



# 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 October 8, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. (Daylight Savings Time). The meeting was located at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #1, 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: Martin Ashley, Benjamin Barney, Amelia Black, Grace Boyne, Rhonda Etsitty, Harry Martin; Byrde Nez attended telephonically

Members Absent: Valonia Hardy, Paula Seanez and Jeannette Yazzie

FTF Staff Present: Melissa Begay, Elyse Dempsey, Charlene Surber, Memarie Tsosie, and Virginia Turner

### Call to the Public

Jennifer Hernandez, Northern Arizona Outreach Mobilizer, provided an introduction of Expect More Arizona – a statewide advocacy organization for quality education from birth through career. Ms. Hernandez provided information regarding program initiatives.

### Discussion and Possible Approval of September 10, 2013 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Council approve the September 10, 2013 Regular Meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Member Barney. Motion carried.

### Review and Discussion of the SFY15 Funding Plan

Regional Director Begay introduced discussion for SFY2013 expenditures, SFY2014 awards, and proposed SFY2015 allotments. In SFY2013, under-spending of regional and statewide strategies – Family, Friends & Neighbors, Food Security, FTF Professional REWARD\$, Nutrition/Obesity/Physical Activity, Oral Health, Quality First Scholarships, Quality First Pre-K Scholarships, Recruitment-Stipend/Loan Forgiveness, Scholarships non-TEACH, and Statewide Evaluation – led to increase in the regional SFY14 Carry-Forward balance. In addition, three SFY2014 strategies remain unawarded: the Regional Council is currently pursuing government to government agreements with Holbrook Unified School District and the Arizona Department of Education for the Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense strategy; the Regional Council is awaiting response from the Navajo Nation Office of Dine' Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment regarding the government to government agreement scope of work for the Native Language Preservation strategy; and the Needs and Assets strategy will not be awarded as the Regional Council elected to proceed with a base report not requiring additional work by the vendor. Unawarded funds will be moved to the regional Carry Forward balance. Regional Director Begay further reported that in anticipation of over-spending by Regional Councils a ten percent increase of total regional allocations will be added to all regional Carry Forward balances beginning SFY2015.

Regional Director Begay provided SFY2015 strategy allotment recommendations in which the Regional Council was asked to consider use of the regional Carry Forward balance to sustain current strategies in SFY15.

The Expansion Start Up and/or Capital Expense strategy – to assist with the expansion of early care programs for Navajo Nation Arizona school districts pending approval by the Regional Council – was recommended for an allotment of \$500,000.

The Family, Friends, and Neighbors strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$200,000 with the understanding that the Regional Council may reenter into a potential grant agreement with current grantee, Navajo Nation Child Care and Development Fund.

The Food Security strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$340,000. Since current grantees are in the final year of grant agreement, a Request for Grant Agreement would be released in spring SFY2014 with an anticipated award for July 1, 2014. The Regional Council recommended that an increase also be made to the number of target services units, with consideration of appropriate delivery system for increased units.

The FTF Professional REWARD\$ strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$67,500. Regional Director Begay reported that the recent increase of enrolled Quality First early care programs may later impact the strategy as the number of early care professionals receiving incentives would also increase.

The Home Visitation strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$428,963, including a ten percent increase of the original total allotment that would anticipate any increase in program services in the second year of grant implementation.

The Native Language Preservation strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$100,000 to potential grantee, Navajo Nation Office of Dine' Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment, for year one program planning phase in SFY2015 pending approval by the Regional Council and First Things First State Board.

The Nutrition/Obesity/Physical Activity strategy, with grantee in final year of grant agreement, was recommended for an allotment of \$600,000. A Request for Grant Agreement may be released or the Regional Council may elect to continue with a government to government agreement with the current grantee, Navajo County Public Health. Chair Martin inquired about the coverage of services throughout Apache County. Regional Director Begay indicated that Navajo, Apache, and Coconino counties are collaborating with Navajo County Public Health to ensure that services are provided to families of Navajo Nation Arizona.

The Oral Health strategy allotment was recommended for an allotment of \$460,000 to support an increase in target services units and to include funding to support a planning phase to implement a tele-dentistry program in SFY2016.

The Parent Outreach and Awareness strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$90,000 in anticipation of expenses for the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council Early Childhood Workshop in April 2014.

The Quality First, Quality First Child Care Scholarships, and Child Care Health Consultation strategies were presented by Regional Director Begay in two cost model scenarios where the number of Quality First Scholarships varied. Scenario one included funding 25 center based providers, QF Scholarships would be dispersed at the base model and only have 50 additional Quality First Child Care Scholarships for off reservation scholarships.....whereas scenario two also included funding 74 additional scholarships beyond the base model to assist three pre-kindergarten programs previously funded by the Regional Council. Regional Director Begay also recommended that additional travel expenses be considered for Child Care Health Consultation. The Regional Council elected to proceed with scenario two where Quality First would be recommended for an allotment of \$2,255,340.85; Quality First Child Care Scholarships at \$374,351.85; and Child Care Health Consultation at \$72,425.

The Read Out and Read strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$72,698 and increased in number of books distributed.

The Scholarship non-TEACH strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$700,000, and increase in the number of target service units. In addition to funding Northland Pioneer College and Coconino Community College, a proposal has been submitted by Dine College to offer scholarships for early care providers to attain an Associate of Arts degree in early childhood.

The Community Awareness strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$30,000. Regional Director indicated that adjustments were to account for a more intentional approach to regional event sponsorships and/or participations.

The Community Outreach strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$85,000 including a five percent increase for legislative critical pay retention.

The Media strategy was recommended for an allotment of \$65,000.

The Statewide Evaluation strategy allotment was recommended for an allotment of \$255,900 per recommendations of the Research and Evaluation Panel.

Member Barney inquired about limitations regarding use of Carry-Forward funds for regional overspending. Regional Director Begay clarified that Charlene Surber, Fiscal Specialist of First Things First Finance, monitors regional finances of the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council to ensure that strategies remain within allotments. Though, the Regional Council may elect to revise allotments for strategies during grant renewals.

Member Black expressed concern of home-base care providers and individual care providers living in rural communities who may be unaware of the services provided by First Things First. Regional Director Begay referred Member Black to Navajo Nation Child Care and Development Fund, in which assistance with funding and regulation is provided for independent providers.

**Discussion and Possible Approval of System Building Priority Themes**

A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne that the Regional Council table discussion and possible approval of System Building Priority Themes for the November 12 Regular Meeting, seconded by Member Black. Motion carried.

**Regional Council Member Announcements**

Chair Martin provided an update from the First Things First discretionary funding Ad Hoc committee meeting where discussion proposed that frontier areas could receive more discretionary funding than other regions of First Things First. Any changes would not be implemented until SFY16 to coincide with upcoming three year plan cycle.

Member Etsitty announced a new model provided by TEACH that would allow early care providers to complete necessary courses to attain an Associates of Arts degree. Additionally, in attending the 24<sup>th</sup> Early Childhood Fair, Member Etsitty reported that both she and Member Black had received the Early Childhood Award, and presented the award to Member Black. Additionally, for consideration by the Regional Council, Member Etsitty provided a narrative of an early care provider who could not attain her degree due to funding.

**Next Meeting**

The next Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council Regular Meeting will be held on November 12, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Museum, Conference Room #1, Loop Road and Highway 264, Window Rock, Arizona 86515.

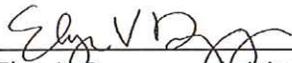
**Adjournment**

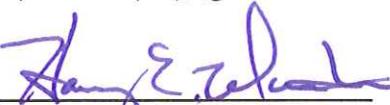
A motion was made by Vice Chair Boyne to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Member Ashley. Motion carried. Chair Martin adjourned the meeting at approximately 12:44 p.m.

Dated this 11<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2013

ARIZONA EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH BOARD

Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Elyse V. Dempsey, Administrative Assistant II

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Harry Martin, Chair