



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

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 June 28, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. at the Colorado River Union High School District located at 5221 Highway 95, Fort Mohave, Arizona 86426.

Director Beckett called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Members present

Alisa Burroughs, Jose Garcia, Terri Holloway, Debra Weger, Betsy Lewis – telephonically, Vijette Saari - telephonically

Members excused

Riley Frei, Lenore Knudtson, Nancy Mongeau, Catie Sondrol

Members Absent

Melissa Howell

Call to the Public

Director Beckett read a letter from Barbara Wanland, a Harris Institute scholarship recipient thanking the Council for the opportunity.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Weger made a motion to approve the May 24, 2012 meeting minutes. Member Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

Second Read: Annual Review of Governance Policies

Director Beckett reviewed the minor changes recommended for the Policies. Member Holloway made a motion to approve the Policies as changed. Member Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

Report on Annual Smart Start Conference

Member Burroughs thanked First Things First for sending her to the Smart Start Conference. She said it was a great conference with a big mix of people and topics. She gave a quick quiz on the history of early childhood. Member Burroughs shared a framework with the Council, which covers how to present your case to the public. The Harvard website (www.harvard.edu) outlines crafting well-framed messages for better communication.

Sometimes the message we intend to send is not the message the recipient receives, and we are not as clear as we need to be. Member Burroughs spoke of her experience with children falling asleep in class due to being kept at Little League games where their older siblings were playing late into the evening. One interpretation is that is a bad parent for keeping the younger child up; however, instead it may be the product of one-parent child-rearing. Another example is a mother taking her child to the liquor store/food mart at midnight because that is when the funds are added to their nutrition assistance card (food stamps), and she needed to go to work the next day before the store opened. How would you view that parent? The message template explained that for states to prosper, we need to invest in early childhood development and that messages need to be thoughtful and intentional. Member Burroughs felt this was good information for our Council.

Another session Member Burroughs attended was called "Connect Modules." There is a website that includes free modules, and Member Burroughs plans to invite area day cares to participate in using the information included there. Director Beckett will forward this presentation to stakeholders.

The last session Member Burroughs shared covered "evocative coaching." There is also a Smart Start website that Member Burroughs encouraged everyone to review. The Smart Start attendees had a great time, and there was line dancing at the reception. Director Beckett thanked Member Burroughs for attending the conference and volunteering to present this information back to the Council.

Community Outreach Update

Community Outreach Liaison Della Gray gave an update on statewide and local community outreach efforts, which have included visits to clubs and associations and presentations to community groups. Recent events have included Family Fun Days and the Week of the Young Child. New educational reinforcement items were shared, including toddler/infant toothbrushes and onesies. Through a partnership with Wells Fargo Bank, the Bullhead City Elementary School District and the Lake Havasu Unified School District, children's art was displayed in bank branches through-out the region in honor of the Week of the Young Child. Proclamations were also presented by mayors in Parker and Bullhead in honor of the Week of the Young Child and the 2012 Champion for Young Children Award was presented to the Honorable Judge Richard Weiss. Through these and other efforts, some 2,590 people have heard about First Things First over the past two quarters. The new First Things First campaign – Think Fast, They Do - (www.aztf.gov/brains) includes radio, a television commercial, and a parent's corner on the FTF website.

Discussion and Possible Action on SFY 2013 Community Outreach Budget

This budget includes \$83K for outreach staff, and \$30K for community awareness. It reflects a reduction of \$10K from last year. Member Holloway made a motion to approve the SFY 2013 Community Outreach Budget as written. Member Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

Family, Friend and Neighbor RFGA #FTF-MULTI-13-0406-00

Director Beckett explained there was \$100K for this new strategy, and there was one applicant. The review committee included three Council members from the West Region, including one from the La Paz/Mohave Region, who are recommending approval. If this RFGA is approved by the Council, it will then have to be approved by the Board. Because RFGA information is confidential, the Council would have to go into Executive Session to further discuss any questions. Member Holloway asked if the organization was qualified. Senior Director Arnold reiterated that an Executive Session is required to answer any questions. Member Holloway withdrew her question. The Council indicated they were satisfied. Member Weger made a motion to approve RFGA #FTF-MULTI-13-0406-00. Member Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

Debrief Regional Area Forum on Statewide Benchmarks

Director Beckett said that Members Weger and Burroughs, Chair Frei, and Incoming Member Weiske attended this Forum in Lake Havasu City. The Forum was a brief summary of the work performed on benchmarks across the state to date. There are ten indicators approved by the board, and each Regional Council selects which indicators they will align their plans with. Eventually, each Regional Partnership Council will establish benchmarks for each of their selected indicators. The minutes from the Forum are found in Attachment 9. The comments made to staff were taken back to the central office for consideration. Benchmarks for two of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council's chosen indicators are still in progress. Member Weger said that some of the progress (interim) measures don't measure what the benchmark intends to measure. Member Burroughs said there is vision, but not yet substance. Director Beckett will pass along the feedback and share additional information as it becomes available.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Additional Communities for Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships

Director Beckett advised there are currently eight pre-K sites in our region, and eleven Quality First sites. In FY13, the total funding available is \$1.1M, with \$132K allocated for pre-K expansion. We tried to reach agreement with school districts in northern Mohave County, but were unable to do so. As background, a lack of child care facilities identified the first three communities recommended to expand into next as Littlefield, Topock and Quartzsite. Subsequently the expansion strategy included Mohave Valley, Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City. Another criteria used in prioritizing is the percentage of students/children in the school district in the free/reduced lunch programs. Director Beckett is requesting direction in the next three school districts to approach, explaining that \$132K funds twenty slots. Member Holloway suggested taking the top three on the list, but pointed out that Hackberry doesn't have many children. Member Burroughs stated she got phone calls asking how to do the grant for these scholarships. Member Holloway suggested Yucca. Director Beckett stated if the Council wants to fund all twenty slots in one school district, they only need to identify one district. Director Beckett gave

the example of Bouse where ten slots were funded. Member Holloway asked if the school districts listed have pre-school programs in place already. Member Lewis suggested speaking with Salome to see if they are interested. The consensus was to start with Salome, then go on to Parker if necessary. Member Holloway asked if anything was left then to go to Yucca. Director Beckett will approach the school districts in that order and bring back any agreement(s) for council approval.

Director's Report and Possible Discussion

- A. *SFY 2012 Financial Report* – Director Beckett stated FY12 is almost over, with \$4.5M awarded to grantees. As of June 22, 2012 a little over \$3M of that had been expended (67%). The final billing is due by August 15, 2012, so Director Beckett expects that number to go up to about 75%. There will be carry forward, but we won't know that amount until mid-September. A couple of grantees have expended 100%, but some are start up grantees (e.g. the Lake Havasu City and Bouse pre-K scholarships) and unexpended funds are to be expected. Also the grantees whose strategies were not continued next year may not expend 100% due to staff reductions, etc. Member Holloway asked about the Yuma Food Bank. Senior Director Arnold stated they have had a change in management and an acceleration of the use of funds, and he thinks perhaps they have expended 50%.
- B. *SFY 2012 Data Report* – Director Beckett stated this report is for FY12 third quarter so it represents services provided through March 2012. She explained that most grantees are meeting or exceeding service numbers. Director Beckett did point out that the Court Team service number of 304 – following ongoing monitoring – is not realistic. Subsequently, the FY13 service numbers have been reduced to 200 which are more in line with the number of cases that come into the court system. Member Holloway asked about Milemarkers, and Director Beckett stated that the service numbers – particularly in remote areas – were not likely to be met this year. This strategy will not be renewed in FY13; however, developmental screening is imbedded in two other larger strategies, home visiting and pre-kindergarten scholarships.
- C. *New Council Member Orientation – July 30, 2012 in Lake Havasu City* – Director Beckett introduced and welcomed Incoming Member Howard Weiske whose term begins July 1, 2012. He is the only new member, so will be attending the orientation; however all Council members are invited and encouraged to attend.
- D. *First Things First Summit – August 19 – 21, 2012 in Phoenix* – Director Beckett stated that seven La Paz/Mohave Regional Council Members are registered for the Summit. This is probably the largest showing of Council Members since the first summit, and it should be an excellent event.

General Discussion

None.

Quality First Overview

Director Beckett introduced Ginger Sandweg, Director of Quality First. Quality First is Arizona's quality improvement and rating system. The three main tasks are:

1. Identifying quality standards
 - a. Quality of environments
 - b. Quality of interactions – adult/child, child/child
 - c. Quality of program practices
2. Assessment of quality standards
3. Maintain or increase quality standards

Almost 800 programs are enrolled in Quality First across the state. These include school district programs, community programs, faith-based programs, Head Start programs and tribal programs. In the La Paz/Mohave region, there are currently ten center-based programs and one family child care home. In FY13, an increase of eight additional Pre-Kindergarten sites are funded to participate in Quality First. Beginning in SFY 2014, all FTF-funded Pre-Kindergarten sites will be required to have a 3, 4 or 5 star rating in order to participate in the scholarship program. Director Sandweg reviewed the environmental rating tools, which included several manuals that define the terms that are used. There is also a website with notes clarifications. For example, the hand washing standard has increased from 10 seconds to 20 seconds of lathering. Pre-Kindergarten programs newly enrolling in Quality First in SFY 2013 will be selected in August, and will be contacted by a coach (unless they are already enrolled in Quality First). Director Beckett opened the discussion up to the public for questions. Member Lewis asked for more information about the tools, and Member Burroughs stated she would share that information with Member Lewis.

Next Meeting

Director Beckett noted that there were no action items scheduled for the July meeting, and Chair Frei, Member Weger and Member Saari would not be able to attend, so the Council could cancel the meeting if desired. There were no objections so

the July meeting was cancelled. The next meeting is at 9:30 am on Thursday, August 23, 2012 at the Bullhead City Elementary School District Board Room located at 1004 Hancock Road, Bullhead City, Arizona 86442.

Adjourn

Member Garcia made a motion to adjourn. Member Holloway seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

There being no further business Director Beckett adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Minutes approved.

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant

Merritt Beckett, Regional Director