



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## 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 **August 25, 2011** at 9:30 a.m. in the Board Room of the Bullhead Elementary School District, 1004 Hancock Road, Bullhead City, Arizona 86442.

Chairman Frei called the meeting to order at 9:31a.m. Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

**Members present:** Riley Frei, Chair; Nancy Mongeau, Vice Chair; Terri Holloway; Alisa Burroughs; Jose Garcia; Catie Sondrol; Vijette Saari; Lenore Knudtson-Telephonically

**Members Absent:** Debra Weger; Betsy Lewis; Melissa Howell

### **Call to the Public:**

Michele Leyendecker, director of the Tiny T-Birds preschool at Mohave High School, gave an update on the program, which has increased enrollment of infant and toddlers by 14 children. Ms. Leyendecker explained this was made possible by the Infant/Toddler Expansion grant from the Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC). Ms. Leyendecker, on behalf of the staff, parents, and children of her center, thanked the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council and First Things First for all the opportunities they have provided the communities of the area. Swan Cooke, Aquatic Center supervisor for the Lake Havasu City Parks and Recreation, expressed to the Council the need for water safety education in the area. Ms. Cooke also informed the Council of the dire need for monetary help for families due to the extreme economic situation. Ms. Cooke suggested it would be prudent to teach the children preschool age and younger how to swim to help save lives, and she has put together two proposals for programs to be held at the Lake Havasu City Aquatic Center.

### **Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

No Regional Council Member expressed a conflict of interest regarding items on the agenda.

### **Approval of July 28, 2011 Meeting Minutes**

Member Sondrol made a motion to approve the July 28, 2011, meeting minutes. Member Garcia seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by members present.

### **CEO Update and Council Member Recognition**

Chief Executive Officer Rhian Evans Allvin sent her apologies that she is unavailable; Senior Regional Director Gary Arnold recognized members Saari and Holloway for their dedication to the council and their two-year anniversaries, and he presented them with recognition pins.

### **Community Outreach Update**

Community Outreach Coordinator Della Gray gave an update on the outcomes of her outreach to the public to educate on First Things First. Coordinator Gray described the different leave behinds being utilized including bags with Born Learning Materials such as a playbook and Kids Basics inside and children's books for the families to read together. Coordinator Gray has had requests for more leave behinds, including Spanish language leave behinds. Coordinator Gray described the many presentations she has given including presentations to Kingman Regional Medical Center-Pediatric Therapy Center, the Lake Havasu and Bullhead City Networking groups, the CRIT Head Start Orientations, the Lake Havasu City Chamber of Commerce, the Havasu Regional Medical Center Childbirth Class, and the Havasu Regional Medical Center Prenatal Committee. Coordinator Gray informed the Council of the different events she has attended including the Fort Mohave Elementary Science Fair, the Mountain View Elementary Literacy Night, the Palo Christy Elementary Literacy Fair, the Kingman Regional Medical Center's Kids Day, the Havasu Stick'Em event, the K.I.D.S. Fair in Parker, and the Gingerbread House in Kingman. Coordinator Gray explained the different one on one meetings she has facilitated including meetings with the Hualapai Tribe Head Start and preschools in Fort Mohave. Coordinator Gray has also facilitated one on one meetings with staff at Valley View Medical Center, Willow Valley Medical Center, Hualapai Indian Health Services, and dentists in different areas of Mohave County. Coordinator Gray has met with the Parks and Recreation department in Lake Havasu City, the Parker Area Alliance for Community Empowerment, the Elite Realty Team, and the Lake Havasu City Masonic Lodge. Coordinator Gray attended the Tuba City Family Fun Day for the Navajo Regional Partnership and was able to obtain some pictures of First Things First Grantees and families in action. Coordinator Gray described the Milemarker's Therapy K.I.D.S. Fair held

in Parker where Milemarker's Therapy utilized an idea for making puppets from the Born Learning playbook. Coordinator Gray informed the Council over 2,247 people have heard about First Things First through the different presentations, events, and one on one meetings. Coordinator Gray then gave an overview of upcoming events she plans to attend and presentations she plans to give including the Bullhead City Community Fair, a presentation to the Golden Shores/Topock's Women's Club, and Red Ribbon Week in Parker. Coordinator Gray also informed the Council about the upcoming Big Check Tour, which will reach the La Paz/Mohave region on October 25, 2011. Coordinator Gray expressed the Big Check Tour is a good opportunity to inform elected officials and the media about the work First Things First is doing. Member Holloway wondered if Coordinator Gray has encountered many people who are under the impression First Things First funding was voted away and so the work is unnecessary. Coordinator Gray responded that most of the public are excited to hear First Things First is still around and they are glad she is building awareness. Chair Frei asked Coordinator Gray if she has approached River Cities Community Clinic. Coordinator Gray responded she has left messages. Vice Chair Mongeau and Chair Frei expressed a desire to attend some of the events in Bullhead City with Coordinator Gray to help build awareness of First Things First and facilitate opening even more doors for community collaboration.

### **SFY2011-2012 Financial Report**

Regional Director Merritt Beckett provided a detailed update on the budget. The Council is beginning to utilize the financial information in funding plan development and strategic planning for SFY2013. Director Beckett discussed the different pots of monies: unallotted, unawarded and unexpended and gave an update on the specific numbers for SFY2011. The Council awarded 4.2 million dollars to Grantees in SFY2011 and 3.3 million dollars was expended. There is an estimated \$947, 995 in unexpended dollars that will carry forward to SFY2012, but the final carry-forward amount from SFY2011 will not be known until mid-September. The total amount allocated to strategies in SFY2012 is 4.8 million dollars. The region's annual population-based regional allocation (without carry forward) is approximately 3.9 million dollars. While total funding available in SFY2012, including both the population-based allocation and carry-forward from SFY2011, is an estimated 5.3 million dollars, it is anticipated that carry forward will not continue to be available in future years, so before considering expanding strategies or adding new strategies, the Council will need to discuss and consider our desire and ability to sustain strategies over time.

### **Expansion of Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships in Colorado City**

Director Beckett informed the Council that of the eight school districts that indicated an interest and ability to partner with FTF to expand their existing Pre-Kindergarten program, agreements are now in place with six of the eight school districts. Only Colorado City and Lake Havasu City remain. The Funding Plan workgroup met to discuss adding an additional Pre-Kindergarten classroom in Colorado City and intended to bring a recommendation forward to the council today. However, upon further discussion with administration at the Colorado City Unified School District, it was determined that they are not able to take this on at this time. Director Beckett recommends approaching the Masada Charter School in Centennial Park next, as the need for additional Pre-Kindergarten slots in the area is well established by the school district's existing wait list and lack of regulated child care in the area.

### **Director's Report and Possible Discussion**

#### **A. SFY2013 Strategic Planning**

Director Beckett discussed the upcoming strategic planning process for SFY2013. Director Beckett explained to the Council that the first three-year strategic planning cycle has ended and now the cycle begins again. Director Beckett reminded the Council that the Board will vote on the Statewide Indicators at the upcoming Board Meeting being held at the Annual Early Childhood Summit. This decision and the Indicators will influence the upcoming Strategic Planning process. Director Beckett informed the Council that important decisions regarding the strategies will be made at the December Regional Partnership Council meeting and reminded the Council it is important, due to different conflicts of interest, that all members of the Council be present at the meeting. Director Beckett explained the immediate conversation must be on the overall direction the Council would like to go for the next three year planning cycle. Director Beckett also reminded the Council that many of the strategies currently in use will have to go up for bid through the Request for Grant Application (RFGA) process since SFY2012 does end the three-year cycle for many grants. Director Beckett gave an overview of the different tools for planning the Council will have available including the 2010 Needs and Assets report. There are mechanisms in place to incorporate input from stakeholders and feedback from grantees. Director Beckett reminded the Council the regional priorities need to align with statewide indicators. Director Beckett reviewed system-building models the Council has referenced during strategic planning in the past. In 2010, the Council used the four overlapping ovals to reference different parts of the early childhood system. In 2011, the Council used a pyramid model of tiered service delivery to reference the desired continuum of services. Director Beckett expressed that it has been a high priority for the Council to reach the most vulnerable children as well as the overall population of children. The Council has made sure to have a continuum of services in place to ensure that children do not fall through the cracks, and the Council needs to continue to think of this as it moves forward with SFY2013 strategic planning. Vice Chair Mongeau suggested emailing a survey to stakeholders and grantees to see how the worsening economic situation has affected services to the region and expressed a need to gauge how State budget cuts to child care and the State health care system are affecting the region and what this means for First Things First and the council. Member Sondrol stated she sees a lot of rising health problems due to the budget cuts. Director Beckett stated she will send out the survey and bring back the results to the Council at the Regional Partnership Council meeting in October.

- B. Director Becket reminded the Council that the FTF Early Childhood Summit is August 28-30, 2011 in Phoenix. Members Mongeau, Garcia, Burroughs and Lewis plan to attend.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is at 9:30a.m. on Thursday, September 22, 2011, at Arizona Western College-Quartzsite Learning Center, 695 Kofa Avenue (At Quail), Quartzsite, Arizona 85346

**Adjourn**

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

There being no further business, Chair Frei adjourned the meeting at 10:50a.m.

**Minutes NOT approved**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**APPROVED BY:**

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**Julia Cosmano, Administrative Assistant II**

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**Riley Frei, Chair**

