



FIRST THINGS FIRST

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Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Introductions

The regular meeting of the First Things First – La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council was held **July 28, 2011** at 9:30 a.m. in the Distance Learning Room at El Capitan Public School, 225 N. Cottonwood Street, Colorado City, Arizona 86021.

Chairman Frei called the meeting to order at 9:36a.m. Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Members present: Riley Frei-Chair, Betsy Lewis, Vijette Saari, Catie Sondrol, Alisa Burroughs, Terri Holloway-Telephonically, Jose Garcia-Telephonically

Members Absent: Nancy Mongeau-Vice Chair, Lenore Knudtson, Melissa Howell, Debra Weger

Call to the Public:

Margaret Taylor, Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC) Program Director, introduced Kathy Chaet, new Program Specialist for the Access to Quality Child Care Program and expressed a desire to recruit new child care centers and providers for the program. Ms. Taylor also expressed an interest in meeting any potential new recruits in person and spending a few moments explaining the Access to Quality Child Care program for anyone interested.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No Conflicts of Interest were declared.

Approval of June 23, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Member Holloway made a motion to approve the June 23, 2011, meeting minutes. Motion was seconded by Member Sondrol. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

SFY2011 Financial Report Presentation and Possible Discussion

Regional Director Merritt Beckett directed the Regional Partnership Council members and the audience to Attachment 2-the most recent Financial Report. Director Beckett explained the Council had asked for an explanation for any Grantee contracts that had not expended more than 50% of the expected monies. Contracts with less than 50% expended were highlighted in red. Director Beckett explained the different reasons for the lack of expenditures. Community Outreach is less than anticipated due to a significant cost savings in ordering leave behinds in bulk. Director Beckett explained that an expenditure to Scholastic Books totaling just under \$2000 is not reflecting on the report. Director Beckett further explained it is an internal error that is currently being worked out. The Fort Mojave Indian Tribe Child Care Family Support program is at less than 50% due to the late start date; therefore, the program is not expected to have spent more than the amount reflected. Director Beckett then gave an update on the progress of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe Family Support program. Mohave County Department of Public Health-Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) is lower than expected due to barriers encountered in hiring nurses for the program. The strategy also has extensive training required to be in compliance for the evidence-based model and the nurse currently working as a Child Care Health Consultant only recently finished her training in May of 2011. ASCC's agreement with T.E.A.C.H. is under-expended because scholars are at various stages of the process, and if they are not yet enrolled and taking classes, then the tuition expense, which is the bulk of the cost, has not yet been charged to FTF. The Bullhead Elementary School District (BHESD) has a pending payment being processed that does not reflect in the percentage of expenditure. The BHESD also had a later start date on the contract, so it is not expected to have expended past 50% as of yet. Topock Elementary School District is in the process of submitting request for reimbursement. Topock Elementary School District's classroom is full to capacity, and it is expected to be above 50% once reimbursement is complete. Quality First is slightly under 50% expended; this portion of Quality First is the contract that includes incentives for Child Care centers to improve and not all of the centers may have received those incentives yet. Director Beckett gave an overview of final expenditures and possible carry forward and explained that Grantees have until August 15, 2011, to submit for SFY2011 reimbursement, so a final amount for carry forward would not be available until mid-September. Chairman Frei asked if the T.E.A.C.H. scholarships will reach closer to budget capacity in the upcoming months. Director Beckett stated she did ask for clarification from T.E.A.C.H. regarding the scholarship program and received a response back. The response stated there has been a change in the way First Things First is counting whether a scholarship is awarded, and so during future reports a Council may see the number of scholarships rise and fall due to the way the data is being extracted from their system. First Things First only reflects actively enrolled students, but T.E.A.C.H. considers any contract initiated as awarded, because once initiated the slot cannot be given to someone else. Director Beckett

further clarified the different categories for T.E.A.C.H. grants, including the difference between Quality First-T.E.A.C.H. and regional funded T.E.A.C.H. only. Director Beckett is confident that the Council is budgeting appropriately for the T.E.A.C.H. program.

Director's Report and Possible Discussion

Director Beckett began the Director's Report with a discussion on the upcoming First Things First Early Childhood Summit being held August 28 through August 30, 2011, in Phoenix at the Pointe Hilton-Tapatío Cliffs. Director Beckett informed the Council Vice Chair Mongeau has registered and will be attending. Director Beckett inquired who else from the Council would be attending and if any Council members had registered yet. Member Lewis replied she would be going and had registered. Member Burroughs and Member Garcia also expressed an interest in going.

A. SFY2013 Strategic Planning and Regional Funding Plan Timeline

Director Beckett informed the Council the SFY2013 Funding Plan is due to the First Things First Board on December 16, 2011. Director Beckett illustrated the regional life cycle and Funding Plan timeline. Strategic Planning is a continuous process that begins with a Needs and Assets report. Director Beckett informed the Council the Board will finalize the Indicators, as well as the Regional boundaries and Regional allocations for the next three years, at the August Board meeting. Director Beckett gave an overview of the timeline for strategic planning and for developing the funding plan. A funding plan workgroup will need to be formed and should meet in September. Director Beckett reminded the Council last year's workgroup included Vice Chair Mongeau, Member Holloway, and Member Burroughs. A draft of the funding plan will be reviewed at the October meeting. Chair Frei inquired about the possibility of the regional boundaries changing. Director Beckett responded that while it is a possibility, she is not aware of that being recommended. Director Beckett further clarified the process for determining any possible recommendations for new regional boundaries. Director Beckett also reminded the Council that most of the current grant contracts are in the third year, and as a result are not eligible for renewal, and if it is determined to continue the strategies, then Request for Grant Applications (RFGA) will go out next year.

B. Quality First Update

Director Beckett discussed the Policy Brief that was emailed to the Council, partners and stakeholders outlining the background of Quality First and its approach toward improving child care in the state of Arizona. In June, the Board approved the rating system for Quality First that allows Quality First to assign 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 star ratings to child care providers enrolled in its program. The program has grown significantly; it started with 300 programs; now, 600 programs are enrolled in Quality First, and the expectation for 2013 is expansion to over 900 programs across the State. From the first two years of implementation, participating providers and community partners have given a lot of feedback, which has allowed the Quality First model to be updated. There are two primary shifts in the model. First, moving from just focusing on improving quality to also providing financial support and incentives to help sustain quality over time, and second, and most significant, is the idea and focus on quality being tied to financing so that more low income children are driven into quality child care settings. Quality First will slowly implement the changes. A few changes will be implemented immediately including information sessions in the communities with open Quality First vacancies and assessment before a Quality First coach is assigned to a site. Finally, the star ratings will be assigned at the end of this year. A bonus will be given to sites that are rated a 3 star site and above. From preliminary assessments, First Things First has realized this is not very many sites. At this time, 6% of the Quality First sites in Arizona are rated 3 stars or above. Star ratings will not be publicized until 2013. The goal would be to improve many star ratings before they are made public. In 2013, coaching intensity will be increased, all Quality First sites will offer scholarships for low income families to help increase the availability of high quality child care, and all regions will have the same consultation package, including mental health consultants. Chairman Frei asked if First Things First is looking to align Quality First to the Federal Government "Race to the Top" program. Director Beckett replied First Things First is working with other State agencies to align programs to "Race to the Top" and put a proposal together for Arizona. Director Beckett gave an update on the number of Quality First slots funded for the La Paz/Mohave region.

C. Communications Update

Director Beckett gave an update on the impact of the media campaign from last year. Director Beckett outlined the statewide communications goals to increase public awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health. Director Beckett then gave an overview of the different media outlets used. A baseline was established to set benchmarks. Based on most recent surveys, most of the benchmarks have been and continue to be met. Member Holloway asked if there was a way to tell what drove the numbers to the current level. Senior Regional Director Gary Arnold explained the State does not have that level of detail. Director Beckett offered to send out the actual survey results, but she believes that being on the ballot possibly played a role in raising awareness of First Things First and the importance of early childhood development and health. Chairman Frei recognized and thanked Della Gray, Community Outreach Coordinator for the La Paz/Mohave Region for her dedication and hard work to help increase the awareness and importance of early childhood development and health in the region.

2012 Needs and Assets Work-Plan and Timeline Presentation, Discussion and Possible Action

Chairman Frei welcomed Michelle Walsh from the University Of Arizona Norton School Of Business to present the 2012 Needs and Assets Work-Plan and Timeline. Ms. Walsh expressed the importance of the Needs and Assets Reports for the community and as a component of strategic planning. Ms. Walsh directed the Council to Attachment 3 that outlines the work plan for the 2012 Needs

and Assets report. There is a baseline report that pulls basic information together and compiles it for use. A second component for the 2012 Needs and Assets report are the community fact sheets. This will provide information to be used in the community as a means to further engage the people of the communities in working for quality early childhood development and health programs. Ms. Walsh directed the Council to Attachment 4 that outlines potential indicators that may be used to develop the community fact sheets. Ms. Walsh asked the Council for input on the potential indicators. Suggestions and input included possibly including the number of families with a parent or guardian incarcerated and families involved in the court systems but not necessarily involved with Child Protective Services, including charter schools and homeschooling numbers, the effects of bordering another state and families using services from a state other than Arizona, and childhood hunger rates. It was also suggested that professional development indicators not be a priority, as they would not interest families in the community as much. Ms. Walsh asked for help in identifying key informants to use in different communities to help gather data for the community fact sheets. Ms. Walsh also spoke with Member Lewis regarding tribal approval from the Fort Mojave Indian Tribal council. Ms. Walsh explained that in smaller communities, census blocks and five-year data would be used to avoid causing any one family to be identified and to avoid having data that is not in line with other communities. Member Saari made a motion to approve the 2012 Needs and Assets Work-Plan and Timeline presented by University of Arizona Norton School of Business. Member Garcia seconded the motion. All Council members present voted in favor of the motion. The motion to approve the 2012 Needs and Assets Work-Plan and Timeline was approved.

Early Childhood Therapist Incentives Program Presentation and Possible Discussion

Chairman Frei introduced Sherry Haskins from the Department of Health Services (DHS) who presented a PowerPoint outlining a new strategy in the region – Early Childhood Therapist Incentives Program. The PowerPoint outlined the purpose of the program, the objectives for the program, which Regional Partnership Councils are participating, the eligibility guidelines for a therapist and for a service site; and the financial parameters including a breakdown of the tuition reimbursement and the stipend available for the four years. Director Beckett reminded the Council the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council allocated funding for the first 2 years but not the third or fourth year, at this time. Director Beckett informed the Council it is possible to allocate funding for the third and fourth year later. Member Sondrol suggested adding a 3rd and 4th year to the Stipend portion of the incentive program. Ms. Haskins explained that decision is up to the individual Regional Councils. Senior Director Arnold informed the Council First Things First has regular meetings with DHS and he will bring that suggestion to the next meeting. The PowerPoint also included the criteria for prioritizing who receives the incentives, if needed; specifics for contracts and the monitoring of the contracts. Ms. Haskins presented information on the outreach for the program being conducted by DHS. Ms. Haskins also pointed out some of the concerns regarding the program thus far including a need for more flexibility. Member Sondrol suggested attending the National Occupational Therapist meeting in Phoenix in October. Director Beckett asked if any applications had been received. Ms. Haskins replied in the affirmative and explained she hopes to present the first candidate at the next Regional Partnership Council meeting. Chairman Frei wondered if the program was working on incorporating a “Grow Your Own” model. Ms. Haskins outlined the program being utilized for that very purpose at Arizona State University, which currently has 10 students on the Speech Language Pathologist track at this time. Discussion ensued regarding the need to find therapists to stay in a community longer than the length of the contract.

Video: A Cultural Perspective Presentation and Possible Discussion

Ruth Williams of the Centennial Park Action Committee introduced the video, *A Cultural Perspective*. Ms. Williams explained it is a good introduction into the people of Centennial Park and Colorado City and their beliefs.

Introduction and Historical Overview of the Safety Net Presentation and Possible Discussion

Michael Leetham, Administrative Coordinator for the Safety Net, and Jean Goode, presented a PowerPoint on the history of the Safety Net and its purpose. The PowerPoint included a brief overview of the history of the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints (FLDS) movement and anti-polygamy laws introduced in the United States. The PowerPoint also included the Safety Net’s mission statement; its work to break down barriers; misconceptions formed by outsiders on polygamy; and challenges the Safety Net has faced and faces in the future.

Centennial Park Action Committee (CPAC): Building Bridges Between Communities & Agencies Presentation & Possible Discussion

Marlyne Hammon and Ruth Williams of the Centennial Park Action Committee presented a synopsis of the history of Centennial Park and the events that led to the formation of the Centennial Park Action Committee (CPAC). Ms. Williams explained the importance of education to Centennial Park and CPAC. Ms. Williams also outlined the strengths of the family units in Centennial Park and the importance of breaking down stereotypes to the outside world to help end the isolation some members feel. CPAC was also formed to help give a voice to those who feel they do not have one. Member Sondrol praised CPAC’s efforts and asked how this advocacy is passed on to the youth in the area. Ms. Hammon informed the council of a group in the private high school located in Centennial Park that works to advocate for the community.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is at 9:30a.m. on Thursday, August 25, 2011, at the Bullhead City Elementary School District Board room, 1004 Hancock Road, Bullhead City, Arizona 86442

Adjourn

Member Garcia made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Member Saari. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

There being no further business, Chair Frei adjourned the meeting at 12:59pm.

Minutes **NOT** approved

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Julia Cosmano, Administrative Assistant II

Riley Frei, Chair

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