



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

**Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board
La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council
Regional Forum on Benchmarks
Minutes**

Call to Order and Introductions

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Area Forum on State Level Benchmarks for School Readiness Indicators was held on June 13, 2012, at 2:30 p.m. at the Lake Havasu Unified School District Board Room located at 2200 Havasupai Boulevard, Lake Havasu City, Arizona 86403.

Presenter Karen Peifer, Senior Director of Children's Health – Programs Division, welcomed the attendees and everyone introduced themselves.

Attendees

Riley Frei, Alisa Burroughs, Debra Weger, Howard Weiske, Merritt Beckett, Monica Corcino, Lanna Flood, Gary Arnold

Presentation and Discussion on the State Level Benchmarks for School Readiness Indicators

Ms. Peifer gave an overview of the process to recommend state level benchmarks which included the activities to date. All Program, Advisory and Sub-Committee meeting materials are on the First Things First website at:

<http://asftf.gov/whoweare/board/pages/boardcommittees.aspx>. Each Regional Partnership Council (RPC) chose which of the ten statewide School Readiness Indicators to focus on (La Paz/Mohave chose #1, #5 and #10; CRIT chose #1, #7 and #10).

Review and Discussion of Proposed Benchmarks for Each of the Ten Statewide School Readiness Indicators

1. #/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical

Ms. Peifer stated this benchmark is still to be determined. La Paz/Mohave RPC Member Burroughs asked how we can measure all of the domains (social-emotional, language and literacy, etc.). Ms. Peifer said there is a lot of discussion going on with partners at the State level, including the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), and we will probably do pilot studies next year through 2014. CRIT Regional Director Flood asked if the intent is to keep this a broad goal to use the data. Ms. Peifer said yes. La Paz/Mohave RPC Chair Riley Frei said it's a lofty goal. Chair Frei said a kindergarten developmental inventory would be good to have. La Paz/Mohave RPC Member Burroughs said measuring this would increase the focus on preschool. Ms. Peifer said there are many existing tools that measure parts of these, but none that measure all, and all the existing tools have pros and cons.

2. #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

Ms. Peifer said the proposed benchmark for this indicator is to increase by 10-20% over baseline the #/% of children enrolled in an early care and education program with a star rating of 3-5 stars. Ms. Peifer stated this data is available from the Quality First program, which is an FTF-directed program, so we already have the data readily available. Ms. Peifer said the data can be used to measure child care programs increasing their star rating. Regional Director Arnold raised the issues of regions where there are very few early childhood programs, for example CRIT has two Quality First sites, so their % could only be 0, 50 or 100.

3. #/% of children with special needs enrolled in an inclusive early care and education program with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

Ms. Peifer said the proposed benchmark for this indicator is to increase by 1% over baseline the number of children with special needs/rights enrolled in an inclusive early care and education program with a star rating of 3-5 stars.

4. #/% of families that spend no more than 10% of the regional median family income on quality care and education with a Quality First rating of 3-5 stars

Ms. Peifer stated proposed benchmark for this measure is to maintain the baseline. This is thought to be a realistic goal considering the state of the economy, and the number of parents who are out of work and probably can't afford child care.

5. % of children with newly identified developmental delays during the kindergarten year

Ms. Peifer explained the advisory committees have had very rich and thoughtful discussion around this indicator as it is so complicated and because the State agencies collecting this data don't talk to each other. Member Burroughs said school districts have this information but nobody ever asks them for it. She said they also need to ask the question whether the child was in Arizona prior to kindergarten – especially in Mohave County, as she has 100 new special education students this year alone. Ms. Peifer said they use RTI (Response to Intervention), but the Department of Education doesn't track 3, 4 and 5 year olds. Member Burroughs pointed out the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) qualifications are complicated. Chair Frei stated they need to increase screenings at earlier ages. Ms. Peifer said this benchmark is still under review, but at least different systems are talking to each other. Regional Director Arnold stated we need to not only get these children screened, but also referred for services because the ultimate goal is that something happens.

6. #/% of children entering kindergarten exiting preschool special education to regular education

Ms. Peifer said the proposed benchmark for this indicator will be collected in partnership with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and the recommended denominator is the number of children age 3-5 enrolled in Part B services pre-kindergarten programs. The intent is to remediate the children to move them from special education pre-K to regular kindergarten.

7. #/% of children ages 2-5 at a healthy weight (Body Mass Index-BMI)

Ms. Peifer said the proposed benchmark for this indicator is to increase the number of children age 2-4 at a healthy weight (BMI) from 65% at baseline to 70-75% in 2020. This data is available from the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program. The benchmark is aiming high with a goal of 75% at a healthy weight/BMI. Director Flood questioned whether BMI should be used as a measure of healthy. Ms. Peifer agreed that BMI is not the only indicator of health. Chair Frei asked how the Regional Partnership Councils and First Things First are going to make a difference with this. Ms. Peifer said we are integrating healthy eating and nutrition in to many of our strategies including Quality First, Child Care Health Consultation and home visitation. CRIT RPC Member Corcino said their Head Start saw an increase in obesity and childhood diabetes, but she is glad to have a community-wide collaboration to help support change. The whole community must buy in. Regional Director Arnold said the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) could help by restricting the foods that could be bought with food stamps.

8. #/% of children receiving timely well child visits

Ms. Peifer stated that First Things First encourages getting children receiving appropriate and timely well-child visits, and supports physician educational programs. The recommended benchmark for this indicator is to increase from 65% (current) to 75 – 80% the percent of children receiving at least six well-child visits within the first 15 months of life by 2020. This data is available from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and the Indian Health Services.

9. #/% of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay

Ms. Peifer stated that the recommended benchmark for this indicator is to decrease from 35% at baseline to 32-34% in 2020 the number of children age 5 with untreated tooth decay. Ms. Peifer state that maintaining would be good due to the poor economy and that we can at least try to not let it get any worse. Member Burroughs stated they are promoting tooth brushing in preschool. Ms. Peifer stated the oral health survey would be done again. Ms. Peifer said this data is available from the Arizona Department of Health Services Oral health Survey, Indian Health Services, healthy People 2020 and the St. Luke's Health Initiative Arizona Health Survey.

10. % of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being

Ms. Peifer stated the recommendations for this benchmark are to be determined. The data source for this is the First Things First Family and Community Survey, which is conducted every two to three years. Baseline was established in 2008. New results are anticipated in 2012 to determine a trend line. Chair Frei asked if the survey results were available yet, but found that they were not. Chair Frei thinks socio-economic and geographic constraints would produce different results. Ms. Peifer commented there are different resources in different areas. For example, homes without phones could skew results to higher socio-economic areas.

Review and Discussion on the Timeline

Ms. Peifer stated she would bring the comments from the council members back to the board in August. Director Arnold stated the regional benchmarks would be incorporated into the SFY 2015 regional funding plans. Regional Director Arnold noted that the Race to the Top states had been calling CEO Rhian Allvin asking about shared government. Ms. Peifer stated that Race to the Top was a good learning process, and that we are hoping that one outcome of the work on that will be a memorandum of understanding for better nutrition. Member Burroughs said she thinks the Arizona Department of Health is ahead of other states. Ms. Peifer stated that North Carolina has standards (benchmarks) that are similar to the ones FTF is considering.

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant II

Merritt Beckett, Regional Director

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