

Internal Board Policies**8300A Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council By-Laws****ARTICLE 1: Name**

The name of this organization is the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council, hereafter referred to as Policy Council.

ARTICLE 2: Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Council is to be responsible for the direction of the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start program. Policy Council will utilize the annual community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment and self-assessment in order to complete the following responsibilities:

- Support the development of long- and short-term planning goals and objectives for the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start program and provide input regarding methods/strategies to meet those goals/objectives
- Be responsible for program design and operation
- Facilitate communication and interaction between and among parents, community representatives and Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start

ARTICLE 3: Responsibilities

The Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR Chapter XIII) policy council and policy committee section 1301.3 and the Head Start Act (42 USC 9801) policy council section 642(c)(2)(D) outline the duties and responsibilities of the policy council. The Policy Council shall approve and submit to the Plattsburgh Community School District Board of Education (PCSD BOE), which is the governing body for the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start program, decisions about each of the following activities:

1. Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Head Start agency is responsive to community and parent needs (§642(c)(2)(D)(i)).
2. Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities, including criteria for selecting over-income pregnant women or children who would benefit from program services (§642(c)(2)(D)(ii) & §1302.12(e)(3)).
3. Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding, prior to submission of applications (§642(c)(2)(D)(iii)).
4. Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in policy council activities (§642(c)(2)(D)(iv)).
5. Bylaws for the operation of the policy council (§642(c)(2)(D)(v)).
6. Program personnel policies and decision regarding the employment of program staff, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff (§642(c)(2)(D)(vi) & §1302.90(a)).
7. Developing procedures for how members of the policy council of the Head Start agency will be elected (§642(c)(2)(D)(vii)).
8. Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service area for such agencies (§642(c)(2)(D)(viii)).

Policy Council is also responsible for the following:

1. Approving program procedures on data management in areas such as quality of data and effective use and sharing of data, while protecting the privacy of child records in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws (§1302.101(b)(4)).
2. Along with the BOE, collaborating with the agency to establish program goals and measurable objectives (§1302.102(a)).
3. Along with the BOE, collaborating with the agency to address issues during the ongoing oversight and correction process and during federal oversight (§1302.102(b)(1)(iii)).
4. Along with the BOE, participate, through communication and collaboration, in the annual self-assessment (§1302.102(b)(2)(iii)).

Policy Council must use ongoing monitoring results, data on school readiness goals, data related to program goals and measurable objectives, and self-assessment results to conduct its responsibilities. The Head Start/Early Head Start Program shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the Policy Council, about program planning, policies, and operations, including:

- monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures;
- monthly program information summaries;
- program enrollment reports, including attendance reports;
- monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture;
- the financial audit;
- the annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment;
- the communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates;
- communication and guidance from the Secretary; and
- the program information reports.

ARTICLE 4: Policy Council Membership

Section 1: Eligibility 45 CFR §1301.3(b) and §642(c)(2)(B)

- a. At least 51% of the Policy Council's members must be parents/guardians of currently enrolled children in the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start program.
- b. Community representation cannot exceed 49% of the membership for the Policy Council.
- c. The PCSD BOE shall appoint at least one active Board of Education (BOE) member to serve as a liaison to the Policy Council. The BOE Liaison will be a non-voting member of Policy Council.

Section 2: Conflict of Interest 45 CFR §1301.3(b)(2) and §642(c)(2)(C)

- a. Members of the Policy Council shall not have a conflict of interest with the Head Start agency.
- b. No employee of Plattsmouth Community School District, grantee of the Cass County Head Start/Early Head Start program, may serve on the Policy Council.

- Parents who occasionally substitute as staff are able to serve on the council.
- c. Members of the Policy Council shall not receive compensation for serving on the council or for providing services to the Head Start agency.

Section 2: Procedures for Election of Members to the Policy Council

- a. Each preschool classroom will have two (2) parents elected to serve on Policy Council, if there is sufficient interest, otherwise each classroom will have at least one (1) parent elected to serve on Policy Council. The preschool classrooms at the Plattsmouth Early Childhood Center (PECC) are blended classrooms serving children through a variety of funding sources such as Head Start, Nebraska Department of Education grant funding, and private pay tuition. All parents will be eligible for election to Policy Council, however at least one parent of a child in the Head Start program will represent each classroom. Parents/guardians of children not enrolled in the Head Start program will be considered as community representatives on the Policy Council.
 - Elections will occur after the start of the new school year but before the October Policy Council meeting.
 - All parents/guardians will be invited to submit their name for the Policy Council election ballot.
 - Each classroom will conduct separate elections through secret ballots.
 - A parent/guardian may represent only one (1) classroom on the ballots.
 - Ballots will be given to the Administrative Assistant for tabulation and elected members will receive written confirmation of their membership.
 - In each preschool classroom, the two (2) parents/guardians (if there are at least two parents/guardians that indicate interest) with the most votes will be Policy Council members unless both of the parents/guardians with the most votes are not parents/guardians of children in the Head Start program. In that case, the parent/guardian of a child in the Head Start program with the most votes will be elected to Policy Council along with the “non-Head Start” parent/guardian that received the most votes. Every classroom must have at least one parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the Head Start program on Policy Council.
 - All elected members will attend an initial training session and sign all necessary documents including the Standards of Conduct and the Confidentiality Statement.
- b. The Early Head Start program will have one parent elected to serve on Policy Council.
 - Elections will occur after the start of the new program year but before the October Policy Council meeting.
 - All parents/guardians will be invited to submit their name for the Policy Council election ballot.
 - Ballots will be given to each parent/guardian and staff will take measures to ensure ballots are private.

- Ballots will be given to the Administrative Assistant for tabulation and the elected members will receive written confirmation of their membership.
 - The elected member will attend an initial training session and sign all necessary documents including the Standards of Conduct and the Confidentiality Statement.
- c. Up to three (3) community representatives may be approved by the Policy Council, outside of the ones chosen through the classroom voting process. The Policy Council encourages its members and staff to solicit community representatives from such areas as health, human services, education, private industry, legal services, juvenile services, early childhood programs, pharmacy, CPAs, dual language representatives, and local government. Any person that qualifies as a parent in the Head Start/Early Head Start program is not eligible to serve as a community representative.
- Policy Council members are invited to submit the names of people from the community who they think would be interested in serving on the Policy Council as a community representative and the reason the person should be included as a member.
 - Policy Council members will vote for up to three (3) community representatives. The candidates with the most votes will be asked to become a Policy Council member and will attend an initial training session and sign all necessary documents including the Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Statement.

Section 3: Term of Council Membership

Membership shall be limited to one-year terms for a maximum of five (5) years. These five (5) years need not be consecutive. The term of membership for the Policy Council begins in October of each school year and ends in October of the following school year. Members of the Policy Council who intend to serve for another year must stand for re-election.

Section 4: Vacancies

Vacancies on the Policy Council are created by the resignation of a member or by a member having three (3) consecutive absences without notification. Vacancies shall be filled by notifying the parent/guardian with the next highest number of votes from the initial classroom voting process. If there was not another parent/guardian on the initial ballot from the classroom which was represented by the resigning member, Head Start/Early Head Start staff will attempt to recruit a parent/guardian from that same classroom. If staff are unable to recruit another parent/guardian from the classroom who meets the requirements under Section 2 the position will remain vacant for the remainder of the term.

For Early Head Start, vacancies shall be filled by notifying the parent/guardian with the next highest number of votes. If there was not another parent/guardian on the initial ballot, Head Start/Early Head Start staff will attempt to recruit another parent/guardian from the

Early Head Start program. If another parent/guardian cannot be recruited, the position will remain vacant for the remainder of the term.

Section 5: Reimbursement for Expenses Incurred

- a. Policy Council members travelling more than 20 miles round trip from their residence to the site of the Policy Council meeting will be eligible to receive mileage reimbursement which will be paid at the current IRS rate.
- b. Policy Council members will receive reimbursement for child care expenses when attending a Policy Council meeting, a sub-committee meeting, or another meeting to conduct Head Start/Early Head Start business when child care is not already provided by the agency.
- c. Policy Council members will be expected to complete the necessary paperwork for reimbursement of expenses in a timely manner (no longer than 5 business days after the meeting date) in order to receive reimbursement. Paperwork is available from agency staff (e.g., Director, Administrative Assistants, Family Support Advocates, etc.).

ARTICLE 5: Policy Council Meetings

Section 1: Meetings

- a. The Policy Council shall meet once a month during the regularly scheduled school term (usually August through May) and on an as-needed basis during the summer. A regularly scheduled meeting can be cancelled by the Head Start/Early Head Start Director, upon consultation with the Policy Council Chairperson.
- b. All regular Policy Council meetings shall be made public to all parents, staff and interested parties during open session according to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act §84-1407.
- c. Policy Council reserves the right to go into closed session when dealing with sensitive issues regarding staff and families in accordance with to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act §84-1407.
- d. Roberts Rules of Order (Revised) shall govern Policy Council meetings.

Section 2: Special Meetings

Special Policy Council meetings may only be called by the Policy Council Chairperson or Head Start/Early Head Start Director.

Section 3: Closed Meetings

Policy Council members are able to convene a closed meeting with a majority vote of members in attendance. Closed meetings are only necessary when dealing with sensitive issues regarding staff and families in accordance with to the Nebraska Open Meetings Act §84-1407.

Section 4: Conference Calling/Virtual Conferencing

A conference call number and/or virtual conferencing link will be provided for each regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting. However, Policy Council members are encouraged to attend in person. Members will notify the Administrative Assistant ahead

of time when unable to attend a meeting and planning to access the conference call number/virtual conferencing link. At least one executive committee member, or his/her designee, will need to be physically present at the meeting location in order to run the meeting. If no member of Policy Council or the public indicates the need to use the conference call number/virtual conferencing link prior to the meeting, the line/link will not be operational for the duration of the meeting.

Under extreme conditions, the entire meeting may be conducted by conference call/virtual conferencing with no members or designees at the actual meeting site. Extreme conditions would be rare and would likely follow a short term change in the Nebraska Open Meetings Act to allow for only virtual conferencing.

Section 5: Agenda

The agenda will be sent out prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. The agenda is available in the main office at the Plattsmouth site for review by the public. The conference call number and/or virtual conferencing link is provided on the agenda.

Section 6: Meeting Notices

All Policy Council members will be sent notification of meetings approximately one week prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. A Head Start/Early Head Start staff member will attempt to notify all Policy Council members prior to the day of the meeting as a reminder to attend.

Section 7: Quorum

- a. Action by the Policy Council regarding the affairs of the Grantee Agency may be taken only when a quorum is represented. Four members will constitute a quorum at a Policy Council meeting. If a quorum is not achieved at any regular Policy Council meeting, or if during a regular meeting at which a quorum was initially established then is destroyed, the executive committee may convene, provided a quorum of the executive committee exists (51% of the executive committee member), and for as long as the quorum is maintained conduct the business of the Policy Council meeting as specified on the agenda. In this instance the executive committee shall have the authority to approve routine business, to be later ratified by the full council at the following month's meeting.
- b. While Policy Council members are encouraged to attend Policy Council meetings, four members shall constitute a quorum and are sufficient number to transact business of the Head Start/Early Head Start Program. The adjournment of a meeting may be executed without a quorum. This quorum may change if the Policy Council determines to have a lower number of elected members.
- c. In the event that a quorum is not present at a regular Policy Council meeting, the Head Start/Early Head Start Director, at the direction of the Policy Council Chairperson, will call or meet with absent members after the regular meeting for a vote in order to reach a quorum for the meeting. However, at least two Policy Council members must be present at the regular meeting in order to utilize this option.

Section 8: Voting

- a. Each Policy Council member (parents and community representatives) will have one (1) vote.
- b. The PCSD BOE liaison is a non-voting member of the Policy Council.
- c. In the event that a quorum is not present at a regular Policy Council meeting, the Head Start/Early Head Start Director, at the direction of the Policy Council Chairperson, will call or meet with absent members after the regular meeting for a vote in order to reach a quorum for the meeting. However, at least two Policy Council members must be present at the regular meeting in order to utilize this option.
- d. A motion passes by a simple majority vote. In the case of a tie, the motion does not pass since the majority were not in favor.

ARTICLE 6: Policy Council Officers**Section 1: Officer Duties**

The officers will be Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. It is the duty of the officers to attend all Policy Council meetings, attend all Executive Meetings and assigned sub-committee meetings, follow the by-laws, and to be acquainted with Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure.

Chairperson:

- Shall preside at all Policy Council meetings.
- Assists in preparation of an agenda for each meeting with input from the executive committee and the Head Start/Early Head Start Director.
- Shall call Special Meetings, when necessary.
- Explains each motion before it is voted upon.
- Shall be available to Policy Council members for questions pertaining to the Head Start/Early Head Start program.
- Shall form Ad Hoc Committees as needed and serve as a ex-officio member for each committee.
- Shall be a member of Policy Council at least one (1) year, if possible.
- Serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

Vice Chairperson:

- Shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence or whenever the Chairperson temporarily vacates the chair.
- Shall assume the office of Chairperson should the office become vacant.
- Serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

Secretary:

- Shall keep a record of members' attendance.
- Shall review and present all Policy Council minutes.
- Keeps official Policy Council minutes.
- Serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

Treasurer:

- Reads the monthly accounts as generated by the Grantee's Fiscal Officer. The accounts include the Head Start/Early Head Start funds and Nutrition funds (CACFP/USDA).
- Serves as a member of the Executive Committee.

Section 2: Officer Elections/Terms

- a. Officers shall be nominated and elected at the October meeting and shall take office once the previous year's Policy Council has adjourned.
- b. Terms shall be for one year, until the successors take office.

Section 3: Officer Vacancy

- a. If an officer misses three (3) consecutive meetings or resigns, the office shall be declared vacant and a new election will be held to elect a replacement.
- b. If the vacancy is that of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the Chairperson's role and the election will be held to fill the Vice-Chairperson's position.

Section 4: Executive Committee

The executive committee consists of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

ARTICLE 7: Committees

Section 1: Creation of Committees

The Policy Council may establish standing committees (long term) or special committees (short term) that will function on an Ad-Hoc basis. The members of a special committee shall volunteer or be appointed by the Chairperson.

Section 2: Ex-Officio Committee Members

The Head Start/Early Head Start Director, or his/her designee, and the Policy Council Chairperson shall serve as ex-officio members of all standing or special committees.

Section 3: Executive Committee

- a. The Policy Council shall have at least one standing committee, the Executive Committee.
- b. The Executive Committee consists of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- c. The Executive Committee may be polled between regularly scheduled meetings through phone calls, texts, or e-mails to act on time sensitive Policy Council business as needed. At least two members of the Executive Committee are needed to act on time sensitive business.
- d. Any business conducted by the Executive Committee between meetings of the full Policy Council shall be ratified by the full Council at the next meeting.

ARTICLE 8: Appointments

The Policy Council chairperson will appoint members to represent and report back to Policy Council on the following advisory committees:

- Health Advisory Committee Representative(s)
 - Duties:
 - Attend health advisory committee meetings
 - Report back to the full policy council with a summary of the meeting
 - Suggest any action needed by policy council on behalf of the health advisory committee
 - Other duties as assigned by the policy council chairperson
- School Readiness Committee Representative(s)
 - Duties:
 - Attend school readiness committee meetings
 - Report back to the full policy council with a summary of the meeting
 - Suggest any action needed by policy council on behalf of the school readiness committee
 - Other duties as assigned by the policy council chairperson
- Parent Committee Representative(s) – may appoint one representative for all parent committees, a representative for each parent committee (Conestoga, PECC, and Early Head Start), or a combination of the other two options.
 - Duties:
 - Attend parent committee meetings
 - Report back to the full policy council with a summary of the meeting
 - Report a summary of the policy council meeting to the parent committee
 - Serve as a liaison between policy council and parent committee in order to promote communication (§1301.4(b)(2))
 - Suggest any action needed by policy council on behalf of the parent committee
 - Other duties as assigned by the policy council chairperson, including possible participation in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and/or Head Start employees (§1301.4(b)(3))

ARTICLE 9: Personnel (§642(c)(2)(D)(vi))

- a. Policy Council members shall approve and submit to the Board of Education decisions about program personnel policies (§1302.90(a)), including criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff, and decisions regarding the employment of the following program staff:
 - Executive Director
 - Head Start Director
 - Director of Human Resources
 - Chief Fiscal Officer
 - Any other equivalent position
- b. Policy Council members shall approve and submit to the Board of Education standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers.

ARTICLE 10: Training

1. Appropriate training and technical assistance shall be provided to the members of the policy council to ensure that the members understand the information the members receive and can effectively oversee and participate in the programs of the Head Start/Early Head Start agency (§642(d)(3)).
2. Appropriate training and technical assistance or orientation shall be provided to members of the Policy Council, including training on program performance standards and training on eligibility to ensure the members understand the information they receive and can effectively oversee and participate in the programs in the Head Start agency (§1302.5).
3. All Policy Council members must receive training, within 180 days of the beginning of the term of a new Policy Council, on applicable federal regulations and program policies and procedures regarding eligibility (§1302.12(m)(1)).

ARTICLE 11: By-Laws and Amendments

1. Any changes/amendments to the by-laws must be approved by a majority vote of the Policy Council at any regular meeting.
2. The PCSD BOE shall approve the Policy Council's by-laws and all changes/amendments.

ARTICLE 12: Attendance at Conferences and Trainings

Section 1: Eligibility for Attendance

The Policy Council may approve parent/guardians of children enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start program, Policy Council members, and/or Parent Committee members to attend Head Start/Early Head Start trainings, Nebraska Head Start Association meetings, and/or National Head Start Association conferences, as funding allows.

Section 2: Expectations when Representing Head Start/Early Head Start at Meetings and/or Conferences

The parent/guardian representative must attend all relevant sessions while at the training or conference (e.g., workshops, general sessions, and business meetings). The parent/guardian representative must provide an oral report of any sessions attended at the next Policy Council meeting. The report may be submitted in writing if the parent/guardian representative is unable to attend the next meeting.

Section 3: Reimbursement for Expenses

The parent/guardian representative must present all receipts for expenditures and unspent monies to the Head Start/Early Head Start Director within five business days after the last day of the meeting/conference/ training. Reimbursement for meals, mileage, and lodging will be consistent with the reimbursement policies of PCSD, the Head Start/Early Head Start grantee agency.

ARTICLE 13: Impasse Resolution Process (Policy Council and PCSD BOE)

In accordance with Head Start/Early Head Start Program Performance Standards (45 CFR §1301.1), the Plattsmouth Community School District Board of Education (PCSD BOE) has established a Policy Council, which is composed of Head Start/Early Head Start parents and community representatives. The Policy Council is charged with specific functions, as outlined in the performance standards, and engages in an integrated consultation and approval process with the PCSD BOE to expedite decision-making concerning the Head Start/Early Head Start program.

The PCSD BOE and the Policy Council have mutually adopted the following procedure, to be implemented in the event of an impasse. An impasse is defined as a dispute relating to the respective governance and management responsibilities of the PCSD BOE and the Policy Council under the Head Start/Early Head Start program of which the PCSD BOE and the Policy Council are unable to reach a mutual resolve without use of an impasse resolution procedure.

PROCEDURE (§1301.6(a)): In the event of an impasse, both the PCSD BOE and the Policy Council shall develop a statement of the nature of the issue creating the impasse, and a proposed resolution of the impasse. A statement and proposed resolution must be adopted separately by the PCSD BOE and the Policy Council.

Upon adoption of the statement and proposed resolution by each entity, the President of the PCSD BOE and the Chairperson of the Policy Council shall meet, exchange statements and proposed resolutions, and make a brief final attempt at resolution. This meeting shall occur within 15 school days of when the statement and proposed resolution was adopted by each entity.

If a resolution is not reached, the President of the PCSD BOE and the Chairperson of the Policy Council shall identify a third party mediator (§1301.6(b)). Upon determining the willingness of the mediator to act to assist with resolution of the impasse, a formal mediation meeting shall be scheduled between the designated mediator, the President of the PCSD BOE, and the Chairperson of the Policy Council. The mediation shall occur within 30 working days of when the mediator was identified. At the mediation, the President and the Chairperson will each present the entity's respective statements of impasse and proposed resolution to the mediator, along with a brief verbal statement in support of each entity's position. The mediator may ask any questions he/she deems are appropriate to aid in the process of resolution. Information must be provided regarding the costs of each proposal and the funding source(s) that will support the proposal.

If no resolution is reached with a mediator, the President of the PCSD BOE and the Chairperson of the Policy Council shall identify a mutually agreeable arbitrator who both agree will make a careful and reasoned decision supporting the best interests of the school district's Head Start/Early Head Start program (§1301.6(c)). The final resolution need not be strictly in accordance with either proposed resolution. The final resolution shall be implemented as a resolution to the impasse by both the PCSD BOE and the Policy Council provided the resolution meets with Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards and other regulations with authority over the school district and/or Head Start, and the resolution does not require either the PCSD BOE or the Policy Council to engage in action that would be contrary to any law or regulation, infringe upon either entities management prerogatives, or expend funds beyond that available from Head Start/Early Head Start. In the event the resolution proposed by the arbitrator does not meet those requirements, the resolution shall be returned to the arbitrator for modification. Upon appropriate modification meeting the guidelines above, the resolution shall be final and implemented.

Policy Council:

Adopted: 10/14/08, 1/21/16, 2/12/18, 11/19/18, 11/15/2021

Reviewed: 5/17/11, 5/21/13, 5/20/14, 11/19/15

BOE:

Adopted: Jan. 11, 2016, Mar. 12, 2018, Dec. 10, 2018, 2/14/2022

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