approved.

Executive Director Report

Elliott Hibbs, Executive Director of First Things First, gave the following agency update to the Board:

Evaluation Update

The external evaluation proposal contract with the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University was signed January 26, 2009. The Consortium has posted key research positions, established workgroups, and acquired office space. The baseline data collection by the University Consortium is to begin by October 2009.

Collection of US census data to update the Child and Family Indicators sections of the Statewide Needs and Assets report has begun. These sections will be updated by the end of March 2009. Work will begin on the Current Early Childhood Development and Health System sections in April 2009 so that formatting can begin August 2009. An expected final report is scheduled for October 2009.

External Agency Data Collaboration meetings to discuss data collection or data sharing were convened with the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the Morrison Institute. FTF is working towards formal data sharing agreements and collaboration with these Agencies.

Programs and Business Systems

The Quality First system was enhanced to provide additional functionality such as custom views for applications by regional council, by zip code, and/or by provider type. Tracking the origination of an application was added to assist with outreach efforts and targeted campaigns to increase awareness of the Quality First program.

The system has the ability to retain an original version of a submitted Quality First application; this is necessary for audit trail purposes as updates are made to data. We have added functionality to allow First Things First to override the "entered system date" to reflect a fax or mailed in date/time. This is necessary for applicant selection as tie scores will be resolved by earliest submission date.

First Things First implemented in partnership with the data warehouse, an eligibility check process for centers and homes that apply for participation. The system can now process each application through an eligibility check for current licensing and regulation information against licensing data obtained from DES and DHS.

Financial Update

First Things First continues to expend under our budget. January expenses were \$1,052,917 compared to a budget of \$1,328,456. This is a savings of \$275,539 for the month of January. The largest savings of \$176,338 (Personal Services and Capital & Non-Capital Equipment) is a result of fewer than estimated positions filled which created a vacancy savings of \$107,332 as well as less spending on office equipment. First Things First Regional offices are now established so the purchases of office equipment in the month of January were minimal which created a substantial savings of \$69,007. First Things First has also reduced the amount of travel expenses and as a result saved a total of \$41,608 out of the January budget of \$70,596. Year-to-date expenditures of \$8,410,577 are under budget by \$1,701,481.

Revenues from tax receipts for January totaled \$14.5 million, which brings the total tobacco tax revenues for the fiscal year to \$93.3 million. In addition, interest earnings for January added another \$193,422 to the total receipts bringing the total interest earned to \$3.1 million for six months of the fiscal year (earnings from investments are always distributed the month after they are earned).

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 24, 2008 to be held in Phoenix, Arizona.

Adjourn

There being no other business, Chair Mathis Basha adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:45 p.m.