

Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency
By-laws of the
Head Start/ Early Head Start Policy Council

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency Head Start/ Early Head Start Policy Council, hereinafter referred to as “Policy Council”.

Article II: Purpose and Functions

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose shall be to support and implement the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards and PL 110-134 (Head Start Act). This Head Start/ Early Head Start Policy Council is formed to create a formal structure of shared Governance through which parents can participate in policy-making decisions about the Head Start program and to serve as a link between the local Parent Committee, public and private organizations, the grantee Board of Directors, and the various communities served in the counties of Cannon, Cheatham, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, and Wilson.

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the Head Start/ Early Head Start program, including program design and operation, and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives, taking into account the annual communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment and self-assessment. The Policy Council will perform the following functions directly:

- a. Serve as a link to the Parent Committees, MCCA governing body, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve.
- b. Assist Parent Committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities and the opportunities available in Early Head Start and Head Start, and to encourage their participation in the program.
- c. Assist Parent Committees in planning, coordinating, and organizing program activities for parents with the assistance of staff, and ensure that funds set aside from program budgets are used for parent engagement (Parent Activity Funds).
- d. Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations, and assist in the mobilization of community resources to meet identified needs.

Section 2. Functions

The functions of the Policy Council, in accordance with HSPPS 1301.3 and the Head Start Act, Sec. 642, are to work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body and to approve or disapprove and submit to the governing body decisions about the following:

- a. Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Head Start/ Early Head Start program is responsive to community and parent needs.
- b. Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- c. Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for Head Start/ Early Head Start, including administrative services, prior to the submission of such applications to the responsible federal official.
- d. Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities.
- e. By-laws for the operation of the policy council.
- f. Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, consistent with paragraph (1)(E)(iv)(IX) of the Head Start Act, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff.
- g. Developing procedures for how members of the policy council will be elected

Article III: Membership

Section 1. Composition

The Policy Council shall be composed of parents and community representatives, with at least 51 percent of the membership comprised of parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start/ Early Head Start program.

Section 2. Selection of Members

Membership shall be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of children currently enrolled in the program and members at large of the community. Community representatives will be drawn from the local communities' civic and professional organizations and those who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families and may include parents of formerly enrolled children. Parents of children currently enrolled shall constitute a majority of the membership (51 percent) of the Policy Council. Parents of all program options will be represented.

Each Mid-Cumberland CAA Head Start/EHS area will nominate individuals from each local parent committee to serve on the Policy Council. Voting will take place through a ballot election process. The parents receiving the greatest number of votes during the area wide voting will be elected to serve.

The Head Start Director, in coordination with the MCCA Executive Director, shall recommend one Community Representative per county, which is eight (8). The Policy Council will have the final approval of the recommendations of the community representatives.

- a. There will be eight community representatives, one from each county.
- b. Total number to constitute a voting quorum will be 33% of the membership of the currently seated council. Vacancies on the council will result in a reduction of membership and reduction in the number required for a voting quorum. Should resignations occur, and not be replaced at the time of the meeting the Secretary at the request of the Chairperson will announce the reduction of members and a quorum will be based on the reduced total. In the absence of a quorum the Chairperson may order an executive session to conduct business.

Section 3. Term of Office

Policy Council members shall serve for a term of one (1) year. No member shall serve on the Policy council as a parent member and/or community representative for more than a total of five (5) years in a lifetime.

Section 4. Voting Rights

Each member of the Policy Council shall have one (1) vote. There shall be one duly elected alternate for each parent representative on the Council. The alternate shall exercise all voting rights of the representative in the event of his/her absence.

Section 5. Termination of Membership

A member of the Policy Council may be terminated by a two-third vote of the Policy Council if he/she violates the signed Standards of Conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers.

Section 6. Surrender of Membership

A member of the Policy Council who is absent from two (2) consecutive regular Policy Council meetings without an excuse which is considered legitimate to the Policy Council Chairperson and the Head Start Director, shall surrender his/her seat as a Policy Council member and the Alternate will become the voting member at the next regular meeting.

Section 6. Resignation

Any member who is unable to attend meetings may resign by informing the Chairperson or Designated Head Start staff member.

Members who resign, surrender, or are no longer eligible to serve do not need to be voted off of the council.

Section 7. Vacancy

Resigning, surrendering or terminated members will be replaced at the next month's regular parent committee meeting in the affected county. Nominations will be reviewed by the parent committee, at which time they will vote on a replacement. If there is more than one nominee, there will be a general election following the procedure outlined in **Article III, Section 2-B**. The alternates will be the automatic candidates and other nominations may be submitted from those parent groups in the affected county. Membership will be replaced in this manner until the April meeting and at this time the Council composition will be reduced to the number of members remaining, due to the end of the class operation year and the amount of time available to train and orient a new member to effectively participate during the summer after their child has left the Head Start program.

If a vacancy occurs in a community representative position, the procedure outlined in **Article III, Section 2-C**, will be repeated, and presented to the Council for approval. The composition of the council must however, remain at 51% parents of currently enrolled children.

Section 8. Conflict of Interest and Nepotism

No former or current employee of MCCA or their immediate family members may serve on the policy council. No person can serve as a member of the Policy Council if any member of his immediate family currently serves on the Governing Board of the Agency. Parents are encouraged to provide substitute services (in paid status for less than three consecutive days or less than three days within a pay period. This will not permanently affect their membership as a representative but they will not be allowed to vote at a meeting if they are in the paid service of the agency at the time of that meeting.

Policy council members may apply for regular status jobs with the agency; however, they must resign from the council before submitting an application for employment. Their vacancy on the council will not be filled and their alternate will serve in their place until the position they have applied for has been filled. If they are not selected for employment by the agency and approved by the council they may request in writing to the council chairman to be re-instated. The council must vote in favor or against reinstatement. If the council votes against reinstatement the process for filling a vacancy on the council will be initiated by the local parent group. The local parent group may not elect that former council member.

Article IV: Officers

Section 1. Officers

The Policy Council shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. Other officers shall be elected as deemed necessary by the Policy Council.

Section 2. Election and Term of Officers

Each officer shall be selected by the full membership of the Policy Council once the full policy council has been seated each year. The following guidelines shall apply:

- a. A nominating committee (consisting of one outgoing Policy Council member, one new Policy Council member, and one community representative, with guidance as to roles and responsibilities from the designated Head Start staff member) will present a recommended slate of officers. Other nominations may be made from the floor.
- b. Fifty one (51) percent of the officers must be parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start/ Early Head Start program.
- c. Policy council officers will be elected by a Majority vote of the quorum.
- d. Policy Council officers will serve a term of one (1) year.

Section 3. Removal from Office

Any officer of the policy council who fails to perform his/her duties as outlined above or below, can be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the quorum of the Policy Council.

Section 4. Duties of Officers

- a. The Chairperson shall:
 - i. Preside at all meetings and maintain order.
 - ii. Prior to the meeting, the Chairperson will prepare the agenda with the Head Start/Early Head Start Director or designated Head Start staff member.
 - iii. Serve as the chair of the Executive Committee.
 - iv. Preside as the chair of the Program and Planning Committee
 - v. Appoints Standing Committee members and ad hoc committees as required.
 - vi. Coordinates activities as needed.
 - vii. Work with the Head Start Director and Agency Executive Director as needed.
 - viii. Acts as the official representative of the Policy Council/ serves/ appoints a Policy Council member to serve on Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency's Governing Board of Directors for one year.
 - ix. Be knowledgeable of Policy Council by-laws, Head Start policies, and requirements
 - x. Call the meeting to order and ask the Secretary or his/her designee to call the roll.
 - xi. Note the establishment of a quorum.
 - xii. Preside at all meetings and formally close all Policy Council meetings.
 - xiii. State each motion for which voting is to occur.
 - xiv. Vote only in the case of a tie.
 - xv. Sign all formal documents and recommendations from Policy Council to MCCA's Governing Board of Directors and funding source on issues affecting the Head Start/ Early Head Start program.
 - xvi. Make a formal request, as the result of the Policy Council's recommendation, to the MCCA Chairman to be placed on the agenda of the Agency Board of Directors meeting to present positions on issues or make recommendations concerning the Head Start/ Early Head Start program.
 - xvii. Act as the official representative of the Council at local, state, or regional events.

- Call special meetings, prepare and sign notices explaining the reason for the called meeting.
- xviii. Work closely with the Head Start Director to ensure the effective operation of the Head Start/ Early Head Start program.

b. The 1st Vice-Chairman Shall:

- i. Preside as chair of the Family and Community Partnership Committee.
- ii. Take a leadership role in planning the Head Start program's self-assessment.
- iii. Work closely with staff advisors providing input into the development of the programs work plans.
- iv. Work with staff advisors to plan Policy Council training programs.
- v. Preside in the absence of the Chairman or if the Chairman temporarily vacates the chair.
- vi. Assume the Office of Chairman until a permanent Chairman is elected in case of resignation or death of the Chairman.

c. The Secretary shall:

- i. Preside as the Chair of the Personnel Committee.
- ii. Record the minutes of every Policy Council meeting once the meeting has been called to order with the assistance of staff advisors as necessary.
- iii. Maintain a copy of the By-laws and standing rules and correspondence addressed to the council or information provided by the Head Start Director from regional or federal officials.
- iv. Is involved in the creation, review, and revision of personnel policies and procedures, and makes recommendations for changes to MCCA.
- v. Presides over the Personnel Committee meetings to review and recommend persons for key staff positions such as the Executive Director, Finance Director, Human Resource Director, and Head Start Director.
- vi. Give the Personnel Committee report at each Policy Council Meeting and convey the recommendations of the committee to the full council for final action.

d. The Treasurer shall:

- i. Preside as Chair of the Finance Committee.
- ii. Provide the Policy Council with a Finance Committee report and recommend action by the council on financial matters.
- iii. Make recommendations for action on the plans for the disbursement of parent activity funds.
- iv. Assist the finance committee, the Head Start Director, and Staff with revisions to the budget and planning of the budget for the annual refunding application.
- v. Review the agency audit with the Head Start Director and provide a report, the management letter, to the council. Represent the council with the chairman if there are questions to the Executive Director and Board Chairman regarding agency's audit or financial status.

Article V: Committees

The Policy Council shall appoint such committees as are necessary to properly conduct business, including but not limited to the following: Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Complaints Committee, and Grants/Fiscal Committee.

Section 1. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Officers of the Policy Council. The Executive Committee shall have the power to conduct business for the Policy Council between regular meetings of the Policy Council.

Section 2. Personnel Committee

This committee will assist in reviewing and recommending persons to be hired to fill key staff positions, including the Executive Director, Finance Director, Human Resource Director, and Head Start Program Director. The committee will review and discuss MCCA's HR Policies and Procedures, and will make recommendations to the Council prior to the Council's approval of said HR Policies & Procedures. The committee will also consult in the policy development and revisions regarding the hiring, discipline, and termination procedures for MCCA's HR Policies and Procedures.

Section 3. Complaints Committee

This committee shall hear complaints from the community, and from parents who have followed the community complaints procedures established by the Governing Body and the Policy Council.

Section 4. Grants/Fiscal Committee

This committee will assist and review in the preparation of the Head Start grant application and any amendments to funding. They will also work with the Treasurer (if there is one) in monitoring the Parent Activity Fund.

Section 5. Health Services Advisory Committee

At least one (1) member of the Policy Council Shall serve on the Health Services Advisory Committee.

Section 6. Special Committees

Special Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson or selected by the Council as the need arises.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting

There will be an annual meeting of the Policy Council held each year. The initial MCCA Head Start Policy Council meeting and the annual meeting shall be for the seating of the new members and election of officers, as well as for the transaction of business.

Section 2. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings will be held monthly on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Regular meeting dates can be changed by a majority vote of members present at any meeting. Meetings may take place in person or by teleconference if meaningful business can be completed via teleconference. The next month's meeting may be changed by a majority vote of those members present at any meeting. Meetings may be canceled and/or re-scheduled by the Chairperson if there will not be a quorum present as determined by member responses or if there is not enough business that requires action that month.

Section 3. Special meetings

Special meetings of the Policy Council may be called by the Chair if deemed necessary. Special meetings may be called with an adequate explanation of the reason for the meeting and 48-hour prior notice to all members. A quorum must be present at called meetings for business to be conducted.

Special Meetings may be held online (the internet) or by conference call when weather circumstances threaten safe travel to a meeting or circumstances occur that prevent a formal meeting. All actions must be ratified by the council at the next regular policy council meeting. No community complaints, grievances, or refunding applications can be approved during teleconference meetings. However, supplemental applications may be presented and approved or disapproved during Internet meeting sessions. The chairperson with the aid of the Head Start Director or Staff advisor will determine the method of identification of the policy council member for internet or teleconference voting to ensure the integrity and validity of the meeting.

Section 4. Notice of meetings

Written notices shall be emailed to each member at least five (5) days prior to the date of each regular meeting, paper copies can be requested. A copy of the agenda for the meeting will also be enclosed. Notices of special meetings shall be emailed to each member at least 48 hours prior to the date of the meeting, with an explanation for the special meeting.

Section 5. Quorum

A simple majority of 33% of the members of the Council must be present to constitute a quorum in order to transact business for regular or special meetings.

Section 6. Minutes

Concise minutes shall be kept of the actions taken by the Policy Council at every meeting. Each voting member of the Policy Council, Program Director, and each Head Start/Early Head Start Site shall receive and post a copy of the minutes before the next meeting is held. The minutes of the meetings are public record.

Section 6. Staff Participation

Staff, other than the Program Director, are not required to attend Policy Council meetings. Staff members can participate in an informative, non-voting capacity upon the request of the Executive Director or Program Director. Only Policy Council members shall participate in the discussions taking place during the meeting. The Policy Council Chairperson or Program Director may, however, request information from a guest during the meeting. Any guest who engages in behavior that is disruptive to the Policy Council meeting may be instructed to leave the meeting by the Policy Council Chairperson or Program Director. Policy Council meetings are open, public meetings. Policy Council meetings may be closed to discuss sensitive or personal information about parents, children, or staff, legal matters, or litigation. While the meeting is closed, guests must leave the room until the closed session is completed.

Section 7. Code of Conduct

All Policy Council members shall follow the MCCA HS Policy Council Code of Conduct during meetings. All meetings shall be conducted under the Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 8. Conflict of Interest

Each MCCA Head Start Policy Council member must complete a Conflict of Interest form annually. Policy Council members shall abide by the MCCA HR Policies and Procedures Conflict of Interest Policy

Section 9. Member travel reimbursement

All Policy Council members requiring reimbursement for travel will be reimbursed at rates established in the MCCA Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual. Members will be reimbursed by check. Instead of receiving reimbursement, members may contribute their travel expenses in the form of non-federal share/in-kind by completing and signing the appropriate in-kind form. Travel reimbursement forms and in-kind contribution forms will be available at Policy Council meetings.

Section 10. Member child care reimbursement

Policy Council members can be reimbursed for childcare expenses at a pre-approved rate. If a member chooses not to seek reimbursement of childcare expenses, the value of the services may be contributed to the program.

Section 11. Impasse Policy

The MCCA Head Start Policy Council will abide by the Impasse Procedure within the MCCA HR Policies and Procedures.

Article VII: Amendments

These By-laws shall be the operating guidance and may be adopted at the first meeting of any new council until such time as the council shall amend these by-laws. The by-laws may then be amended by a recommendation of the executive committee sending a copy of the proposed amendment to each

Policy Council member at least one (1) week before the next meeting. The Policy Council may debate the amendment before adoption. Amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the seated Policy Council.

Article VIII: Authority

All Policy Council authorities are outlined in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, 45 CFR Chapter XIII Part 1301-Program Governance, and in section 642 (c) (2) of the Head Start Act.

These By-laws were adopted on _____ by a vote of ____for, to _____ against.

Signature of Policy Council Chair/Authorized Head Start

These By-laws were approved on _____ by the Mid-Cumberland Community Action Agency Board of Directors.

Signature of MCCA Board Chair