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Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board
La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Welcome/Introduction of Guests
The regular meeting of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council was held on April 25, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. at the Arizona Western College – Quartzsite Learning Center, 695 Kofa Avenue, Quartzsite, Arizona 85346.

Chairman Frei called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Members Present
Riley Frei, Terri Holloway, Betsy Lewis, Nancy Mongeau, Catie Sondrol, and Howard Weiske. Vijette Saari participated telephonically.

Members Absent
Alisa Burroughs, Jose Garcia, Lenore Knudtson, and Debra Weger.

Call to the Public
Dr. Peggy Federici, Association for Supportive Child Care introduced herself to the council and explained that in her new position she will be partnering with Natasha Lopez to provide support for TEACH scholars.

Declarations of Conflict of Interest
None

Approval of Meeting Minutes
Member Mongeau made a motion to approve the February 28, 2013 and the March 30, 2013 meeting minutes. Member Weiske seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

FTF Boundary Taskforce Recommendations Update
Director Merritt Beckett explained that the State Board revisits regional boundaries every few years to ensure children and families are best served. She reviewed the summary that will be submitted to the Board recommending no changes to the La Paz/Mohave region. The members' consensus was that any issues and/or concerns that were brought to the task force could be opportunities for improvement. Director Beckett noted that Chair Frei is a member of the task force and thanked him for his representation.

Community Outreach and Awareness Report
Erin Taylor, Community Outreach Coordinator provided an update on the various happenings going on in outreach. We just wrapped up Week of the Young Child, which featured a number of activities, government proclamations, newspaper/journal articles, and even a radio interview. Coordinator Taylor noted that several of the publications felt our message was so important they featured First Things First on the front page. Displays containing children's artwork were featured at various locations throughout Kingman, Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City. Many of our council members were instrumental in the success of these events. Coordinator Taylor has represented First Things First at quite a few area events in order to achieve maximum exposure, and council members agreed the quantity and quality of events were a great indication of our work in the community. The 2013 Champion for Young Children award will be presented to Phyllis Leavitt of the Littlefield Unified School District at the May council meeting.

Possible Approval of Grant Renewal Recommendations for SFY 2014
Director Beckett explained that seven grant agreements are eligible for renewal, and staff recommends approval of all seven. She noted that any issues or barriers that have arisen with these contracts are being addressed, with five of the seven right on target. The Family, Friends and Neighbors program, and the Child and Family Resources Special Needs program, are new services in the La Paz/Mohave Region this year and issues related to start-up, staff hiring and outreach are to be expected. As more routine referral services are implemented for these programs, we expect an increase in services provided. Director Beckett noted that both these programs are otherwise meeting or exceeding their service numbers. Vice Chair Mongeau remarked that all are vitally important so

we need to be patient. Member Weiske made a motion to approve all seven grant agreements. Vice Chair Mongeau seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Possible Approval of Additional Work for 2014 Needs & Assets Report

Director Beckett stated this agenda item is more a discussion of desired additional work, as she is not asking for approval at this time. She explained that, by statute, regional partnership councils are responsible to submit a report detailing assets, coordination opportunities and unmet needs to the Board by September 1 of each even numbered year (next due September 1, 2014). Our contract with the University of Arizona starts July 1, 2013. Each region receives $17,000 from statewide funds for a base Needs &Assets report, which primarily uses secondary data sources. This council set aside $30,000 for additional work, which usually covers primary data collection such as focus groups, key informant interviews, briefs, mapping tools or facilitation services. There is also the opportunity for further analysis such as executive summaries, briefs on opportunities for partners' system building, or parent surveys. The council could also prioritize subgroups such as vulnerable families. Director Beckett suggested a small workgroup of council members convene in the next thirty days to discuss ideas to bring back to the council. We have a good general overview of the entire region, so now we should shift focus to understanding the perspectives of various system partners. Council members suggested a variety of ideas, including individual interviews with providers, recognizing and exploiting new opportunities, revisiting insurance issues – health, dental and vision, reexamining vaccination rates, measuring current program impact on communities, and possible partnering with other entities such as the Mohave County Board of Supervisors to attract new services to the area. Senior Director Gary Arnold did note that council members currently can see shorter term outcome measures for programs and that will soon be broken down regionally as the statewide evaluation plan kicks into gear. One issue of importance to everyone was the need for transportation to reach services, with many children having to leave the county to get to services. Member Holloway suggested attendance at the County Health Assessment meeting on Tuesday, April 30 at 9am at Shugrue's. Members Holloway and Mongeau volunteered for the workgroup to develop a work plan. Chair Frei mentioned an additional tobacco tax being proposed by President Obama, and Senior Director Arnold noted that the Board just authorized an additional tobacco tax study to look at that potential impact on Arizona.

Discussion on System Building Priorities and Regional Action Plan

Director Beckett discussed opportunities for system building and the importance of working with partners to coordinate services. She reviewed the characteristics of an effective system, including the key components to consider. We want to be able to see that children and families really are better off as a result of the work First Things First is doing, and this requires a shared vision. Director Beckett reviewed the ten school readiness indicators and discussed developing benchmarks. We need to be mindful of the priorities this council selected while we think about opportunities for system building. At individual meetings in January, Director Beckett asked council members for system improvement ideas in conjunction with our early learning and family support strategies, and the themes that emerged included more thoroughly integrating health awareness and promotion, focusing more on cross-regional planning to build trust among the west region councils, seeking out opportunities for cross-training with our external partners, convening service providers at the community level, and increasing awareness of existing services – particularly in La Paz County. Director Beckett has invited the La Paz/Mohave, CRIT and Hualapai Tribe regional partnership councils, grantees and stakeholders to the next coordination meeting in Parker on May 7, and will use this opportunity to solicit our partners to help identify system gaps and priorities. Cross regional planning is so important to our success, and collaboration and consolidation can save money. The lack of transportation was discussed further. Senior Director Arnold discussed the importance of looking at the 'big picture' when making these connections. Director Beckett advised she will compile the results of the grantee coordination meeting to share with the council to assist in their prioritization. Additionally it was suggested we discuss ideas for collaboration with school district leadership teams and healthcare providers.

Quality First Model Changes for SFY 2015

Director Beckett reviewed a memo from Chief Executive Officer Rhian Evans Allvin outlining proposed Quality First model changes. CEO Allvin is requesting comments/suggestions by May 17, and is hosting an associated webinar on May 10 at 9:30am. The proposed model changes are significant, one being a fixed rate of reimbursement at 3, 4 and 5 star ratings. Director Beckett encourages participation in the webinar and will set up a group viewing if requested.

Director's Report

Director Beckett provided a financial update current as of April 18. Our grantees have spent just over $2.1M of the $4.3M awarded, so we will probably have an unplanned carry forward amount. The grantees have until August 15 to submit final billings.
Director Beckett shared the timeline for the establishment of regional benchmarks, including data release phase dates. This council will receive Indicator 10 data in Phase 3 (between August and October), and a team of evaluation experts will visit during the September and October council meetings to facilitate the selection of benchmarks for Indicator 10. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the council's benchmark selection before it is due back to the Board for approval. Data for Indicators 1 and 5 are yet to be determined.

Director Beckett provided an update on the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant as requested by Member Weiske. The Department of Health Services received this federal grant to expand home visiting services in Arizona. All communities were ranked based on need for additional home visiting services. Two were identified in the La Paz/Mohave region with additional needs – Ft. Mohave and Wenden/Salome. Director Beckett understands that the Department of Health Services already has new agreements in place with Child and Family Resources in Bullhead City to expand services in Ft. Mohave, and with Interagency Council to serve Wenden/Salome. Both agencies are providing the Healthy Families model. All state agencies involved with MIECHV, including the Department of Economic Security, the Department of Education, First Things First, and the Department of Health Services, have formed a leadership team that meets regularly to discuss coordination of services, and have created a website aimed at families to help them find the services they need. Visit www.strongfamiliesaz.com for more information.
Director Beckett invited all council members to the next Grantee Coordination Meeting on Tuesday, May 7 in Parker.
Director Beckett reminded the council members that the First Things First Early Childhood Summit is August 26-27, 2013, with early registration starting May 15.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is at 9:30 am on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at the Littlefield Unified School District located at 3490 East Rio Virgin Road in Beaver Dam, Arizona 86432.
Vice Chair Mongeau advised that the Legacy Foundation is doing something different this year for their 2013 Backpack Buddies program. On May 18 at Mohave High School, the program will provide backpacks filled with essential items to all Head Start and Pre-K children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). On May 19 backpacks will go to the remaining elementary school children receiving SNAP. If anyone would like to volunteer for or observe the program, please contact Vice Chair Mongeau. In the future this event could evolve into a health fair providing vaccinations for these children – an example of system building. Coordinator Taylor will look into providing resource bags to hand out at the event.

Adjourn

Member Mongeau made a motion to adjourn at 11:35 p.m. Member Holloway seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

SUBMITTED BY:

Sandy Smith

Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant

APPROVED BY:

Riley Frei, Chair