

CC Employment and Human Services Department
Community Services Bureau

Head Start/Early Head Start Bylaws

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I. Name

The name of this council is the Contra Costa County Head Start and Early Head Start Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as the Policy Council.

II. Authority

The Policy Council is established and organized under the Head Start Act of 2007.

III. Purpose and Responsibilities

A. Purpose. The purpose of the Policy Council is to promote the objectives of the Head Start and Early Start Programs operated by Contra Costa County. The Policy Council serves as the link among public and private organizations, Contra Costa County and Delegate Agencies, the communities served, and the parents of enrolled children.

B. Responsibilities. The Policy Council shall approve and submit to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors decisions about each of the following:

(i) Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Contra Costa County is responsive to community and parent needs;

(ii) Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities;

(iii) Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for programs under this subchapter, prior to submission of applications described in this clause;

(iv) Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in policy council activities;

(v) Bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council;

(vi) Consistent with Contra Costa County's policies, Personnel Management Regulations, applicable Memoranda of Understanding, and laws and regulations, program personnel policies and decisions 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;

(vii) Developing procedures for how members of the Policy Council will be elected; and

(viii) Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies.

IV. Policy Council Membership

A. Composition

1. The Policy Council consists of 36 member seats represented by parents of currently enrolled children, past parents, and community agency representatives. Policy Council composition is reviewed annually to ensure that it meets the general membership guidelines of Head Start Performance Standards and that the representatives are proportionately selected according to program option (Head Start, Early Head Start, Full-Day, Part-Day, and Home-Based). Parents of Currently Enrolled Children

At least 51 percent of the Policy Council seats must be filled by parents of children currently enrolled in Head Start (“HS”) and Early Head Start (“EHS”). (See 45 CR 1305.2 for definition of “parent.”) The number of seats allocated to each childcare center is based on the center’s number of funded HS and EHS slots with one seat for every 60 slots rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Parents, and their alternate, are nominated and elected by the parent committee of the center at which their children are enrolled. The parent nominee who receives the most votes is elected to serve as the primary representative of the center where his or her child attends. The parent nominee who receives the second highest vote number of votes is elected to serve as the alternate representative. When the primary representative is unable to attend a meeting, the alternate representative will attend the meeting and vote in the primary representative’s place. Each childcare center shall maintain a list of its primary and alternate representatives, which it shall send to the Policy Council Secretary.

2. Past Parent Representatives

Parents of children who formerly attended HS and EHS programs may serve on the Policy Council for a total of five years, inclusive of terms served while their children were enrolled in HS/EHS. Past parents interested in serving as representatives may submit a letter of interest to the Policy Council and are elected during the Policy Council Orientation Meeting.

3. Community Agency Representatives

Community Agency Representatives are members of local community agencies, selected by the Policy Council, that serve low-income children and families.

B. Term of Membership

Members are elected each year to a one-year term that commences on September 1 and ends on August 31 of the following calendar year. Members may serve on the Policy Council for a total of five years.

C. Absences

Policy Council members are required to attend all meetings. . If a member provides less than a 24-hour notice of his or her absence, the absence will be considered unexcused.

If a parent of a currently enrolled child will be absent, he or she must confirm that his or her alternate will attend on his or her behalf. The member must give twenty-four hours' notice of his or her absence to the alternate, Policy Council Secretary, and childcare site supervisor of the center the parent's child attends. If a parent of a currently enrolled child has two unexcused absences, the center that he or she represents will be notified, and the center will make the determination as to whether the parent will remain on the Policy Council or if the parent will step down and the center will elect a new representative. The center must notify the Policy Council Secretary of any changes in representation.

If a past parent or community representative has two unexcused absences, the Policy Council may choose to terminate his or her membership. Community representatives may be terminated only after the Policy Council notifies the agency represented.

D. Resignation

If a member wishes to resign from the Policy Council, or a parent representative is no longer eligible to serve because his or her children are no longer enrolled in the HS or EHS program, the member must submit his or her resignation in writing to the Policy Council Secretary.

E. Termination

A Policy Council member may be terminated by two-thirds (2/3) vote at any regular meeting for reasons of misconduct or excessive absenteeism. If the termination is for excessive absenteeism, this vote will take place only after notice has been sent to the childcare center the member represents and the childcare center has provided a response. The member will be notified in writing of his or her termination from the Policy Council. Any decision to terminate a Past Parent or Community Representative is made by the Policy Council itself, with the member being notified in writing.

F. Vacancy

If the seat of a parent of a currently enrolled child becomes vacant, the vacant seat will be filled by the member's alternate until the parent committee of the center represented by the member elects a new representative to fill the vacant seat. If a seat held by a community agency representative becomes vacant, the agency must appoint a replacement as soon as possible. The Policy Council Chair will announce vacancies of past parent representative seats.

G. PROHIBITION

Persons employed by Contra Costa County, delegate agencies, and partner agencies, who work for or with HS and/or EHS programs, and immediate family members of such persons including co-parents, are prohibited from serving as members of the Policy Council.

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Policy Council members shall abide by all applicable conflict of interest laws and regulations, including but not limited to those pertaining to financial reporting, contracting, and personnel decisions.

V. Executive Committee

The Policy Council is led by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is comprised of Policy Council members who are elected annually to serve as executive officers. The Executive Committee oversees the monthly Policy Council meetings, and also meets separately each month to plan Policy Council meetings, to review the agenda, and to review the previous month's meeting minutes.

A. Officers

1) Chairperson

The Chairperson presides over Policy Council meetings. He or she has the authority to call special meetings, to maintain order, and to appoint members to chair ad-hoc committees. The Chairperson shall enforce the observance of order and decorum among the members and shall recognize members, staff, and visitors who wish to speak and make official written communication.

2) Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson and assumes the Chairperson's obligations and authority if the Chairperson is absent. The Vice Chair is responsible for reviewing the desired outcomes and meeting rules during Policy Council meetings.

3) Secretary

The Secretary conducts a roll call of members and declares whether a quorum exists at the beginning of each meeting, and monitors member attendance. He or she reads any correspondence into the record during Policy Council meetings, prepares meeting minutes, and ensures that meetings are recorded. He or she reviews and corrects the previous month's minutes and seeks approval of the minutes during Policy Council meetings.

4) Parliamentarian

The Parliamentarian assists the Chairperson in maintaining order during meetings. He or she states and reviews the principles of conduct and expected behaviors during meetings. He or she acts as timekeeper of the agenda items and notifies the Chairperson when time is about to be exceeded. He or she also serves as the Chairperson of the Bylaws Subcommittee.

B. Election of Officers

Executive Officers are elected and seated annually at the general meeting in September. Nominations for the officers are made by the general membership. Only parent representatives may serve as officers. Votes are cast by roll call. No more than three past parent representatives may serve on the Executive Committee during any term.

C. Attendance

Executive Officers shall attend all Policy Council and Executive Committee meetings. Executive Officers may attend Executive Committee meetings by teleconference. Arriving 15 minutes or more late to an Executive Committee meeting is considered an unexcused absence.

D Removal from Office

Executive Officers may be removed from office by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the general membership at any regular meeting for misconduct or excessive absenteeism.

E. Officer Vacancies

The Chairperson of the Policy Council fills officer vacancies by appointment. The Policy Council ratifies the appointments.

VI. Subcommittees

The Policy Council has six standing subcommittees: Executive Subcommittee, Fiscal Subcommittee, Program Services Subcommittee, By-laws Subcommittee, Advocacy Subcommittee and Ongoing Monitoring –Self Assessment Subcommittee. Executive Officers must sit on at least one subcommittee.

Each subcommittee must always maintain at least four members. The Policy Council Chair appoints subcommittee leads and the Policy Council must confirm all appointments by ratification. Subcommittees must follow the Brown Act, keep minutes, and present reports to the Policy Council.

VII. Meetings

Policy Council meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, except in the months of July and December.

Meeting notices and agendas shall comply with the Brown Act, the County's Better Government Ordinance, and all applicable local and state meeting laws.

A. Regular Meetings

The Policy Council will hold a minimum of nine (9) meetings per year. Meeting agendas will be published 96 hours in advance. All meetings of the Policy Council and its committees will be held in accordance with the Brown Act and the Contra Costa County Better Government Ordinance.

B. Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called at any time by the Chairperson. Twenty-four notice of a special meeting must be given to Policy Council members.

C. Quorum

A quorum is required to conduct a Policy Council meeting. A quorum exists when members representing a minimum of 40% of the total seats of the Policy Council, filled and vacant, are present at a meeting and at least 51% of those members present are currently enrolled parents.

D. Voting

Only Policy Council members or their alternates are permitted to vote on action items. Motion approvals require a majority vote.

VIII. Resolution of Disputes

The Policy Council has developed an impasse procedure, which has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The impasse procedure is set forth in CSB Policies and Procedures, Program Governance: Section 10, i-iv.

IX. Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws may be initiated by action of the Policy Council and must be approved by the Board of Supervisors. Proposed amendments must be presented to members at least one general meeting prior to sending the amendments to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

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