



FIRST THINGS FIRST

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Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Policy and Program Committee Meeting Minutes November 26, 2013

Call to Order

The Regular Meeting of the First Things First – Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board Program Committee was held on November 26, 2013 at the First Things First Board Room, 4000 North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Members Present:	Janice Decker, Brad Willis, Bill Berk, Nicol Russell, Toni Harvier (by phone but disconnected at 10:10), Vivian Juan Saunders, Kenton Laffoon
Members Absent:	Mary Ellen Cunningham, Laurie Smith, Naomi Karp, Kim VanPelt, Dr. Randal Christensen
Advisory Committee Co-Chairs:	Jeanette Shea
Public	Dawn Craft
FTF Staff:	Karen Woodhouse, Cynthia Chavarria, Dr. Karen Peifer, Ginger Sandweg, Stephanie Golden

Welcome and Introductions. Chair Decker called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Review and Possible Approval of Meeting Minutes

Willis motioned to approve the draft meeting minutes of March 7, 2013 and Member Berk seconded. All in favor, Chair Decker voted I, motion passed.

Update on Policy and Program Advisory Committees and Sub-Committees

Karen Woodhouse provided an update on the upcoming work of the Policy and Program Committee for 2014.

Dr. Peifer gave an update on the Health Policy Advisory Committee. They last met in the summer and have worked on their strategies like well-child visits and oral health and they're looking at the Access to Care Sub-Committee to move this work forward. The Affordable Health Care Act has brought lots of discussion on improvement of care and we hope it will increase the number of well child visits Families have access to. The oral health strategy has a lot of activity going on and part of health care act is that states will have different levels of reimbursement and for our state, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) will now reimburse for flourish treatments. The Committee is working broadly and specifically on movement of these strategies. The Nutrition, Obesity Prevention and Physical Activity Sub-Committee will have one more meeting before the next Program meeting and we will report out at that time. Health Advisory Co-Chair Shea noted that we're looking at strategies that might involve partnership in strategies with other agencies.

Karen Woodhouse reported on the Family Support and Literacy Advisory Committee. They are working on finalizing their framework and have identified three key areas of focus which are 1) Access (to information and services) 2) Awareness (knowledge empowering Families) and 3) Connections (looking at system of supports and services to families and how they can be better connected). The Advisory Sub-Committee is down to working on the technical level of the framework.

Ginger Sandweg provided an update on the Early Learning Advisory Committee. They too are working on their framework and will bring back a draft report to finalize at their next meeting. They've had discussions on Quality First data and they are looking at which indicators will help move providers to higher quality levels. They're identifying what the support systems are within Quality First and where we need to go. They're discussing how to allow all programs that would like to participate in Quality First to do so.

Stephanie Golden discussed the work of the Professional Development Workgroup. They are working on the development of an Associates of Arts in Child Development and are working with three Community Colleges to offer a pilot program. On December 6, 2013 there will be a meeting with the Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) to share the results of various site visits and meetings with College Staff and to discuss further ways to bring additional IHEs to the process. The next step is to develop a Professional Development Framework. The Workgroup is near completion on this and we've vetted our work in several public forums and will vet our work again with edits which have been incorporated based on the public forums and we hope to have a final completed by the end of December with distribution in January

2014. The Workgroup is also working on designing and launching a website by the end of the year. The Design Sub-Group has vetted its work with the Workgroup and we hope to go live in December. Our next focus will be on the development of a Professional Development Registry which is being development and is off to a good start. We have selected to use Registry One as our software and we anticipate this work to be completed by August 2014. Member Berk questioned what information would be on the Website? Stephanie shared that it would include information on the Early Childhood Workforce, opportunities for higher education programs for the Workforce, links to other agencies working for children, and when completed, there will be a link to the Arizona Registry. Chair Decker appreciates the progress of the work being done. Karen Woodhouse asked if the Workgroup would start its work on the next iteration of the strategic plan for 2015/2016 soon and Stephanie reported that the Workgroup has already started the conversations and the work is underway.

Review and Possible Approval of Recommendations from Cultural Responsivity Sub-Committee

Karen Woodhouse provided an update on the work of the Family Support and Literacy Advisory Committee - Cultural Responsivity Sub-Committee. In 2012 when First Things First (FTF) convened the Advisory Committees, and came up with the priorities for FTF, each of the Advisory Committees touched on cultural responsivity as a priority. When we reported this to the FTF Board they asked us to create a Sub-Committee to convene cultural responsivity across the board. This Sub-Committee met for about a year and came up with recommendations which are provided in the handouts for review. We are asking that the Policy and Program Committee review and provide feedback on these recommendations and we'd like to move forward with presenting them to the FTF Board in January 2014. If accepted, the Sub-Committee will regroup in the spring to look at a work plan that FTF will have created and put in place so that they can monitor our progress. Member Juan Saunders likes the definition of contracts and Chair Decker called for further comments and there being none called for a motion to approve the definition and recommendations of the Cultural Responsivity Sub-Committee as presented to be taken to the board. Member Willis motioned and was seconded by member Berk. All were in favor, Chair Decker voted I and motion was passed. The Cultural Responsivity Sub-Committee Recommendations have been passed and will be presented to the FTF Board at their next meeting.

Update on FY14 Funding and Strategies (Presentation and Discussion)

At each meeting Karen Woodhouse will provide an update on First Things First (FTF) funding and strategies and informed the Committee that they will be able to access this information through a web portal. Karen will send out to the Committee the instructions on how to access the reports through the FTF Website.

A handout of the information being presented was reviewed. The current data was pulled a week ago on November 20th. The information reflects the funding allotments from each Regional area as well as from our Statewide programs for our six goal areas. The largest funding amount goes towards Quality First (QF) and Family Support services, mainly for Home Visiting Strategies. These services are executed by grantees which the Regional Partnership Councils or FTF Board has contracted with to provide. Karen displayed the internal site used to pull the report and showed the Committee how FTF Staff can delve into more detailed information through our internal "Reports" page. The detailed information shows allotments for QF including scholarships and coaching services. The Health Services page displayed various strategies, primarily in care coordination, medical homes, mental health care consultants, oral health, prenatal, development screening and health consultation. Family Support services included home visiting, parent education and family resource centers. The list is long in these areas and as we move towards Fiscal Year 16, FTF is looking at strategies that should be part of these areas so they're not "one offs" and they can be comprehensive.

Quality First (QF) data was further reviewed and the Committee was shown data that reflected the progress being made in increasing star rating levels. There are two "cohorts" involved and the first is a group that is making statistically valid increases between star levels. The other reflection is that providers are coming in at a higher quality level than the first group of QF participants though we're not sure why this is. First Things First (FTF) is looking at providers contracted with the Arizona Department of Economic Security in targeted zip code areas, who are serving low income children and it could be that these providers have been using more of the QF tools readily available and that this is why the incoming star levels are raised. Member Berk agrees but also believes it is because of increased Professional Development in the field.

This Quality First (QF) analysis goes further into the data on environmental rating scales and class instrument. We found that a larger percentage of providers were at two stars as has been the case since the beginning of the program but we're looking at where we can increase focus to move them up in ratings. Currently approximately 32% of providers are at

three stars or above and are progressing every month with 50% of providers ready to move up from three stars and have gotten past the threshold of the environmental scale. The CLASS instrument is comprised of three areas (classroom organization, social and emotional support for the child, and instructional support) We do well in the first two areas and find that instructional support is the area in which we see providers are having the hardest time in moving past. This is also typically one our early childhood field has not devoted as much attention to in course work or in professional development (PD) but we are working with coaches and supervisors on how to improve and receive PD in this area.

Karen shared that First Things First (FTF) brought in the Authors and Consultants of the book Powerful Interactions and what we're seeing is that if we provide supports in this area we can help providers move forward. Ginger Sandweg added that we engaged the Consultants to work with our coaching teams and evolved the training to be geared specifically to working with teachers in the classroom. The theory is that if we interact with everyone on how we want others to interact with children, it will be a "cascade/domino" effect amongst all partners. If we understand where children are at developmentally, we're better able to work with them in an instructional capacity then we can be structurally supportive of them. The better connections and relationships one has with children, the better we'll be "present" with them. We also looked at extending a child's learning experience. If we look at increasing a teacher's language and terms used in the classroom, for example from saying "you've done this" to "you've done this and here's why it's important" then as a coach as I increase my interaction with teachers they will have increased interaction with children and this will extend their learning in the same way. As a child hears and is addressed more words it increases their vocabulary. Committee Members were asked to further review the data and to respond to Karen Woodhouse with any feedback or concerns on the way FTF is looking at the Quality First data.

Member Berk questioned the data on estimated ratings and whether providers who have completed the CLASS with high enough scores but who have not completed the quality point scale would be included in the 4 star column, as well as if there were any providers who had high scores in CLASS to get a four or five but who had not gotten the score of four or five on the point scale? Ginger Sandweg responded yes to both areas but that they are very few. For example, there were programs that met the CLASS scores but didn't meet the staff qualification requirements necessary to maintain their three, four or five star levels and essentially achieved a two star rating because of this. There are also some family child care providers that don't have the CLASS assessment that don't meet some of the requirements on the point scale so essentially they've met the ERS scores and then move on to the point scale. In this past year there were some who initially didn't reach the point scale scores in their initial assessment but were later able to provide an explanation / clarification on items the Assessor may not have seen the information during the first review. We also found that some were held back in reaching higher levels because of staff qualifications. Karen Woodhouse noted that this is a good point we'll look at further in our validation study since we're not validating the levels of quality anymore we're looking at whether or not a three, four or five star rated provider is actually getting the child outcomes we think our national research tells us we should be getting. The validation study and the evaluation we're going to do in that study during the next couple of years is going to be really helpful in understanding what the true predictions of child outcomes are.

We're currently looking at research out of Virginia from Bob Kianta on whether it matters if a person has a BA degree if say they have an AA degree or AAEC with content knowledge and course work that's very specific to early childhood development and their teaching in the classroom gets the child outcomes we need. This area of work is being developed by the Professional Development Workgroup. Child outcome data is a large piece of our study and this is the direction our National Panel recommends we go but it will take some time to collect and analyze this data. Member Willis commended First Things First on identifying what the common stumbling blocks are for providers in attaining a three star or higher and in proactively finding the resources to help support providers in their growth as well as in the care. Chair Decker called for further comments or questions but there being none, moved on to the next agenda item.

Report on 2013 Race to the Top (RTTT)– Early Learning Challenge Grant Proposal (Presentation and Discussion)

Karen Woodhouse reviewed a one page handout and noted that 17 states submitted applications and those awards will be announced by the end of the year. The Governor's Office identified that First Things First (FTF) would facilitate the grant application in partnership with the other State Agencies and we worked closely with the Arizona Department of Economic Security, Arizona Department of Education and the Arizona Department of Health Services. The grant specified that funds would be used to improve high learning programs for children and for populations of children with high service needs such as children in poverty at 200% or below the poverty level, children in foster care or with health care needs,

children with English as a secondary language and for tribal children. The grant called for each state to propose what it would do in terms of education reform to bring all kids to level. The grant application wrote to these populations and identified seven specific areas of focus and we identified a total of 27 major goals. We focused on statewide programs and chose four regions that would be representative of the state. These were South Phoenix, Santa Cruz County as a border community with a high non-English speaker and poverty population, Navajo Apache as our rural area and the San Carlos Apache Indian Community. In reviewing past applications and scores we found it was best to not spread out and to stay focused on certain areas. We're including a look at Quality First (QF) in tribal areas as well as looking at what's needed for cultural responsiveness and we've identified that we'll be working with tribes across the state to look at their health and safety standards. Member Laffoon asked for more detail in regards to working with tribal standards and Karen shared that the Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona had first brought this idea to the table during the Tribal Consultation. We would look at the current standards used by the Tribes and provide information on other statewide standards and ways for the Tribes to adopt/adapt their own standards. As for Tribes to more fully participate in QF, we're looking at increasing entry requirement which tribal communities don't currently do. For FTF to get a better idea of how tribal standards are set, we would get more training from the Tribes. Applicants don't receive updated information during the review and scoring process but we have heard that there is an emphasis on work with rural and tribal communities and based on past awardees, this work resonates with what FTF is planning. Chair Decker commended FTF and the partners on all the work it took to put together this grant.

Update on Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI) (Presentation and Discussion)

Although not awarded the Race to the Top Grant in 2011, working on the application helped First Things First (FTF) to identify the areas we wanted to move forward on. At the federal level it's working on the Kindergarten Developmental Inventory (KDI). Progress has come from the formation of a collaborative with the Arizona Department of Education leading a partnership with FTF, The Virginia G. Piper Trust and the State Board of Education. Two national consultants will be advising the collaborative and they are Dr. John Love, former Director of Mathematica Research Organization and Catherine Scott Little out of North Carolina Chapel Hill. We are working on engaging the Superintendent of Public Instruction on what the collaborative work could look like in Arizona. Funding will come from The Piper Trust and FTF will use funding from the Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG). Arizona is part of a 10 state consortium with North Carolina leading with three national partners, BUILD, Zero to Three and Strategic Research Inc. (SRI) who will help us work on the assessment. They have proposed in the \$6.1 million grant that we would develop a K-3 assessment system that's appropriate for young kids. The beginning of this assessment system is a KEA. Although Arizona has been working on our KDI/KEA, all our work will align with this further development. The Arizona Department of Education putting together a lot of professional development with lots of engagement with stakeholders, families and educators as we move through the next couple of years and we're all working together in alignment. More information will follow.

The assessment will be across the five domains of learning which include social and emotional approaches to learning physical development as well as language and literacy and cognitive development. It is not a gateway assessment, we're looking at the whole child and we're very focused on identifying where a child is in their development. It's also about the ability to monitor data at the population level so we're looking at Arizona as a whole in improving how we're able to close the readiness gap for kids prior to Kindergarten. A big measure of this data is the KDI and our timeline is for field and pilot testing in 2015/16 and in 2017 we anticipate we'd make available the assessment for all schools. Even though we're engaged in this work, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) would have to go through a competitive process to get the vendor who would do the assessment to be used. School readiness is the #1 indicator and all the FTF indicators relate to school readiness for the whole child and concurrent and aligned to this is ADE currently vetting their definition of school readiness which has been vetted around the state and comments can also be made on-line. We're also really trying to engage Kindergarten through third grade teachers because we're going to need their support. Karen reviewed a handout of the report that was created from the KDI Stakeholder Taskforce. The three main areas are the actual instrumentation of or the assessment itself, the professional development which will be necessary and communication which includes data about the assessment or the system, communicating with educators, parents and families, the general public but also communicating about the data and what is being collected and disseminated. This will be a good opportunity for Arizona to have some real evidence on where we are in school readiness. This information would be available to school districts in 2017 but not mandated. The Department of Education is saying this will be a voluntary program and feel that at this point in time politically, it would be hard to mandate. Not because it will cause the districts money because it would be a low cost to the State but it's a concern for the political environment and the discussions

which have occurred around common core standards known as the Arizona College and Career Ready Standards. The political aspect of young children and assessment, even with great messaging, the public will still have a concern that this would keep their kids out of kindergarten. We will reassess the political environment in three or four years but right now this will only be based on voluntary participation.

FY 2014 Meeting Dates:

The Committee discussed meeting dates for the 2014 calendar year and determined that meetings from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. are good times and to avoid meetings on Mondays and Fridays. By consensus meetings will be scheduled on Tuesdays when possible. Chair Decker and Karen Woodhouse will work on the date for the next meeting and when scheduled an e-mail will be sent out to the Committee.

Chair Decker called for further discussion items or Member updates and there being none, she adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.