



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## Arizona Early Child Development and Health Board Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council MINUTES

### Call to Order/Welcome

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on July 9, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. (Daylight Savings Time). The meeting was located at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #1, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona, 86515.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martin at approximately 11:25 a.m. followed by introduction of the Regional Council, staff, and guests.

Members Present: Benjamin Barney, Amelia Black, Grace Boyne, Rhonda Etsitty, Valonia Hardy, Harry Martin, Byrde Nez, Paula Seanez, and Jeannette Yazzie

Members Absent: Martin Ashley

FTF Staff Present: Melissa Begay, Elyse Dempsey, Memarie Tsosie, and Virginia Turner

### Call to the Public

Claude Endfield announced the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Childhood Fair of Northland Pioneer College on October 5, 2013, where early childhood caregivers and providers will be recognized for their efforts.

### Discussion and Possible Approval of the June 17, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Council approve the June 17, 2013 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Yazzie. Motion carried.

### Discussion and Possible Action on 2014 Regional Needs and Assets Work Plan

Chair Martin asked the Regional Council to consider discussion in Work Group on June 17, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. in Window Rock, Arizona, where Dr. Michele Walsh, Associate Research Professor of the University of Arizona Norton School, and Violeta Domínguez, Research Scientist of the University of Arizona Norton School facilitated discussion on the 2014 Needs and Assets report work plan. Per recommendations of the Regional Council, Ms. Domínguez and Dr. Walsh will plan to proceed with the work plan as presented, and will provide a list of potential tribal sources to the Regional Council for collection of supplemental tribal data. The Regional Council will also provide additional priority areas to Regional Director Begay to be included in the final report.

A motion was made by Member Hardy that the Regional Council approve the 2014 Needs and Assets Work Plan, seconded by Member Seanez. Motion carried.

### Presentation and Discussion on Early Childhood System Building

Regional Director Begay provided a PowerPoint presentation on early childhood system building Navajo Nation Arizona, addressing key areas such as governance and financing, parent support and education, early care and education, health, and public engagement. To increase quality and access to early education and health, and establish effective networking among stakeholders, Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council consider the current early childhood system on Navajo Nation, and potential priority areas for improvement and enhancement.

Member Seanez identified challenges relating to the position of First Things First on Navajo Nation as a state entity, a lack of a shared vision among early care providers and programs, and the absence of tribal leader involvement. Member Seanez also recommended First Things First engagement of early care providers on Navajo Nation through more personalized strategies that consider culture of communities.

Member Black expressed interest in collaborating with local tribal governance such as chapter houses where community needs are directly identified and addressed. Additionally, Member Black identified a lack of qualified early care program staff, and inadequate facilities management of centers as challenges to increasing the number of early care programs on Navajo Nation; and recommended that the Regional Council direct more funding to expansion.

Member Hardy indicated that partnerships with local entities such as the Indian Health Services are necessary to address all goal areas of the Regional Council; particularly as it pertains to data collection that is needed to identify the various needs of Navajo Nation Arizona communities.

Chair Martin referred to constraints of First Things First as a designated funding source for non-direct services, and indicated that goals of the Regional Council should be clearly identified for potential grantees. Chair Martin identified the goal of having all children on Navajo Nation Arizona to be enrolled in early care programs.

Vice Chair Boyne identified governance and financing as a key factors for child care as well as early care and education, and parent support and education. Vice Chair Boyne also identified reluctance for partnerships among child care programs as a potential challenge for early childhood system building on Navajo Nation.

Member Barney recommended that adjustments be made to First Things First goal areas to be more specific in terms of target audiences and desired outcomes for potential grantees. Member Barney also recommended that strategies for parent support and education consider strengthening the relationship between families of Navajo Nation and early care providers.

Regional Director Begay suggested that the Regional Council consider the participation early care providers in Quality First as a way to increase regional benchmarking for school readiness indicators as well as a way improve First Things First partnerships with Navajo Nation early care programs. Regional Director Begay further indicated that discussion regarding the three identified strategies for early childhood system building on Navajo Nation Arizona will continue at the August Regular Meeting: 1) creating a shared vision among early care providers; 2) enrolling for children into early care programs; and 3) having families and early care systems work together more closely.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2015 Family, Friends, and Neighbor Strategy**

Vice Chair Boyne stated for the record that she has a conflict with agenda item 6, and recused herself from the agenda item. Vice Chair Boyne is the Program Manager of the Navajo Nation Child Care Development Fund, which is a grantee of the strategy.

Due to loss of quorum at the June Regular Meeting, the Regional Council took no action on the Family, Friends, and Neighbor strategy. Regional Director Begay reintroduced strategy with progress updates from the current grantee – Navajo Nation Child Care Development Fund, which is currently in the final year of funding. Regional Director Begay asked for early consideration of the Regional Council to continue funding the strategy in FY15, 16, and 17 as early action would allow for proper approvals to be obtained by the Navajo Nation to avoid delay in program services. Funding would support to home base providers to continue quality care programs, and assist providers with becoming regulated for enrollment in Quality First.

A motion was made by Member Seanez that the Regional Council continue to include the Family, Friends, and Neighbor strategy in the SFY15 Funding plan, seconded by Member Hardy. Motion carried 7:0:1.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on SFY14 Recruitment – Stipend/Loan Forgiveness**

In reference to past action taken by the Regional Council to defund the Recruitment – Stipend/Loan Forgiveness strategy in SFY14, Regional Director Begay indicated that further action was needed since the strategy was approved by the First Things First State Board in June 2013 as a multi-regional contract with the grantee. Regional Director Begay and program staff will work with the current grantee to create a responsive Quality Assurance improvement plan that would address barriers and challenges of the grantee, and regular progress reports would be provided to the Regional Council. Additionally, as the contract is for a two-year period, the Regional Council can elect to defund the strategy in SFY15.

Vice Chair Boyne expressed concern regarding the validity of past action taken by the Regional Council as well as the challenges to identify successful implementation for the strategy on the part of the grantee.

With requirements of the strategy to serve primary children zero to age five conflicting with needs of the region to serve an older populous, Member Seanez stated that the Regional Council elected to defund the strategy as a therapist may not be able to fulfill requirements to serve children ages birth to five years.

Per Chair Martin's inquiry regarding the consequence of maintaining the original action of the Regional Council to defund the strategy, Senior Regional Director Turner indicated that the strategy would be terminated for all Regional Councils that are included in the multi-regional contract. Additionally, as the Regional Council did not provide formal feedback to the grantee for corrective action, electing to continue funding the strategy in SF14 would allow for adjustments to be made by the grantee.

A motion was made by Member Etsitty that the Regional Council continue the Recruitment – Stipend/Loan Forgiveness Strategy for SFY14 with the understanding that a performance implementation plan is being put in place and progress on the plan will be provided to the Regional Council, seconded by Member Yazzie. Motion carried 6:2:0.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2014 Regional Council Meetings**

The Regional Council elected to maintain Regular Meetings of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council on the second Tuesday of each month with location and time to be proposed in August.

A motion was made by Member Seanez that the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council approve to continue to hold their regular meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, seconded by Member Etsitty. Motion carried.

#### **Regional Director Report**

Regional Director Begay provided a PowerPoint presentation of Quality First SFY15 Model Updates to the Child Care Scholarships, Star Rating, and T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships components; modifications will become effective July 1, 2014 to allow for current Quality First participants to make needed adjustments.

Regional Director Begay also informed the Regional Council that First Things First Tribal Affairs is working on securing data permission from Indian Health Services and Women, Infants, and Children to begin the regional benchmarking process.

#### **SFY13 Community Outreach Report**

Community Outreach Coordinator presented a three-minute video to the Regional Council of SFY13 benchmarks and successes for Community Outreach.

Referencing early childhood system building, Member Seanez recommended the inclusion of Navajo Nation early care programs in community outreach efforts and projects.

#### **Regional Council Member Announcements**

Member Etsitty announced the release of the annual report for the Associate for Supportive Child Care, and the implementation of new programs that may be presented to the Regional Council if desired.

Member Seanez expressed gratitude for the opportunity to attend the Language Immersion Planning and Methodology workshop in Tucson, Arizona.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council Regular Meeting will be held on August 13, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. (Daylight Savings Time) at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #1, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

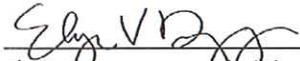
**Adjournment**

A motion was made by Member Seanez to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Yazzie. Motion carried. Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:30 p.m.

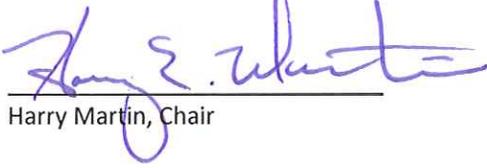
Dated this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2013

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council



Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II



Harry Martin, Chair