



FIRST THINGS FIRST
The right system for bright futures

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health

North Phoenix Regional Council

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The meeting of the First Things First North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council of the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board was held on July 14, 2009 at Washington Elementary School District, 4650 W. Sweetwater, Governing Board Room, Glendale, AZ 85304.

Regional Council Chair Adams called item #1 for the meeting to come to order at 4:33 p.m. A brief welcome by Chair Adams and introduction of the guests at the meeting.

Council Members in attendance:

Bill Adams, Sally Downing, Dr. Elaine Ellis, James Emch, Jenna Goad, Gina Montes, Karyn Parker, Connie Robinson, Willette Watts

Council Members not in attendance:

Mindy Zapata

First Things First Staff in attendance:

Kamil Gutierrez, Kelley Murphy, Mary Myers, Brenda Tomlin, Kim Van Pelt

Public in attendance:

8 members of the public were present

2. Welcome to New Council Member Willette Watts

Chair Adams called item #2 welcoming new Council Member Willette Watts to the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council.

Council Member Watts has been living in Arizona since 1983 and has been in early childhood education for most of that time. Council Member Watts is the Director of Northwest Christian Preschool.

3. Consent Agenda

Chair Adams called item #2 to consent agenda.

The items on the Consent Agenda included the Regular Meeting Minutes and Executive Session Meeting Minutes from the June 9, 2009 North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council Meeting.

A motion was made by Council Member Ellis to accept the June 9, 2009 meeting minutes. Seconded by Council Member Robinson. Motion carried.

4. Call to the Public

Chair Adams called item #4 for members of the public to address the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council.

- Bruce Liggitt, Executive Director of Arizona Childcare Association addressed the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council.

The Arizona Childcare Association is a statewide membership organization of private licensed for profit and non-profit child care providers. The Arizona Childcare Association represents small independently owned businesses, small faith based centers, community based agencies and the large companies that provide childcare. These providers provide childcare for infant, toddler, preschool through school aged children. In June, Mr. Liggitt expressed his thanks to the State Board for their quick movement to provide emergency scholarships for child care. Mr. Liggitt expressed how much it has helped children, families, providers (some to stay afloat). These scholarships have kept children out of dangerous situations. Child care providers have been able to keep teachers. He identified that typically for every 10 children supported under the emergency scholarships, one teacher's position is also supported.

Mr. Liggitt expressed his thanks to the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council for funding emergency child care scholarships. He addressed the fact that while he was aware that the scholarships were meant to be temporary, the economy in Arizona remains bleak. Mr. Liggitt asked the Council to consider additional funding for emergency scholarships.

- Debra White, Director of Operations for Valley Child Care Learning Center/Cactus Preschools was called to address the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council.

Ms. White informed the Council that her organization serves 1505 of children around the valley. Valley Child Care Learning Center/Cactus Preschools has a staff of 215 members. She has 264 scholarship recipients. Ms. White explained the many demographic areas that the First Things First emergency scholarships have supported.

Ms. White explained the importance of continuity for the children of Arizona. She also discussed how the emergency scholarships have helped to retain teaching positions at the Valley Child Care Learning Center/Cactus Preschools.

- Erica Melady a parent residing in the North Phoenix Region addressed the Council.

Ms. Melady has twin sons that are enrolled in Premier Children's Center received a letter from Premier Learning Center explaining that her emergency child care scholarships will be ending soon. She is an Arizona State employee who feels that she will have to relinquish her position at the state in order to care for her children.

- Tracy Showater, Director of Premier Children's Center was called to address the Council.

Tracy Showater, Director of Premier Children's Center expressed her concern for children in her center that are receiving emergency scholarship funding. Many of the parents who have children in the center do not qualify for Arizona Department of Economic Security assistance.

She asks that First Things First continue to provide these scholarships in order to provide continuity of care for these children as that is the most important thing.

- Sherry Anderson – Tutor Time, La Petite and Child Time Learning Center, addressed the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council.

Sherry Anderson spoke of the importance of the having these remain in the centers that they are currently receiving service in order to preserve continuity of care. There are ten centers serving more 1000 children. She stated that many parents are now working in positions that pay 50% less than their previous job. Ms. Anderson is concerned that with school beginning again soon many children will be without adequate care.

- Mindful that an open dialog is not allowed with call to the public participants under open meeting law guidelines, Regional Coordinator Tomlin posed a question for clarification to Mr. Liggitt regarding his earlier remarks regarding scholarship implementation. Ms. Tomlin asked Mr. Liggitt if he had received feedback from his providers to help determine if on-going scholarships would benefit the child care provider community more if the scholarships were structured to be paid at the current level, but cover less time (i.e., 6 months instead of 12) so more children could receive them; or if it would be better to pay a lower scholarship amount overall so funding would spread amongst more children?
- Mr. Liggitt replied by saying that the child care community's hopes are that because the scholarship program already exists, First Things First will continue to provide dollars for the children. He hopes that all the Councils will begin to monitor how many children there are in the respective regions and how much funding would be necessary to provide care for the children. Mr. Liggitt states that locally he believes that the child care community hopes that the emergency scholarship dollars will continue as they are until the economy stabilizes.

5. Statewide Initiatives

Kelley Murphy, Senior Policy Specialist, First Things First addressed the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council. Ms. Murphy gave an update on the currently funded statewide initiatives:

- **Quality First!** – The first 300 statewide funded centers/homes for Quality First were selected a couple of months ago. Those centers/homes are in the process of enrollment. Approximately 260 – 270 slots have been filled and have signed documents. No names were released until after the actual enrollment of the center to assure that centers/homes selected actually made it completely through the enrollment process. Some selections were unable to participate in the program due to financial reasons, no longer interested in participating, or no longer meeting eligibility requirements. Today is the coaches training for the coach teams.
- **T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships** – Educational sessions have begun for those who are enrolled in Quality First! They have to go to educational session in order to learn about the scholarships.
- **Child Care Health Consultation** – Contracts need to be signed by the Maricopa County Health Department. This region has allocated additional funding to support additional Child Care Health Consultants outside of those working with the Quality First! centers/homes. A training and technical assistance contract was established with Pima County to train staff across the state. Software will be purchased and it will track data and outcomes across the state.

- **Compensation and Retention** – This RFGA was pulled. There were internal issues that prevented First Things First from following through with this RFGA. There were no awards. This RFGA is being reviewed for re-release.
- **Intergovernmental Agreement with ASU** – To increase the number of Speech and Pathology students. First Things First is providing funding to increase the numbers in that area. Another component is adding into the curricula pediatric feeding issues. There are not enough experts in the state. Details are being completed on what that curricula should look like and how it will be implemented into the program.
- **Physician Outreach & Training RFGA** – This is a practice improvement program for physician practices around the state. First Things First will work to train them on the medical home model so that First Things First can have data and follow up on children around the state.
- **Mental Health Consultation Model** – This is an RFGA process. Many regions have allocations in their funding plans to support Mental Health Consultants. The scope of work is a difficult one to write because it was necessary to include the ideas and intentions of all of the regions. It is very close to being completed.
- **Families First** – There has been background development regarding the content of the educational website piece and what it should include. Other questions under current consideration are which links to other information should be included on the website.

Council Chair Adams thanked Kelley Murphy for sending updates to the North Phoenix Regional Council.

6. Discussion and Possible Vote – Meeting Crisis Needs

Regional Coordinator Tomlin called item #5 for discussion of Crisis Response and Family Resource Centers.

- Coordinator Tomlin led the discussion regard whether or not the North Phoenix Council wanted to continue with the identified warm line strategy. She provided examples of RFGA’s that have been released regarding crisis needs in other Regional Councils.
- Coordinator Tomlin stated that Council Member Robinson has also contacted local schools to obtain information on how best to identify special needs children and prepare teachers to handle that responsibility. This could also be considered as a revision to the strategy if the council felt this was a priority area to address.
- Coordinator Tomlin stated that it important to make a decision regarding these funds. Coordinator Tomlin explained options that the North Phoenix Regional Council may consider which included: (1) carrying the money forward, (2) developing a new strategy and (3) adding funding to an existing strategy that is not sufficiently funded. The Council has a balance of \$200,000.
- Council Chair Adams asked the Council for its input as to how to spend these funds.
- Council Member Robinson addressed the Council regarding a conversation calls she made Deer Valley School District and Paradise Valley School District. She spoke to principals, counselors, etc. Council Member Robinson was told that the need to both districts is to have funding for early literacy. The suggested that they also benefit from have parent education so that parents

have the tools and confidence to help children in their respective school districts. She suggests that funding be used in this area.

- Council Member Montes stated that she was moved by the presentations given by the providers and parents during call to the public. She feels that some funds should go towards those efforts. She also stated that there are alcohol and substance abuse situations that would be magnified by financial stressors for parents. These problems are a huge cause of abuse and neglect. Funding for child abuse and neglect prevention is important.
- Council Member Goad is interested in providing funding for the Crisis Response and Family Resource Centers. She supports the idea of having a source of a broad spectrum of services for families.
- Council Member Emch stated that the emergency child care scholarships have been a great benefit to children in the region. He stated that quality and continuity of care has been an issued in the child care industry for a many years. Council Member Emch believes it going to be difficult for First Things First to get Quality First! up and running quickly. He believes in having funding continue for the children in this region to attend quality child care centers will assist in lowering abuse and providing decent meals for these children.
- Council Member Ellis stated that the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council mission was to put things in place to make all of Arizona’s children better. She believe that the Council needs to look to the future and push forward to have our statewide strategies come to fruition opposed to “band-aid” solutions that only last for the moment. She understands the desperation in the community. Council Member Ellis reminded the Council that their goal was to make processes and build systems that would make Arizona children ready to learn and to have ground work done that would be replicated. She supports the Crisis Needs Strategy.
- Council Member Robinson stated that it is very easy to add money to one thing or another but that the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council needs to remember the important work of supporting their Region.
- Council Member Emch stated that there is a push for the Department of Economic security to evaluate its waiting list process. First Things First seems to be covering the gap in funding for the children of Arizona that are in child care facilities.

A motion was made by Council Member Ellis to adopt the crisis response plan that was used in Central Phoenix Region and to move the \$200,000 in warm line funds into the crisis response plan. Seconded by Council Member Downing. Motion carries.

Vote: 8 Yes 1 No

7. Discussion of Early Literacy Strategy Response to Board

Chair Adams called item #6 for discussion of the Early Literacy Strategy Response

- North Phoenix Regional Coordinator Tomlin reported the Council’s letter had thus far been presented to one member of the Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board. It is to be circulated to other members of the Board. The response given to Coordinator Tomlin was

that the Board will try to meet before the August Board meeting. If they are not able to have a quorum, it will be addressed at the August meeting.

- Coordinator Tomlin asked the North Phoenix Regional Council whether or not they would like to take any additional steps to address concerns that they have regarding actions the State Board has/has not taken. She also informed the Council that they are welcome to attend the August Board Meeting in order to address any issues they have. The Yavapai Regional Partnership Council is also sending a letter to the Board and will be attending the August Board meeting.
- Council Chair Adams is concerned about the amount of time it has taken to receive a response from the Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board President. He believes that there should be an additional step to create communication between the two entities.
- Council Member Montes stated that she would like to volunteer to attend the August Board meeting to discuss the North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council's issues.
- Council Member Ellis stated that attending the Board meeting is important because there is an underlying issue regarding the approval of strategies vs. the approval of recommendations. The Council feels that they have followed the process necessary to have their RFGA approved. The Council is disappointed that the Board is now denying the decisions that were made.
- Council Chair Adams stated that it is important to address the issue as the Council volunteers their time to discuss and decide on strategies that benefit the State and it should be taken more seriously. Council Chair Adams stated that responses from the Board should be timely.

The North Phoenix Regional Partnership Councils will be for Council Chair Adams meet with the Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Executive Director Elliott Hibbs to discuss untimely response to the Council's letter.

8. Discussion, Possible Vote and Executive Session – Oral Health Strategy

Chair Adams called item #7 Oral Health Strategy for discussion.

Executive Session Convened

A motion was made by Council Member Downing to convene Executive Session to discuss the Oral Health Strategy as it is an open RFGA. Seconded by Council Member Parker. Executive session was convened at approximately 6:20 p.m.

Executive Session Adjourned

A motion was made by Council Member Montes to adjourn Executive Session at approximately 6:26 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Ellis.

8. Vote – Oral Health Strategy

A motion was made by Council Member Downing to accept the review committee's recommendations as presented to the Council in the confidential summary documents. Seconded by Council Member Montes.

No Conflicts

Vote: 9 Yes

Council Member Montes was excused from the 7/14/2009 North Phoenix Regional Partnership Council Meeting at 6:39 p.m.

9. Council Member Announcements

Chair Adams called item #8 for Council Members to make announcements.

- Email for Regional Boundaries needs to be completed by 7/21/2009.
- Chair and Vice Chairs meeting is September 10, 2009.

10. Discussion of Future Agenda Items

Chair Adams called item #9 for future agenda items. Suggestions for future items were presented as follows:

- Timeline for Needs & Assets for the next fiscal year
- Board allocations for next fiscal year
- Councils and cross regional strategies & collaborations
- Next Council meetings
- Outreach focus – Grantee Interaction
- Attendance Policy
- Evaluation Update – Longitudinal Study
- How to work with schools
- How to project unspent dollars
- Monthly financial report

A motion was made by Council Member Goad to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m. Seconded by Council Member Parker. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be held on August 11, 2009 at the same location.

SUBMITTED BY:



Kamil Gutierrez, Administrative Assistant III

Approved:



Brenda Tomlin, North Phoenix Regional Coordinator