



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*Ready for School. Set for Life.*

## Arizona Early Child Development and Health Board Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council MINUTES

### Call to Order/Welcome

A Regular Meeting of the First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council was held on July 22, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. (DST). The meeting was located at the Navajo Nation Museum, Resource Room, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Martin at approximately 10:13 a.m. followed by introduction of the Regional Council, staff, and guests.

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

Members Absent: Valonia Hardy, James Nez, and Paula Seanez

FTF Staff Present: Melissa Begay, Elyse Dempsey, Kate Dobler-Allen, Jeanne Martin, Memarie Tsosie and Virginia Turner

### Call to the Public

There were no calls to the public at this time.

### Discussion and Possible Approval of June 9, 2014 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Member Barney that the Regional Partnership Council approve the June 9, 2014 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

### Overview and Discussion of Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council's Priorities and Strategies

Kate Dobler-Allen, Regional Director of the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council, presented to the Regional Council an overview of SFY2015 prioritized needs, school readiness indicators, and funded strategies and partners of the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council. Ms. Dobler-Allen reported that although the needs have existed for six years, prioritization of needs in the region has changed over time including an increasing lack of access to quality child care due to geography of the region. Ms. Dobler-Allen attributed success of the regional strategies to system building efforts among early care programs and providers in addition to funding.

Chair Martin expressed interest in different strategies to be considered by the Regional Council to fulfill needs in the Navajo Nation Arizona Region.

Member Barney inquired of programs created by the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council in response to a need identified in the region. Ms. Dobler-Allen indicated that Community-Based Professional Development for Early Care and Education Professionals was developed for local programs that do not have access to Quality First, and the Healthy Steps for Young Children Program, which provides well-child visits and a connection to parent resources for families. Ms. Dobler-Allen also indicated that children in foster care are a population of need in the region that is being considered in FY16-18 planning for the Navajo/Apache Regional Partnership Council.

### **Presentation on Parenting Arizona's Home Visitation Program**

Katherine Mike, Parents As Teachers (PAT) Coordinator of Chicanos Por La Causa's (CPLC) Parenting Arizona, provided a program overview of family recruitment and implementation challenges in SFY2014, and goals/activities for SFY2015. For service areas of Kayenta, Chinle, Ganado, and Window Rock, Ms. Mike reported a fulfillment of target service units of 150 recruited families with additional families on wait-lists for Ganado and Kayenta service areas. In addition, CPLC Parenting Arizona implemented Group Connections – a monthly opportunity for families to socialize and participate in group activities surrounding early childhood development, and provided family referrals to support services as needed. Current program challenges include families being unable at time of visits, high maintenance cost of personal vehicles and fuel prices, and high-risk families not having additional visits in the month per PAT curriculum due to high cost of travel. Ms. Mike noted that although a 50 mile radius services area was reported, reduction to a 30 mile radius services area is being considered for one of four services hubs to reduce travel expenses. In year two, Ms. Mike informed the Regional Council that vision and hearing screenings will be performed.

Member Barney inquired of the inclusion of Navajo culture and language into the PAT curriculum. Mike confirmed that Navajo clanship and language are supported by the Parent Educators during visits to families.

Member Etsitty expressed concern for high-risk families and asked that consideration be made to place high-risk families as priority in SFY2015.

Member Yazzie also expressed concern for families who are located in more remote areas of the regions that may not have access to services.

Regional Director Begay recommended that the issue of high travel cost be brought to the attention of FTF Finance so that solutions may be presented to the Regional Council in September 2014.

### **Discussion and Possible Action on a No-Cost Extension for Arizona Department of Education Grant Contract #ISA-RC0001-14-0685-01, for Three Months to Complete the Remainder of the Scope of Work in SFY2015**

Jeanne Martin, First Thing First (FTF) Fiscal Specialist, reminded the Regional Council that Arizona Department of Education (ADE) was awarded a 5 month contract in SFY2014 to provide assistance to three school districts with expansion and start-up of early learning programs for the 2014-2015 school year. Due to delays in supply order for playground safety materials, one school – Red Mesa Unified School District – was not able to complete the order by fiscal year end. Per procurement procedures, reimbursement for SFY2014 is not possible and requires action from the Regional Council to extend the contract with ADE to complete supply order, and permit previous SFY2014 funding to be moved to the SFY2015 strategy for Expansion: Start-Up and/or Capital Expense. Ms. Martin also noted that any left-over monies would be placed in SFY2015 Carry Forward.

A motion was made by Member Etsitty that the Regional Partnership Council approve a No-Cost Extension for Arizona Department of Education Grant Contract #ISA-RC0001-14-0685-01, for Three Months to Complete the Remainder of the Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense Scope of Work in SFY2015, seconded by Vice Chair Boyne. Motion carried.

### **Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2015 Native Language Preservation Strategy**

Regional Director Begay provided an overview of past efforts by the Regional Council to implement the Native Language Preservation Strategy including government to government grant agreements with Navajo Head Start and the Office of Diné Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment respectively, and a FTF Directed strategy that endeavored to identify and hire an Early Literacy Instructional Specialist. Most recently, programs reported challenges with recruitment of qualified early childhood professionals, which prevented implementation. In response, FTF program staff recommended the development of a strategy scope of work where year one is a planning period, year two is a professional and curriculum development period, and year three is dedicated to identifying an administrative home. Regional Director initially requested recommendations from the Regional Council in May to address strategy implementation, where Member Barney and Member Hardy provided comments and identified current resources. Regional Director Begay provided a discussion summary and asked the Regional Council to consider the future of the strategy in the region and alternative implementation strategies.

Member Barney asked that the Regional Council consider the benefits of providing Navajo language embedded curriculum.

Vice Chair Boyne commented on the importance of other languages and language preservation is a family initiative.

Chair Martin commented on the importance of language structure in early learning years and asked that the Regional Council consider a different delivery system that might more heavily incorporate parent engagement.

Member Black advocated for a home-based strategy where direct contact with families provided access to early literacy materials for Navajo language.

Member Yazzie proposed hiring a consultant to assess system needs, and recommended creation and use of media materials.

Regional Director Begay recognized the Regional Council's desire to continue the strategy, and recommended an approach that includes home-based and center-based implementation. Regional Director Begay indicated that assistance would be provided by FTF program staff to identify a vendor.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Partnership Council approve to hire a consultant to determine a comprehensive needs assessment on the Navajo language in the region, seconded by Member Begay. Motion carried.

#### **Discussion on FY2016-2018 Strategic Planning**

Regional Director Begay reviewed the SFY2013 to 2015 strategic plan with attention to regional priority needs, strategies, funding, and school readiness indicators; and provided summaries for community partner programs, the 2012 Needs and Assets Report and historical growth of the regional Carry Forward balance for Regional Council consideration in planning for the SFY2016 to 2018 strategic plan. Regional Director Begay asked that the Regional Council consider the sustainability of prioritize needs while Carry Forward decreases over time, and short term investments to spend down the Carry Forward balance where grant partners are aware of limited funding.

Member Barney recommended that notice be provided to current regional partners to consider other sustainable sources for funding.

Member Etsitty inquired of the effects on Quality First scholarships for the Navajo Nation, Arizona region by FTF State Board action. Regional Director Begay noted that Quality First Scholarships will no longer be an inclusive package with Quality First. Instead, Regional Council will choose the number of scholarships for the region.

Regional Director Begay indicated that discussion will continue at the August Work Session for the Regional Council.

#### **Presentation on Regional Community Outreach Plan**

Community Outreach Coordinator Tsosie provided additional updates regarding the SFY2014-2016 Statewide Strategic Communication Plan including current goals and benchmarks for engagement. Per Regional Council member recommendations, Pre-K/K-12/Higher Education, Faith-Based, Families, Military/Veterans, and Community Leaders have been identified as priority audiences for the region for community awareness, outreach and engagement. In addition, the Informal Networking Event, where community members are able to facilitate discussions, has been recently added as a new outreach tactic.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action for Election of Regional Chair and Vice-Chair for SFY2015**

A motion was made by Member Barney that the Regional Partnership council maintain Harry Martin as Chair and Grace Boyne as Vice Chair of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council for SFY2015, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

#### **Discussion and Possible Action on SFY2015 Regional Council Meeting Date and Times**

A motion was made by Member Etsitty for the Regional Partnership Council to approve the second Tuesday of each month for the Regular Meetings beginning at 10:00 a.m. with meeting locations to be determined at a later date, seconded by Vice Chair Boyne. Motion carried.

**Regional Council Member Announcements**

Chair Martin announced upcoming Regional Council events/meetings including the New Member Orientation on August 6, 2014 in Show Low, Arizona; the Early Childhood Summit on August 18 and 19 in Phoenix, Arizona; and the next Regional Council meeting schedule to be a Work Session on August 17, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. in Phoenix, Arizona.

Member Black announced a Dine Bizaad immersion camp on August 8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>. Additional information is available on the Diné College website.

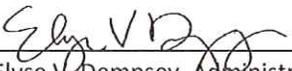
**Adjournment**

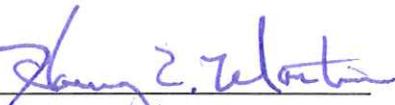
A motion was made by Member Yazzie to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Begay. Motion carried. Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:55 p.m.

Dated this 24<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2014

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

  
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Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II

  
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Harry Martin, Chair