



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

Member Willis motioned to approve the draft meeting minutes of March 7, 2013 and Member Berk seconded. 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 and the sub-committees for care coordination, oral health and nutrition, obesity prevention and physical activity. The Affordable Health Care Act has brought lots of discussion on improvement of care and it is expected to increase the opportunity for families to have well child visits. The new law also impacts oral health and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) will now reimburse for flourish treatments. Co-Chair Shea noted that the committee is looking at strategies that might involve partnership in strategies with other agencies.

Karen Woodhouse reported that the Family Support and Literacy Advisory Committee has identified three key areas of focus which are Access (to information and services); Awareness (building knowledge and empowering families); and, Connections (looking at a system of supports and services for families and how they can be better connected).

Ginger Sandweg provided an update on the Early Learning Advisory Committee. They are looking at Quality First data and the indicators and supports that will help move providers to higher quality levels and how to scale Quality First to allow more providers to participate.

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 and engaging with other higher education institutions to broaden the offering. The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies are in final review, and work begins on the competencies for coaches and technical assistance providers in January 2014. The Workgroup is also working on designing and launching a website and registry in 2014 and Registry One has been selected as the software for the registry. In response to a question from Member Berk, Stephanie shared that the professional development website and registry would include information on the Early Childhood Workforce, opportunities for higher education programs for the Workforce, and links to other agencies offering professional development. Users would access the registry through a link on the professional development website. The Workgroup will soon begin to draft the next iteration of the strategic plan for 2015/2016.

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, which met for about a year and developed recommendations for FTF to continually improve culturally responsive practices and materials. If the Board approved the recommendations, the sub-committee will regroup in 2014 to look at a work plan that FTF will have created and implemented so that they can monitor our progress. Member Juan Saunders likes the definition 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. Motion was passed and the recommendations will be forwarded to the FTF Board at their next meeting.

Update on FY14 Funding and Strategies (Presentation and Discussion)

Karen Woodhouse provided an update on FTF funding and strategies. The information reflects the funding allotments from each Regional area as well as from Statewide programs in six goal areas. The largest funding amount goes towards Quality First (QF) and Family Support services, mainly for Home Visiting Strategies. QF data was further reviewed and the Committee was shown data that reflected the progress being made in increasing star rating levels. Currently approximately 32% of providers are at three stars or above. While 50% of 2-star providers are close to moving up to three stars, instructional support is the area in which providers are having the hardest time in progressing. QF grantees are working with coaches and supervisors on how to improve coaching in this area. Ginger Sandweg added that QF engaged consultants to work with our coaching teams and evolved the training to also work with teachers in the classroom. 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 QF data.

Member Berk questioned the data on estimated ratings and whether providers who have completed the CLASS assessment 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. However, 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.

The QF validation study will provide data on which quality indicators are most predictive of child outcomes, and this will enable continuous improvement in the QF rating standards and indicators. 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.

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 work 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 application wrote to these populations and identified seven specific areas of focus and 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.

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

A collaborative partnership between the Arizona Department of Education, FTF, Virginia G. Piper Trust and the State Board of Education has made progress on a plan for a KDI. A statewide stakeholder taskforce met several times and provided feedback on what the partnership should consider in the development of a KDI. The taskforce is issuing a report addressing three main areas: instrumentation of or the assessment, professional development for educators and administrators, and communicating with educators, families, and the general public but also communicating about the data and what is being collected and disseminated.

Arizona is also part of a 10-state consortium with North Carolina leading with three national partners, BUILD, Zero to Three and Strategic Research Inc. (SRI) that will be working on a K-3 assessment system funded through a federal Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG). The \$6.1 million grant proposes that a kindergarten entry assessment is the beginning of the assessment system. Although Arizona has been working on a KDI, we will now continue that work through the grant. The timeline is for field and pilot testing in 2015/16 and in 2017 the assessment will be available for voluntary use in all schools.

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. 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.