FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

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

**Welcome and Roll Call of Regional Council**

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on September 9, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. DST. The meeting was located at the Navajoland Inn & Suites, Conference Room, 392 West Highway 264, Saint Michaels, Arizona 86511.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martin at approximately 10:10 a.m. followed by roll call of the Regional Council.

Members Present: Victoria Begay, Amelia Black, Grace Boyne, Harry Martin, Rhonda Etsitty, Valonia Hardy and Paula Seanez

Members Absent: Benjamin Barney and Dawn Yazzie

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

**Call to the Public**

There were no calls to the public at this time.

**Discussion and Possible Approval of Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Council approve the July 22, 2014 and the August 17, 2014 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

**Conflict of Interest: Council Members will Address Potential Conflicts of Interest Regarding Items on this Agenda**

There were no conflicts of interest at this time.

**Presentation on Bureau of Indian Education Baby FACE's Parenting As Teachers Program**

Marsha Gebhardt, Project Director for Baby FACE's Parents as Teachers Program, provided a PowerPoint presentation overview including the four components of the Parents as Teachers Program model: bi-weekly personal visits, developmental and health screenings, resource network, and Family Circle; history and tribal presence; and outcomes of the program. Parent Educators of the program also shared anecdotal stories on the outcomes of program efforts for families. Parent Educators emphasized health and developmental screenings; parent-child activities; early literacy and the book program; school readiness; family well-being and connection to resources; incorporation of Navajo culture and language into Parents as Teachers curriculum; child development, and economic development and adult education.

Member Seanez requested information about current program, and the cost to sustain the program after funds provided by the Bureau of Indian Education are depleted.

Chair Martin requested a follow up presentation to address Member Seanez's comments. Melissa Begay stated she would work with Ms. Gebhardt to obtain information on behalf of the Regional Council.

Member Begay inquired of the Navajo Nations responsibilities to the program in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Education.

**Discussion and Possible Action on 2014 Regional Needs and Assets Report**

Regional Director Begay reported that the University of Arizona's Norton School has continually fulfilled contracted tasks. However, due to delays with Navajo Nation tribal approval to authorize FTF to proceed in data collection as outlined in resolutions and use of

data in the 2014 Needs and Assets Report. Activities to complete draft review for Regional Council review and comment remains pending until approval is provided.

A motion was made by Member Seanez that the Regional Partnership Council request a time extension from the First Things First State Board for the submission of the 2014 Regional Needs and Assets report to January 21, 2015, seconded by Vice Chair Boyne. Motion carried.

**Discussion and Possible Action on a Government to Government Grant Agreement with Holbrook Unified School District**
Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that clarifications are continuing with Holbrook Unified School District and FTF Program staff and Review Committee. Regional Director asked the Regional Council to continue discussion and possible action on September 12, 2014 for a Special Meeting.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Partnership Council approve a telephonic Special Meeting for September 12, 2014 at 12:00 p.m. DST to discuss and take possible action on a government to government grant recommendation for Holbrook Unified School District, seconded by Member Begay. Motion carried.

**Presentation and Discussion on SFY 2016-2018 Strategic Planning**

a. **Presentation and Review of State Board's Direction on Fiscal Policy and Quality First Program Policy**
Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that the FTF State Board approved in July 2014 the fiscal policy, which will remain constant for successive years, to be disseminated to Regional Councils based on tobacco tax revenue projections. In addition, Carry Forward balances for all regions will be considered as a part of regional funding allotments as opposed to additional funding for each region, and that Quality First scholarships are no longer required as a part of the Quality First model. Regional Director Begay indicated that the fiscal policy would not immediately impact the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council's program funding due to larger Carry Forward balance. Regardless, scenarios of regional program funding will be provided to the Regional Council for consideration for SFY2016 – 2018 strategic planning.

b. **Discussion on SFY 2016-2018 Priority Needs and Approaches**
Regional Director Begay reviewed the SFY2016-2018 strategic vision developed by the Regional Council in August 2014: By 2018, the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council will make it a priority to have every caregiver, family, community and early childhood education professional develop awareness and understanding about early childhood education in order to provide coordinated access to quality care; and discussed regional prioritized approaches and strategies for strategic planning including 1) limited access to quality, affordable early care and education programs; 2) increase family support services including parent education, preventive health and dental services, and early literacy; 3) lack of number of health specialists and professionals in early childhood development to ensure the healthy social-emotional development of young children; and 4) limited knowledge about the importance of early childhood development and health. Regional Director Begay identified current approaches and strategies funded by the Navajo Nation Regional Council to address the four priority needs, and asked the Regional Council to consider also additional unfunded strategies that might assist in realizing the Regional Council's vision of coordinating comprehensive services by SFY2018 and use the regional Carry-Forward balance.

In regards to Priority Need One:

Regional Director Begay recommended short-term approach, Kindergarten Transition Community of Practice, to address system gaps and encourage coordination among early care and education program providers and public school sites offering kindergarten.

Vice Chair Boyne indicated that lack of coordination among early child care services is a concern within Family, Friends, and Neighbor, and is continuing in discussion.

Member Seanez indicated that though some programs are coordinating, gaps do exist among others including FTF and Navajo Head Start, and expressed concern for how to begin coordination with such programs to increase access. Member Seanez also commented that experience with a special-needs high school transition program has proven successful coordination among schools.

Member Black recommended switching priority need 2 with priority need 3 emphasizing the need for more professionals in Early Childhood Education.

Member Etsitty supports the Kindergarten Transition Community of Practice strategy to address coordination gaps in early child care.

Member Begay asked for consideration of private and boarding schools in addition to public schools when considering the Kindergarten Transition Community of Practice.

In regards to Priority Need Two:

Regional Director Begay recommended short-term approach, Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals, in which one-day seminars will be provided to parents and caregivers among others to support their child's health and development. In addition, the Regional Council may elect to define the strategy to include learning opportunities that would evolve into degree or certificate programs.

Member Black inquired of data to support families are benefiting from the Food Security, Nutrition/Obesity Prevention/Physical Activity, and Oral Health strategies. Regional Director Begay stated that regional grantees will provide presentations at the October Regular Meeting with information regarding services.

In regards to Priority Need Three:

Regional Director Begay recommended three short-term approaches – Child Care Health Consultation for non-Quality First Center, Mental Health Consultation, and Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals – to address a lack of health specialists to ensure the healthy social-emotional development of young children.

Member Seanez asked that the Regional Council consider a system-wide perspective to address lack of health specialists and professionals to develop social-emotional development of young children, and reconsidered reversing order of priority need two and three. Member Etsitty agreed.

Vice Chair Boyne recommended moving Priority Need Four where limited knowledge about the importance of early childhood development and health would become the first priority considering a base knowledge of early childhood is important to moving other Priority Needs forward.

In regards to Priority Need Four:

Regional Director Begay recommended short-term approach, Professional Development for Early Care and education Professionals, to increase the limited knowledge about importance of early childhood development and health.

Chair Martin asked for clarification regarding the pairing of school readiness indicators with current funded approaches. Regional Director Begay stated a presentation on School Readiness Indicators will be provided at the October meeting.

Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that additional information will be provided in a follow-up e-mail to further solicit feedback from the Regional Council in order to offer recommended strategies and allotments at the October 2014 Regular Meetings; and that clarification regarding funded approaches and school readiness indicators will be provided as well.

**Regional Director's Report**

a. **SFY 2014 Quarter 4 Data Reports**
Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council of Quarter 4 data reports, highlighting outcomes and grantees who met or exceeded Contracted Services Units (CSUs).

Member Etsitty inquired of enrollment of Quality First centers. Regional Director Begay specified that additional approvals are required by the Navajo Nation for the Child Care & Development Fund's participation in Quality First.

b. **SFY 2014 Regular Meeting Schedule**
Regional Director Begay presented the Regular Meeting Schedule for the current fiscal year with emphasis on meetings anticipated to be three hour meetings. Regional Director Begay also notified the Regional Council that the anticipated November 11, 2014 meeting date is conflicted with a holiday, and asked that the Regional Council to consider an alternative date, which will be recommended and provided in a follow-up e-mail.

**Future Agenda Items and Announcements**
There were no future agenda at this time.

Regional Director Begay announced on behalf of Community Outreach Coordinator Memarie Tsosie that a site tour will take place on September 10, 2014 at Little Miss Muffet in Fort Defiance, Arizona.

Chair Martin announced that the next Regular Meeting will take place on October 14, 2014.

**Adjournment**
A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Seanez. Motion carried. Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:02 p.m.

Dated this 15th day of September, 2014

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II

Harry Martin, Chair