



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

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## 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 FTF Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on October 14, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. DST. The meeting was located at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #2, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martin at approximately 10:06 a.m. followed by roll call of the Regional Council.

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

FTF Staff Present: Melissa Begay, Elyse Dempsey, Karen Peifer, Memarie Tsosie, and Virginia Turner

### Call to the Public

Rose Phillips, Senior Program Manager at the Southwest Human Development, presented information regarding Smart Support, a statewide accessible early childhood mental health consultation program that supports the social/emotional development of young children and increases the capacity of early care providers to address mental health needs for at risk children. The program is funded by FTF and serves tribal communities in Arizona. Ms. Phillips asked the Regional Council to consider implementing and funding the program in the Navajo Nation Arizona Region in SFY2016.

Vikki Shirley, Regional Coordinator of Reach Out and Reach Arizona, provided implementation updates regarding book distribution for SFY2015 and expressed gratitude for the support demonstrated by the Regional Council.

### Discussion and Possible Approval of Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Council approve the September 9, 2014 Regular Meeting minutes and the September 12, 2014 Special Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Seanez. Motion carried.

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

Chair Martin disclosed conflict with Agenda Item #10: Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2016-2018 Quality First and Quality First Scholarships. Chair Martin is employed by the Kayenta Unified School District, which receives Quality First Scholarship funding.

Vice Chair Boyne disclosed conflict with Agenda Item #10: Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2016-2018 Quality First and Quality First Scholarships. Vice Chair Boyne is employed by the Navajo Nation Child Care and Development Fund, which may receive Quality First Scholarship funding. Vice Chair Boyne recused herself from discussion and action.

Member Etsitty disclosed conflict with Agenda Item #10: Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2016-2018 Quality First and Quality First Scholarships. Member Etsitty is employed by Association for Supportive Child Care, which receives funding from the Quality First strategy. Member Etsitty recused herself from discussion and action on Quality First and abstained from discussion and action on Quality First Scholarships.

To ensure quorum for discussion and action on Agenda Item #10, Chair Martin announced that the agenda item would be introduced and addressed earlier in the agenda than scheduled. Chair Martin specified that discussion and action would begin upon the arrival of Member Hardy, who would establish full attendance by the Regional Council.

## Program Update from Navajo Nation Regional Grantees

### **A. Navajo County Public Health Services District's Oral Health**

Mary Tyler, Director of Navajo County Public Health Services District's Oral Health program, in partnership with Coconino County Public Health Services District reported updates for the region including an excess number of children and adults served based on contracted service units for the SFY2014. The success was in part attributed to a contract with a dental hygienist who carried out dental screenings. However, the hygienist has recently moved out of the region and is unable to continue work with the program. Ms. Tyler reported that the program has since identified five part-time hygienists to continue screenings, and that advertisement in various local newspaper sources to recruit additional hygienists continues. One of the successes of the oral health program include the early childhood training program, which teaches child care providers, parents, or adults who work with children 0 -5 about the importance of oral health.

Member Seanez commented that Navajo Head Start also implements a dental program and asked if the counties were partnering with head start to expand services. In addition, Member Seanez inquired of any programs similar to the American Academy of Pediatrics' Brush, Book, Bed program that are being implemented as a part of oral health education, which could be a partnership with Reach Out and Read. Ms. Tyler indicated that with the level of assessment provided by a qualified dental hygienist at dental visits, the visits can qualify as exam, which is a higher level of dental assessment than screenings that are provided by head start. In noting so, in previous fiscal years, visits were made to head start centers in more rural communities of the region, and provide dental exams by the hygienist. Regarding dental health and reading routines for young children, Ms. Tyler indicated that Reach Out and Read would be contacted about the possible partnership.

Member Yazzie recommended that the Oral Health program also partnership with regional hospitals and health clinics to provide information for pregnant women about oral health.

Member Black inquired of the process in which schools are selected to receive dental screenings and varnishes. Ms. Tyler explained that notices are provided to all schools that are known to enroll children birth to age five, including Baby FACE.

Chair Martin requested an update for the tele-dentistry program. With SFY2015 being the planning year, Ms. Tyler reported that contact is being made with communities and early care providers to let them know about tele-dentistry. In addition, Ms. Tyler has communicated with the Navajo Nation Director of Health and Assistant Director of Health as well as the dental directors within with region. Moreover, necessary equipment will soon be purchased and a site will be identified to conduct a tele-dentistry event in spring 2015, where the Regional Council will be invited.

### **B. Dine College's Scholarships non-TEACH**

Dan McLaughlin, Chair of the Center for Diné Teacher Education, reported findings from a recent First Things First Quality Assurance Site Visit of the Scholarship non-TEACH program in which barriers and success were identified. Barriers include a declined student enrollment in the early childhood education associate's degree program due to similar programs being offered by local higher education institutions; an intensified hiring requirement for early childhood providers to acquire bachelor degrees; and internal challenges and planning to address student enrollment. As for successes, Mr. McLaughlin indicated that 28 scholarships have been awarded since spring 2014; announced plans to expand the early childhood education associates degree program to the Diné College Tuba City campus; and further noted a successful one-day conference for early child care providers in spring 2014.

## Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2016-2018 Quality First and Quality First Scholarships

Chair Martin requested that Agenda Item 10 be moved for discussion upon the arrival of Member Hardy, who would maintain quorum for discussion and possible action. Agenda Item 10 was moved up after Agenda Item 5. Chair Martin, Vice Chair Boyne, and Member Etsitty declared conflict with Agenda Item 10; thusly, Member Seanez served as chair for the agenda item.

Regional Director Begay indicated that this agenda item would have been presented in the November meeting of the Regional Council. However, in consideration of attendance and a potential loss of quorum, Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council consider the agenda item for discussion during the October Regular Meeting.

Regional Director Begay reviewed Quality First and the Quality First Scholarships for SFY2015 and recommended funding allotments and target service units for SFY2016. In regards to Quality First in SFY2016, Regional Director Begay recommended decreasing the funding allotment and maintaining the number of target service units at 25 child care centers. Funding in SFY2016 for Quality First will support 18 centers with scholarship and 7 vacant slots without scholarships. If potential centers enroll in Quality First, Regional Director Begay explained that funding could be allocated to the centers in SFY2017. As for Quality First Scholarships, Regional Director Begay recommended a decrease in funding allotment and target service units where funding would be for scholarships for 18 centers, 67 additional scholarships, and an increased 75 scholarships for Navajo college student.

Member Black moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the Quality First Strategy package for 25 Center Based Providers with a funding allotment of \$368,022 in SFY2016. The Quality First package includes the following strategies for enrolled providers: Quality First Coaching and Incentives, Quality First Academy and Quality First Specialized Technical Assistance, seconded by Member Begay. Motion carried.

Member Begay moved that the Regional Partnership Council approve the Quality First Child Care Scholarship Strategy with a total allotment of \$1,877,345 for an estimate of 169 Quality First Scholarships for 18 Center Based providers enrolled in Quality First; an additional 67 Quality First Scholarships for children birth to age five in the following zip codes 86033, 86031, 86510, 87328, 86503, and 86504; and 75 scholarships for children of Navajo college students temporarily living off the Navajo Nation in SFY2016, seconded by Member Barney. Motion carried.

#### **Grant Update from Child Care Development Fund on Family, Friends, and Neighbors**

Selena Curley, Principal Social Worker with the Navajo Nation Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) Program, provided updates for the Navajo Nation Child Care Development Fund program under the Family, Friend, and Neighbors strategy. Ms. Curley reported that in SFY2014 83 child care providers were served with trainings to become regulated, and children services tracking continues to identify children birth through age five who receive care from home based providers.

Member Barney inquired of the number of children who are disenrollment. Ms. Curley indicated that children are disenrolled when families move out of the region; children are not dismissed due to behavior. Ms. Curley noted that the ages and stages questionnaire targets five elements from personal care to social and emotional development for children.

Member Seanez asked if the goal is to have providers regulated, why is there one of 44 in Chinle regulated. Selena indicated that there are many certifications and trainings required that sometimes are barriers in providers' completion. Regional Director Begay noted that the goal of the CCDF program is to provide quality learning environment for young children and updated the Regional Council that CCDF declined the SFY2015 grant award to redevelopment the Scope of Work; the program is not focused on regulation, but on quality of child care providers serving young children.

Member Yazzie recommended communicating with Navajo Head Start to expand service efforts for young children.

Member Barney inquired of Navajo cultural practices that are implemented in the trainings for Navajo families.

#### **Presentation on Community Outreach Quarterly Report**

Community Outreach Coordinator Tsosie reported quarterly goals and outcomes, indicating changes being made to Google maps for easier navigation; and efforts to move friends and supporters to champions. Ms. Tsosie also shared information for quarterly presentations, stories, site tour, media opportunities, speaker trainings and informal networking event.

#### **Presentation and Discussion on SFY 2014 Year-end Financial Reports**

Regional Director Begay presented the SFY 2014 year-end financial report demonstrating the grantee expenditures. Regional Director Begay noted that more than seventy-five percent of grant awards for Community Awareness, Family Support, Health, and Professional Development had been expended. As for Evaluation, and Quality and Access, less than forty-five percent of grant awards had been expended respectively. An award was not made to the Needs and Assets Report by the Regional Council as no additional work was needed for the 2014 Needs and Assets Report. Regarding the Quality and Access goal area, timing and enrollment of providers in Quality First prevented expending usage of scholarship funds. Regional Director Begay also provided information on the growth of the regional Carry-Forward balance, and asked the Regional Council to consider strategic planning for SFY 2016-2018.

#### **Presentation and Discussion of SFY 2016-2018 Strategic Planning**

Derived from feedback from the Regional Council, Regional Director Begay presented a reordered prioritized need list for the region: 1) limited knowledge about the importance of early childhood development and health; 2) lack number of health specialists and professionals in early childhood development to ensure the healthy social-emotional development of young children; 3) limited

access to quality, affordable early care and education programs; and 4) increase family support services including parent education, prevention health and dental services, and early literacy. Regional Director Begay presented current strategies implemented in the region and new short-term strategies, requesting feedback from the Regional Council regarding implementation to address system gaps and fulfill the vision previously established by the Regional Council.

Member Barney request for clarification regarding priority needs and the amount of allocated funding. Regional Director Begay clarified that the Regional Council does not need to consider the order of the prioritized needs when determining funding allocations for those needs.

Member Hardy recommended, in regards to priority need 1 and the Community Awareness strategies, development and implementation of a strategy that targets the general public on a global scale of the importance of early childhood through media outlets; and a message campaign to inform public of healthy early childhood habits that could change behavior.

Member Seanez commented the importance for consistent messaging across the region on the importance of early childhood development and health.

Vice Chair Boyne commented on the relationship between adequate knowledge of the important of early childhood development and effective advocacy.

Regional Director Begay also presented continuing strategies for SFY 2016-2018 with current funding allotments for SFY 2015 and recommended allotments for SFY 2016. In an effort to prevent growth of the regional Carry Forward balance, decreases in funding allotments is attributed to recognition of historical expenditures for each strategy and matching with grant awards. Regional Director Begay also commented on the Family, Friends, and Neighbors strategy, where the current grantee elected to forego funding in SFY 2015 to review and update the Scope of Work; and the Home Visitation program, where the Baby FACE program has requested assistance from the Regional Council to continue programming. Regional Director Begay also informed the Regional Council of updates regarding the Curriculum Development and Parent Education strategy, where the Regional Council elected to hire a consultant to assess the region for resources and needs prior to implementing the Native Language Preservation strategy. Regarding the Native Language Preservation strategy, FTF would like to first establish tribal approval for use of data and information.

Member Seanez expressed concern with providing funding to the Baby FACE program due to cost of operation and longevity of the program if funded by the Regional Council, and requested additional information regarding expenses and implementation.

Member Black expressed interest in programmatic aspects of the Baby FACE program, and possible evidence-based information that can be learned from the program and possibility implemented into FTF strategies.

Member Seanez commented that if tribal approval is not necessary, then the process to completing the consultants work on the Native Language Preservation strategy would be expedited; and recommended that a courtesy letter be provided to tribal leadership with final review and approval of the proposal being directed to the Navajo Nation Human Research Review Board.

Regarding recommended new strategies for SFY 2016-2018, Regional Director Begay introduced the Professional Development for Early Childhood Professionals strategy, the Mental Health Consultation strategy, and the Kindergarten Transition of Community Practice strategy to address service gaps and enable spend-down of the regional Carry Forward balance.

Member Seanez commented that the proposed Professional Development for Early Childhood Professionals strategy should lead to a degree program where early childhood professionals are enhancing skillsets. In regards to the Mental Health Consultation, Member Seanez noted that Navajo Head Start has been implementing a similar strategy, and recommended that information be obtained regarding cost, challenges, and benefits prior to implementing in the region. In addition, Member Seanez commented that the hiring of mental health consultants who are from the region would benefit the young children of the region.

Member Etsitty confirmed the need of the Mental Health Consultation support within the region.

Regional Director Begay informed the Regional Council that additional information is being retrieved for the Kindergarten Transition of Community Practice strategy, and may allow successful implementation in SFY 2016 or 2017; and invited the Regional Council to attend forums hosted by FTF and Arizona Department of Education to discuss the strategy in Flagstaff, Arizona on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **Future Agenda Items and Announcements**

Chair Martin announced that due to limited time Agenda Item 11, Presentation on School Readiness Indicators, would be discussed at the November Regular Meeting of the Navajo Nation Regional Council.

Member Black noted that early registration for Diné College will begin on November 21. Diné College is also in communication with Northern Arizona University regarding a two plus two program for students with associate degrees to prepare for bachelor degrees.

Member Begay informed the Regional Council of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Indian Child and Family Conference scheduled on December 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> in Scottsdale, Arizona.

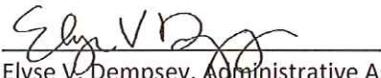
**Adjournment**

A motion was made by Member Seanez to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried. Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:35 p.m.

Dated this 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2014

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council



Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II



Harry Martin, Chair