

New Business

Committee Reports:

Budget Committee - did not meet

Education/Conference Committee – did not meet.

Membership – did not meet.

By-Laws – did not meet.

Executive Committee – did not meet today.

3-Year Strategic Planning: Carl Moore joined us at 9:45. Introductions were made around the table. Carl gave us his bio orally and spoke about his take on strategic planning. He facilitates work that people are reluctant to undertake.

Carl helped us to establish ground rules for the sessions and passed out the agenda. The answers to the interview questions were passed out and from those responses we spoke about the question, “Why do strategic planning?” The discussion moved to what a good plan would be. Words like realistic, doable, ongoing monitoring, manageable. We then reviewed the history of NIHSDA. We added that NIHSDA is now mentioned in the law after reauthorization as mandatory consultants in regards to Indian programs and development of the director’s listserv.

Discussion of our mission began before we broke for the call to Jim Northcutt for the 2007 audit. We were to focus on *why* we do what we do not *what* we do.

Break for 15 minutes...

Jim Northcutt: The call was made to Jim Northcutt our certified public accountant in Wichita, Kansas. Jim corrected the terminology that this is a compilation report not an audit. Joining us by phone were Toni Dobrec and Kathryn Helsel of Three Feathers Associates, Danny Wells and Hilda Marshall. Also in the room were Kristi Bentkowski and Terri Stringer of Three Feathers Associates. It was moved by Joyce to accept the Compilation Report, seconded by Vicki. Motion carried.

Renee Perthuis: Renee gave a presentation to the board on the Risk Management Process.

I hope you’ve had a chance to see the Office of Head Start WEBCAST on the Risk Management Process. Today we’ll cover some of the same points but also highlight grantee roles in the process and provide some Regional information on scheduling the meeting.

As we go through our presentation today I think it’s important to keep in mind that the Office of Head Start is adopting an established business process. It’s used in the private sector,

government, health care, and educational institutions to identify risks & prevent or reduce problems. GAO also strongly supports the use of Risk Management by federal programs and grantees. GAO sees Risk Assessment and Risk Management as key to ensuring that programs achieve their objectives and to protect against harm to the federal grant.

One of the important features of the OHS Process is its comprehensive nature. It's like a comprehensive preventative "health exam" for the Head Start Program.

The process involves an intentional focus on risks – on events or circumstances that threaten the likelihood of a grantee to implement a Head Start or Early Head Start Program in full compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards and other regulation.

In other words it focuses on things important to the success of the program that aren't working well and which could lead to problems.

As you can see we are starting the Risk Management Process on April 1 and will complete it for all grantees in preparation for their 2009 funding.

OHS sees Risk Management as the right direction at the right time for Head Start. It helps us accomplish two key goals: It helps us strengthen consistency in planning and decision-making and strengthen our focus on prevention, early intervention and continuous improvement.

We can't afford to wait to take these steps. We need to be on the same page on risks and work together early and systematically to prevent deficiency and crisis.

This is a tested process. It was piloted by Kansas City, a smaller Region in terms of number of grantees, and by Atlanta, the Region with the largest number of grantees. The process reflects an understanding of Head Start and is based on experience on factors & issues that lead to problems and deficiency.

It's important that the Funding, Monitoring and Technical Assistance processes be tied together, be informed by each other, and operate in concert toward the same purposes.

Risk Management provides this framework. It ties these processes together for the purposes of preventing or reducing risks – to intervene early – to make sure everyone has the full picture of the situation and that plans and decisions are made in a transparent way and are documented.

Corporate knowledge is so important in today's world. Head Start is a complex program – this means that information is scattered among different systems and in the heads of a number of people.

I'm sure you've had the experience of looking back over something that didn't work out as you expected and realizing you didn't know something at the time you made a decision. The OHS process helps you avoid surprises.

This is also a world of turnover – the documentation in the Risk Process and the shared knowledge make it possible for someone to step in when people leave.

The OHS process operates as an on-going cycle with three equally important and interdependent stages – the Data and Information Analysis Stage, the Risk Management Meeting and the

Follow-up Stage. These stages are repeated each year for all grantees in advance of their continuation funding.

It's logical to connect the Risk Management cycle to continuation funding. This is a key planning and decision point in the life of the head start grant. This is also an annual process, which ensures that every grantee will be assessed at least once each year.

While this means all grantees will have at least one Risk Management Meeting each year based on the funding cycle, there are circumstances when additional meetings will be held to gauge progress towards goals or sustaining improvements.

An example is a grantee that has been determined to have deficiencies or a significant number of non-compliances as the result of a monitoring review.

The process itself is triggered by the month in which the Risk Management Meeting must occur.

Based on the pilots we've determined the Risk Management Meeting will be held in the seventh month prior to the grantee refunding date. This provides the time we need to complete the steps that inform the Funding Guidance letter and Refunding Application. For this start-up year only, grantees with October and November refunding dates will be scheduled for Risk Management Meetings in April. This allows us to get on track in May with the standard 7 month lead time for Risk Management Meetings for grantees with December Refunding dates.

During the six weeks or so prior to the Risk Management Meeting, the Regional Program and Fiscal Specialists are engaged in the Data and Information Analysis Stage.

This stage is a single point in time that data and information from all of our processes are brought together for analysis – to see what it means.

The results of this stage provide the focus for the agenda of the Risk Management Meeting and lay the foundation for an informed discussion and a productive meeting.

During the course of their work, the Program and Fiscal Specialists will often be in contact with the Grantee to clarify information. For example to clarify PIR data. We ask your cooperation with the Regional staff when they contact you.

Towards the end of this stage, the Program Specialist will contact the Grantee to let them know topics that will be on the agenda so the Grantee can prepare for this discussion. Grantees often add topics they would like to discuss with the Regional Office.

At about the same time the Data and Information Analysis Stage is underway, the Program Specialist is also scheduling the Risk Management Meeting.

*You can expect a contact from your Program Specialist to schedule the Meeting about 6 weeks before the month the Meeting is due. In our Region we will hold Risk Management Meetings every (**Insert Regional Day(s) for RMM**).*

This is also a point at which you would discuss whether you plan to attend in person or by conference call and your plans for participants. They will also let you know who from the Regional Office will be there as well as others invited such as the CSBG or State Child Care

*Director. Our experience in the pilots tells us that conference calls result in very successful sessions. Grantees who **have** traveled in for the meeting have told us that it is worth the trip*

The Invitation Letter is sent 30 days before the date of your meeting. You will also receive a Grantee Meeting Form that reports data from our National System e.g. PIR and forms a preliminary agenda. You will be asked to confirm the accuracy of the data.

*The Risk Management Meeting itself is a central and dynamic stage in the process. It brings together the data and information and all the people involved with the grantee program. Dependent upon the funding sources, it can also include, for example, the State CSBG or Child Care Directors. It's important to keep in mind that this is a **discussion meeting**. It's conducted in accord with a pre-set format that guides the flow and ensures all the bases are covered. The Meeting is convened by the Head Start Manager and is led by the Program Specialist.*

The meeting lasts from 60-90 minutes. I think the video on the WEBCAST gives a sense of the tone and flow of the meeting.

Everyone is involved in identifying possible risks as well as strategies for addressing those risks. This is also the opportunity to shine a spotlight on strengths and success.

The goal of the meeting is to bring everyone on to the same page on risks and opportunities and to collaborate on a comprehensive Action Plan to address areas needing improvement or additional support.

Grantees play an active role as part of the Risk Management Process. The design of the process gives you the opportunity to bring your Leadership team together with the Regional Office and TA Staff to determine actions to be taken to prevent or reduce risks and strengthen your program.

We encourage grantees to include the Executive Director, Head Start Director, key staff and the Board and Policy Council chairs in the meeting so they will understand and support the work to be done from the very beginning.

The Action Plan includes goals, responsible parties, and timelines for completion. Responsible parties completing goals can be grantees and Regional and TA staff. A copy of the Plan will be sent to the grantee a week after the meeting as an attachment to the Thank you letter.

The Plan will inform the Funding Guidance letter and subsequent Refunding Application.

In the pilots we found that the Action Plan is fleshed out and even expanded during the Follow-up stage. We think this makes sense -- the Regional Office Team and Grantee need to work out the nitty gritty of plans and activities.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the Action Plan in the Risk Management Process. Because this is a collaborative plan – a comprehensive plan – everyone is accountable to work toward mitigating grantee risks and achieve the agreed upon outcomes.

The Plan frames the work of the TA Specialist and integrates it into the work of the Regional Office. The work of the TA specialist is a powerful tool and central strategy in supporting grantee efforts to prevent and reduce risk.

The Follow-up Stage is what it's all about. The Process has steps for monitoring and reporting of progress during this stage.

*The experience in the pilots tells us that follow-up is most effective when the specialists work as a Regional Office Team with the grantee. There is only **one** integrated and comprehensive plan under which everyone – the Regional Office Team and the grantee -- is communicating with each other on issues, progress and plans as they carry out their work.*

It's during this stage that you will find you will be able to move more quickly and effectively if your leadership Team including the Board and Policy Council chairs participated in the Risk Management Meeting.

I hope our presentation helped you understand a little more about the process and your involvement and that you are more comfortable with the idea of intentionally focusing on risks.

- That it makes sense to fix things that aren't working as soon as possible*
- that the process aims at a balanced and comprehensive picture of a program – its strengths as well as problems – and*
- that it is a way to bring all key members of the grantee staff on the same page with the Regional Office on OHS expectations.*

And finally I hope the transparency of the process and collaborative approach to planning and shared accountability stand out as a real opportunity for grantees to be an active player in the OHS process. As with anything new it will take experience and time to get comfortable with the process. We know questions will come up and there may be some confusion in the early stages. We want to hear from you – let us know what's working and what's not. Also watch for Risk Management information and resources on ECLKC.

John asked who beyond tribal leadership would be required to attend. HR, finance, anyone leading in the implementation of the program that is monitored, community partners, policy council members, anyone who can speak to successes and risks. What kinds of questions can we anticipate? PIR data driven questions, health tracking, what are you doing to change this percentage of failure?

A lack of native folks in the monitoring pool is critical. Renee responded that it is not for lack of invitation but could we please encourage native people to join the Danya team.

March 5 and 19 at 3:00 EST, all tribes can call in to get the presentation from Renee.

No funds are available to provide travel for these meetings across all regions. Teleconferencing will be the vehicle for these meetings.

Yesterday (February 27, 2008) the initial paperwork was signed off allowing the posting of the AIAN Program Branch Chief. This will happen in about 3 weeks and will remain open 30 days. Native preference will be given.

Gil posed the question of accountability of program specialists. Feds just went thru process of evaluation. Need more than hearsay to complaints about specialists. Write in to Renee at her email, we will not be identified.

Can the left hand communicate with the right hand? Please update old file info. Several complained that despite grantees sending in changes, the official mail is still addressed to past tribal leaders. It is offensive to current leaders. Renee stated to send in the information to her and also make sure that it is updated on the ECLKC.

Renee stated that request for fewer children/reduced services waiver request is being reviewed and that guidance would be coming out soon.

Close out letters- Renee will check with David and get back with Kathryn regarding the process and requirement.

Greg Smith and Michelle Brown-Yazzi: With reauthorization came changes and some of these changes required regulations such as expansion, what is expansion under the new law? There are dollars designated to expansion but is that just part-day to full-day? Home based to center based? Greg has been to meetings in D.C. that involved many main players, the heads of national programs in early childhood services in order to provide a united front for common issues, show a force of collaboration and unity. With the interpretation of the law occurring in such a fast pace, they want to insure that 6 – 8 items receive careful attention to interpretation such as governing board qualifications. Can tribal councils be considered public officials?

NHSA was in attendance also. Mike McGrady approached Greg wanting to get together and be a united voice. Greg let him know that when Polanski was with them she offered communication but no one else has. NHSA works on issues full time round the clock and calendar. They are still of the mind set that the mistakes made with the set aside were not really illegal and should be let go, forget about it and move on but Greg reminds them that the past informs the present.

We have two weeks, roughly, to develop our own view on expectations for the regulations. Here is the provision in the law, here is what we expect the regs to say. The Republicans are speeding to kick out a draft prior to elections to show they are education minded.

The 153 million increase for Head Start was approved but vetoed by Bush. For FY 09 there will be a 148 million increase but that is below inflation but enough to kick in the increase that would be 1.9 for them and 5.4 for us. Greater than the rate of inflation for us. McCain will be more supportive than Bush and so will the Democrats.

Many perceive Pre K-now as a great threat. Migrants said that they can't be trusted on the Hill. They claim to support Head Start yet compete for the same children and now hint at wanting federal dollars. The efforts so far have been in the states. There are

three paths: Choose to ignore them, oppose them, or collaborate; but on what terms? Pre K-now can cannibalize. NHSA might join in opposing federal dollars to Pre K-now.

As for the HHS budget consultation, Greg will go despite his feeling that it is a charade. He tried last year to dig up the reason for throwing funds over the fence to regional programs. No one has answered for that yet. They promised and lied. It is not legal. We could possibly sue, but would take hundreds of thousands of dollars and years. We can't recapture lost funds as it could possibly take 20 – 30 years to resolve. But maybe we could get a promise from them not to do it again. It is way too much effort for far too little gain.

3-Year Strategic Planning Continued: Strategic planning continued. Carl led the group through discussions regarding mission, strengths, vulnerabilities, environmental trends, opportunities, and treats of NIHSDA. A draft of the planning will be presented at the NIHSDA membership meeting in June. A work group has been established to work on a draft action plan that will also be presented to the membership in June.

Conference Planning: It was determined that we need to focus on development of workshop titles and content so we can finish the conference agenda.

Overview of the new Act, Professional Development Plans and Documentation, Ongoing Monitoring (by component area or integrated) IDEA regs (504) (IDEA B&C), Community Partnerships, Transitions, PreK-now 1.5 hour for Oregon Model and how Head Start was at the table and is fully incorporated into the shared benefits and 1.5 hour of the Oklahoma Model with Verna Thompson and how Indian Head Start is affected. Ongoing recruitment and outreach of low-income areas was suggested, Autism as a growing concern, an overview, increases in findings, reasons, parents refusing vaccinations out of fear? Minimal Brain Damage was suggested ADHD etc. Conscious Discipline, GABI is still necessary, Fiscal Requirements in the new Act, Risk Management process, Managing staff/supervision and related issues, Leadership styles, Indian Head Start and State Collaboration Offices-how is this supposed to work? Disaster preparedness, Methamphetamine. Strategies for Head Start teachers acquiring 15 hours of professional development annually.

We would like to keep Greg as the keynote speaker either at the beginning or the closing depending on his vacation schedule with his family in the Portland area. Ron Herndon would be invited to give a short welcoming and be invited to present NHSA update at the board meeting. Maybe we could visit his program.

If Oklahoma City does not work out, Tulsa will be the next choice because it is nearby in the same state and Danny might have some ideas about local accommodations. The board voted for San Diego as the next location on the list.

Toni has taken notes on the conference planning also and can fill in areas missed while the secretary was talking.

Committee Assignments: The following changes were made: Membership – Mavany was removed and Mike and Teresa were added. Bylaws – Lolinda was added. Budget – Pat was added. It was decided to scratch the Ad Hoc Quality Assurance committee until further notice.

Anne Bergan response discussion: After lengthy discussion about several topics, we decided to invite Anne to join our March meeting to help clarify what she is looking for in this area of research. Some of our topics were: Look at the trends such as the increase in 0-3 and PreK-now looming, can we increase EHS in Indian Country? Tribal leaders want to determine their own eligibility criteria for Head Start. Will a scientifically based curriculum be applied to Native populations without bias? Is there a good measurement for *our* children? Can OHS develop a good measurement tool for *unique* populations even within regional programs? Are the needs of children with disabilities in Indian Country being met? How will those children be served once they leave Head Start?

Adjournment: Lolinda moved to adjourn the meeting and Gil seconded. The motion carried.