



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

## ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH BOARD Meeting Minutes

### **Call to Order, Welcome and Introductions**

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First - Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board – Policy and Program Committee was held on May 7, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was held at First Things First, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Chair Decker called the meeting to order at approximately 10:05 a.m.

### **Roll Call**

Cynthia Chavarria performed a roll call.

#### **Members Present:**

Janice Decker, Chair  
Bill Berk (via telephone)  
Dr. Randal Christensen  
Mary Ellen Cunningham  
Verna Johnson (via telephone)  
Vivian Juan Saunders  
Naomi Karp  
Wendy Resnik  
William Rosenberg  
Laurie Smith  
Senator Ruth Solomon (via telephone)  
Kim Van Pelt

#### **Members Absent:**

Amy Corriveau  
Colleen Day Mach  
Kevin Earle  
Alan Taylor  
Brad Willis

#### **Invited Guests:**

Kameron Bachert (via telephone)

#### **Staff:**

Karen Woodhouse  
Ginger Sandweg  
Dr. Karen Peifer  
Cynthia Chavarria

Chair Decker welcomed new Members Verna Johnson and Wendy Resnik. Chair Decker announced this would be her last meeting as Chair and reintroduced incoming Chair, Vivian Juan Saunders who will commence her role starting in July 2015.

Chair Decker announced that First Things First (FTF) is in the process of reviewing FY16 Requests for Grant Applications (RFGAs) and the Board will review and consider them at the May and June meetings. Related to the solicitation and award process, Chair Decker asked Ginger Sandweg to speak related to Quality First (QF) Scholarship funding. Ms. Sandweg relayed that after the FTF Board approved the FY 2016 Program Committee recommendations for funding options, FTF communicated with QF providers. The main talking points focused on: 1) FTF’s fiscal changes to ensure consistent and sustained funding over time; 2) the process of regional and community decision making that impacted QF Scholarship funding; and, other FTF and community supports that were available to families who might be losing scholarships. FY 2016 scholarship allocations were sent to providers on May 1, 2015. Member Cunningham asked whether each scholarship was tied to a specific child care slot or child. Ms. Sandweg replied that the scholarships were not based on a 1-1 child-scholarship basis and provided an example that if a provider has six full time scholarships the scholarships could be split in half to support 12 part time slots. Member Solomon asked if a provider split a scholarship, how this might affect the quality rating of a program because for example, if studies have determined that \$1,000 is what it takes to provide quality services per child, if that scholarship is split in half to cover two slots at \$500 each, that’s less funding available to provide the level of quality care. Ms. Sandweg noted that even if a provider chooses to split scholarships they are continuing to provide the same level of quality service and usually making up the difference through tuition or other revenue sources, although, providers may not charge the families the difference. Member Berk shared that providers work with blended funding streams and with QF funding increases made last year, even with scholarships being cut this year, the recent increase helped fund more services overall. If scholarships were to be cut too low, then it would be difficult to provide the same level of quality services.

### **Review and Possible Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chair Decker called for a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2015. Member Cunningham motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Member Smith. All in favor, none opposed. Chair Decker voted aye, motion passed.

### **Advisory Subcommittees Update**

Kameron Bachert, Chair of the Quality First Advisory Sub-Committee gave a brief update on the work of the Sub-Committee. While only two meetings have been held, great strides have been made. They have adopted the "North Star" for their strategic direction that Quality First is the designation of quality. They have also established guiding principles and three workgroups: 1) Quality Standards; 2) Planning, Monitoring and Accountability; and, 3) Financial Supports. Quality Standards will look at meaningful standards for all participants and equity to support all children, ensuring culturally responsiveness. Planning, Monitoring and Accountability will look at the quality benchmarks and how assessments are conducted and measured. Financial Support will look at the sustainability of supporting and incentivizing continuous improvement. During the May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, the workgroups will begin discussion of expectations, additional data needs and who to engage with to obtain community and stakeholder feedback.

Linda Lopez, Chair, Early Identification School Readiness Indicator Advisory Sub-Committee was not able to participate today and Dr. Peifer presented on her behalf. Two meetings have been held and at the last meeting, the Sub-Committee considered various data sources including national sources such as Head Start, and local sources such as the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) and the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP). The national Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has a new measure on the percent of children receiving screening before ages one, two and three, and AHCCCS will be adopting this new measure for Arizona. FTF is also planning to add questions to the Family and Community Survey related to early intervention. FTF is drafting a request for data from AHCCCS, and the Sub-Committee will meet again after FTF meets with AHCCCS representatives. The data request will also address Tribal data, and FTF is having discussions on possible data from Indian Health Services. Member Cunningham shared that as the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS) prepares their application for federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funding, they will select eight measures from a menu of 15, and one measure pertains to percentage of children ages 9-71 months receiving a development screening. DHS can share this data in the future. Member Rosenberg stated that Head Start programs have a Program Information Report (PIR) and this might be a good source of data. Dr. Peifer relayed that FTF does have this Head Start data for 2013. In the future, these PIRs will contain data for Tribal Head Start data. Member Juan Saunders asked for clarification on what is meant by care giver behavior on the FTF Family and Community Survey. Dr. Peifer replied that it relates to whether parents and/or care givers are aware of developmental benchmarks their children should be at and whether they are confident enough to advocate and seek help for their child.

### **FY16 FTF Systems Approach Framework for Programmatic Priorities: Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development System**

FTF has a clear mandate to support and improve the quality of the early childhood workforce and provide professional development opportunities. Karen Woodhouse reviewed data from the 2012 Early Childhood Work Force Survey and Ginger Sandweg provided an update on the Professional Development Work Group (in partnership with BUILD Arizona), and the development of the Arizona Early Childhood Career and Professional Development Network, which includes a Workforce Registry, Workforce Knowledge and Competencies notice of professional development opportunities and FTF College Scholarships for early childhood professionals. First Things First (FTF) is currently in an open RFGA process seeking an organization to administer the Registry and FTF College Scholarships components, with expected launch on July 1, 2015. FTF College Scholarships will cover tuition, books and course work fees for students who are working toward a child development credential, associates or bachelor's degree in early childhood. Member Solomon asked if participants could be tracked after graduation in this field. Ms. Sandweg replied that the Registry will track scholars' educational progress as well as employment. Member Cunningham commented that she personally logged on to the Network and found it to have very helpful information. Member Christensen expressed his satisfaction at seeing something that was first discussed a decade ago coming to fruition.

Member Karp asked how many professional development grant strategies First Things First (FTF) is currently funding and their congruence with the Network. Ms. Sandweg responded that the Standard of Practice for all FTF Professional Development and Quality First Strategies, as well as most other health and family support strategies will require staff implementing these strategies, as well as professional impacted by these strategies, to be enrolled in the Registry by June 30, 2016.

Ms. Woodhouse noted the infrastructure development of the Network was financed through two federal grants, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant and the State Advisory Council Grant. FTF is providing statewide program funding to maintain the administration of the Network. Member Van Pelt questioned if on-line trainings from national organizations can be included in the Network. Ms. Woodhouse replied yes, and any local and national partners will be included. Benchmarks for the first year of implementation are five thousand professionals enrolled in the registry and over 900 scholars using college scholarships.

The Committee discussed workforce retention in the early childhood system and two FTF strategies were noted: 1) FTF College Scholarships, which awards a yearly bonus for scholars if they achieve a certain educational level and remain working in the early childhood workforce; 2) FTF Professional REWARD\$, which also provides a financial award tied to a certain educational level and retention with an employer for a determined length of time. Member Cunningham questioned if Registry participants' employers would be able to see employees' account information. Ms. Sandweg responded that there will be privacy protections on Registry data. Although at some level, employers need to verify an employee's data, but participants will not be able to see each other's information. Member Rosenberg shared that at the National Head Start Director's Association meeting he was informed that the Obama administration is proposing approximately \$1.1 billion towards early childhood education and asked if any of these funds would come to Arizona and how that could be supported. Ms. Woodhouse noted that the Preschool Development grant awarded \$20 million to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for the next four years to expand high quality preschool programs. Member Rosenberg believes the information he heard on the President's proposal relates to a different grant, so FTF staff will do further research on it and report back at the next meeting.

Member Van Pelt requested information on what other states are doing in terms of policy efforts and on other workforce retention and incentive programs. Ms. Sandweg noted that some of the state's efforts reviewed by FTF were Oklahoma, New Jersey and Minnesota.

Member Karp mentioned that the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona is hoping to receive another three years of funding for their professional development work and if awarded, they will host a kick-off event on July 18<sup>th</sup> in Tucson.

#### **FY16 Meeting Dates Discussion**

The Committee would like to continue meeting on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Staff will work with new Chair Vivian Juan Saunders to identify future meeting dates and staff will send out by e-mail in early summer.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair Decker thanked the Committee and staff for their commitment and for allowing her to have shared in the work during the last two years as the Chair. Incoming Chair Juan Saunders thanked Chair Decker for the opportunity and is pleased to accept reappointment to the FTF Board.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:55 a.m.

#### **Telephone Procedures**

The Board Room telephone was used for members participating by telephone. Members on the telephone were identified when they spoke for the benefit of those physically present at the meeting.