

BY-LAWS
EPIC EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Revised April 1, 1981, September 9, 1982, March 21, 1984, January 19, 1993, February 9, 1993, May 20, 1997, January 18, 2002, February 17, 2004, March 28, 2007, October 27, 2010, November 21, 2013, November 2016, July 20, 2022

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the EPIC Early Head Start and Head Start Policy Council.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE AND FUNCTIONS

Section 1 - Purpose of the Policy Council

The purpose of the Policy Council shall be to implement the Head Start Performance Standards and serve as a link between the grantee, the EPIC Advisory Council, communities, community organizations, and the parents of children enrolled in the Early Head Start/Head Start Program in Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties, West Virginia.

Section 2 - Functions of the Policy Council

The functions of the EPIC Early Head Start and Head Start Policy Council, in compliance with the Head Start Performance Standards shall be to:

1. Promote the growth and development of children and families through activities that will improve life and education skills of children in the home and classroom.
2. Initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements, procedures, and operations and receive periodic reports on action taken by the grantee with regard to Policy Council recommendations.
3. Plan, coordinate, and organize activities for Early Head Start and Head Start families with the assistance of the staff.
4. Communicate with all parents and encourage their full participation in the Early Head Start and Head Start Program.
5. Administer the Parent Activity Fund.
6. Recruit volunteer services from parents, community residents, and community organizations; and mobilize community resources to meet identified needs.
7. Approve the goals for Early Head Start and Head Start within the agency as proposed by the grantee advisory council, and develop ways to meet these goals in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards.
8. Assist in developing a plan for recruitment and selection of eligible children and approve such plan.
9. Establish and participate in all standing Policy Council program committees.
10. Assist in resolving complaints about Early Head Start and Head Start.
11. Approve or disapprove Early Head Start and Head Start personnel procedures, including the following:
 - a. Development of hiring and firing procedures, career development plans, and employee grievance procedures.
 - b. Hiring and firing of all Early Head Start and Head Start staff; priority will be given for hiring

of qualified Early Head Start and Head Start parents.

12. Approve or disapprove the grant application and funding requests prior to sending items to ACYF, with sufficient time for study and inquiry.
13. Review information prepared for the Program Information Report (PIR) to ACYF.
14. Approve or disapprove major changes in the Early Head Start and Head Start operating budget and policies and procedures while the program is in operation.
15. Participate in the self-assessment of the Early Head Start and Head Start program.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 - Composition of the Policy Council

1. The Policy Council shall be elected by current Head Start and Early Head Start parents and composed at the ratio of one (1) member per twenty (20) children currently enrolled in the Early Head Start and Head Start program. The number of alternates shall not exceed the number of members in the county represented. Alternates, parents who received the next highest vote totals, will be contacted to attend meetings. In addition, each county may have up to three members who are community representatives, including Pre-K parents (1 per county) and other community representatives.
2. All counties must be represented on the Policy Council based on the proportion of the number of Head Start and Early Head Start children served in each county and the program options.
3. Membership of the Policy Council shall be composed of at least 51% current Early Head Start and Head Start parents in compliance with Head Start Performance Standards.
4. Members of the Policy Council shall be (a) current parents or (b) community representatives, including community agency employees or volunteers, past parents and one Pre-K parent per county who is elected by Pre-K parents.
5. A member of the EPIC Advisory Council shall serve as a liaison to the Policy Council in a non-voting capacity. A Policy Council member will be encouraged to attend Advisory Council meetings and serve as liaison.
6. No staff members or their families shall serve on the Policy Council in a voting capacity. Parents working part-time (less than 40 days a year) may be members. Staff members may attend meetings in a consultative non-voting capacity.

Section 2 - Nomination and Election of Members

1. Nominations or self-nominations for Policy Council membership will be accepted until two weeks prior to elections in September, or by a date designated on the program calendar.
2. Early Head Start and Head Start parents shall elect Policy Council parent members from their respective county's program options, and centers. Each enrolled family is given one vote.
3. Newly-elected members shall be notified at least five business days prior to the beginning of their term, the September meeting.
4. Parents who are nominated but not elected may serve as alternates from their county.
5. Parents and staff will seek and select community representatives to serve on Policy Council. Community representatives shall be actively involved in the community served by the grantee. They may also be past parents if community volunteers are not available. Pre-K parents will elect one parent per county to serve as a community representative.

Section 3 - Term of Members

1. The term of office for parent members of the Policy Council shall begin at the first meeting in September and end in September of the following year.
2. The term of office for community representatives on the Policy Council shall begin in September after appointment and end in September of the following year.
3. If a member is elected to the position of officer, the term shall not expire until the term as officer has ended.
4. No one shall serve on the Policy Council for more than five years.

Section 4 - Voting Rights

1. Each member of the Policy Council shall have one vote.
2. There shall be no proxy voting, by or for a member.
3. There shall be no absentee voting, unless approved at a Policy Council meeting by those present.
4. Alternates will not vote unless a voting member from their county is absent.
5. Only one person in a family can be a member.

Section 5 - Termination of Membership

1. Reasons for Termination - A membership may be terminated if the member is:
 - Absent from two consecutive meetings without notification of a reason for the absence. (requires a majority vote by the voting membership present)
 - Unable to carry out his/her functions as a member. (requires a majority vote by the voting membership present)
 - Employed by EPIC Head Start/Early Head Start except for parents who occasionally substitute for regular Early Head Start and Head Start staff or work part time less than 40 days a year. (requires automatic termination from Policy Council)
2. Procedure upon Termination - When a member is to be terminated from the Policy Council, the Secretary shall send a letter to the member who has not been attending. If the member does not respond to the letter or resigns from the Policy Council an alternate would be contacted to serve in that person's place.

Section 6 – Resignation

A member should give written notice of resignation two weeks prior to the effective date of the resignation.

Section 7 - Vacancy

Upon notification of a vacancy, the Policy Council shall appoint, as soon as possible during a regularly scheduled meeting, a new member from the county to complete the term of the vacating member.

The appointee may be an alternate from the county where the vacancy has occurred.

Section 8 - Duties

1. All members of the Policy Council should attend meetings regularly; arrive on time for all Policy Council and committee meetings; actively participate in meetings by reading the agenda prior to the meetings; respect the rights of other members to express their opinions; consider all information and arguments before voting; and accept and support any final decision of the majority of the Policy Council. **All personal information disclosed at any Policy Council meeting shall**

be kept confidential.

2. All parent members of the Policy Council shall discuss matters to be considered with other parents in the counties that he/she represents; keep informed of the Policy Council's purpose, plans, and progress; and report back to the parents in the counties he/she represents any action taken by the Policy Council. Members are expected to participate in the functions described in the Head Start Performance Standards.
3. All community representatives to the Policy Council shall promote the ideals and the goals of the Early Head Start and Head Start Program in their county.
4. Parent members and community representatives are expected to attend the Policy Council Training Retreat.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

Section 1 - Positions to Be Filled

1. The Policy Council shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
2. The Policy Council Chairperson shall elect a Parliamentarian.

Section 2 - Nomination and Election of Officers

1. Nominations, with the consent of the nominees, or self-nominations, will be accepted at or prior to the September Policy Council meeting.
2. Elections shall be held during the September meeting. Each officer shall be elected by a simple majority of Policy Council members.

Section 3 - Terms of Officers

Policy Council officers shall serve a term of one year, from September through September.

Section 4 - Termination of Officers

1. Any officer of the Policy Council who fails to perform his duties as outlined below can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the total voting membership present.
2. If an officer's position is terminated, the Policy Council shall review and may terminate the person's membership in compliance with Article III, Section 5 of these By-Laws.

Section 5 - Resignation

1. An officer should give written notice of an intended resignation, and reasons for resigning, at least two weeks prior to the effective date of the resignation.
2. Upon resignation, an officer may become a regular voting member of the Policy Council and may finish out his/her term as a Policy Council member.

Section 6 - Vacancy of an Office

In the event of a vacancy, the Policy Council shall elect a replacement officer at the next scheduled meeting. Such election shall require a majority vote of those present. The newly elected officer shall complete the term of the vacating officer.

Section 7 – Chairperson’s Duties

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings; have an understanding of the By-Laws of the Policy Council; refrain from entering into debates of questions before the assembly; extend every courtesy to the discussions of the motions; call meetings to order and formally close them; follow parliamentary procedure; help prepare an agenda for each regular meeting with input from staff advisors; call special meetings and mail notices of special meetings and explanations of same to each member; appoint members to all committees; explain each motion before it is voted upon; and may vote to break a tie.

Section 8 - Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson, or whenever the chairperson temporarily vacates the Chair. In the case of resignation, death, or removal of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the office for the balance of the term. The position of Vice-Chairperson shall then be considered vacant

Section 9 - Secretary

The Secretary shall record the minutes and attendance of every Policy Council meeting after the meeting has been called to order and keep copies of the By-Laws, a list of members’ names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses, a list of unfinished business, and a copy of the agenda. The secretary will ensure that a record of the minutes is kept on file in the Head Start office and receive and handle all mail addressed to the Policy Council.

Section 10 - Treasurer

1. The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of all money received and/or spent by the Policy Council and make regular reports to the Policy Council of all expenditures related to the administration of the Parent Activity funds and other funds of monies received and distributed.
2. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records and provide up-to-date reports to the Policy Council at each meeting and upon request; conduct or have knowledge of all banking transactions; and disperse funds under the guidelines of Policy Council procedures.
3. The Treasurer shall also be a member of the Budget Committee.
4. The Treasurer shall work closely with Policy Council liaisons to keep an accurate record of the all money received and spent.

Section 11 - Parliamentarian

1. The Parliamentarian shall be familiar with Robert's Rules of Order and the By-Laws of this Policy Council; maintain order at Policy Council meetings; and advise on proper procedure.
2. The Parliamentarian will assist in training the membership in Robert's Rules of Order and the By-Laws.

ARTICLE V - COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Committees Defined

1. The standing committees are: School Readiness/DLL, Five-Year Planning/Self-Assessment, Data Sources Reporting, PBIS/PBC, Transportation Committee, Education Advisory Committee and Health Advisory Committee. Meeting dates are scheduled at the calendar-planning meeting in May of each year. Committee members include Policy Council members, staff, parents and community members.
2. Policy Council members will be notified of and encouraged to attend all standing committees. A report of committee meetings will be given at Policy Council meetings each month.
3. Special committees shall be formed as needed.

Section 2 - Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of all officers of the Policy Council and all community representatives. Staff members may serve on the Committee as consultants.
2. The Executive Committee shall have the power to conduct business for the Policy Council between regular meetings of the Policy Council, if necessary.
3. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed on notice of the Chairperson.

* Committees have been renamed and combined for the efficiency of the program. All original committee meetings are still taking place in their new form.

Section 3 - Budget Committee

1. The Budget Committee shall propose the budget for the Parent Activity Fund with the assistance of the Head Start Program Director and Family & Community Partnerships Specialists.
2. The Budget Committee shall assist the Program Director in all budget matters including preparing, reviewing and revising the yearly budget and presenting it to Policy Council.
3. The Budget Committee shall facilitate an audit once a year of the Parent Activity Fund.

Section 4 – Policy, Procedures, and Safety Committee

1. The Policy, Procedures, and Safety Committee shall develop and review program policy and procedures, including personnel procedures, and make recommendations concerning them to the Policy Council.
2. The Policy, Procedures, and Safety Committee will address the need for program and policy changes, which may be required by new local, state, or federal regulations or laws.

Section 5 – Transportation Committee

The Transportation Committee will address transportation needs and develop and review transportation procedures.

Section 6 - Long Range and Strategic Planning Committee (Five Year Planning Committee)

The Long Range, Short Range, and Strategic Planning Committee will plan for the future of the program, consider grant applications, and develop the long range, short range, and strategic plans.

Section 7 - Self Assessment Committee

The Self-Assessment Committee shall help conduct an annual self-evaluation of the Early Head Start and Head Start Program.

Section 8 - Career Development Committee

The Career Development Committee will plan for education and advancement opportunities for staff and parents and plan special events, workshops and other educational activities.

Section 9 – Concern Committee

A Policy Council member from each county shall be designated to meet, as needed, with the director and other staff members to discuss parent or community concerns. A committee to address concerns is described in the concern procedure in the parent handbook.

Section 10 - Special Committees

Special Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson or selected by the Policy Council as the need arises. Interview committees will include the program director, the supervisor, and at least one parent.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

Section 1 - Regular Meetings

1. Regular meetings of the Policy Council will be held once a month, usually the third Wednesday at 10:15 a.m.
2. Meetings shall rotate between the counties served.
3. All regular meetings are open to the public.
4. If one or more of the three counties (Berkeley, Morgan, Jefferson) are closed or delayed because of inclement weather, the monthly meeting will be postponed until the scheduled make-up meeting date. Policy Council meeting make up days for December through March will be established at calendar planning and documented on the Tri-County Calendar. Make-up meetings will typically be held one week following the originally scheduled meeting.

Section 2 - Special Meetings

1. There will be special meetings or executive sessions of the Policy Council if the Council or Executive Committee determines a need.
2. Executive sessions may be called due to personnel matters or sensitive issues that arise.
3. All special meetings shall be called by the Chairperson at least 48 hours in advance by emailing or sending notice through the Remind App to the membership.

Section 3 - Notice of Meetings

1. Written notices, the agenda, and information to be considered at the meeting shall be mailed to each Policy Council member by the Secretary or staff liaison at least one week prior to the date of each regular meeting.
2. In addition, notices may be emailed.

Section 4 - Quorum

1. A quorum shall consist of voting members who are present at any regular or special Policy Council meeting to transact business.
2. At the start of each meeting of the Policy Council, the Chairperson shall announce what constitutes a quorum for the meeting based on current eligible membership on the Council.
3. Unless otherwise provided in these By-Laws, the Policy Council shall transact official business as a body by majority vote of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present. In the event of a tie, the acting chairperson would contact the next member (according to rank) until the tie is broken. Only one additional vote would be required.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

1. Amendment of these By-Laws must be proposed at Policy Council meetings and the Secretary shall be responsible for drafting the final written copy to be voted upon.
2. All amendments must be approved by a majority of the voting membership of the Policy Council.

ARTICLE VIII - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

At all meetings of the Policy Council, parliamentary procedure shall be in conformity with Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition), to the extent consistent with these By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX – TRAVEL AND CHILD CARE REIMBURSEMENT

As funds are available, Policy Council parent members will be reimbursed mileage and some child care expenses upon request when they attend Policy Council meetings, Policy Council training, and committee meetings. Child care at the meeting site will be provided whenever possible. Requests for mileage/child care reimbursement must be given to a Policy Council liaison within one month of the meeting date for which reimbursement is being requested.

As Policy Council funds are available, per diem cost for travel expenses, meals, and rooms shall be given in advance to representatives attending state, regional, and national meetings. Representatives must sign a promissory note to the Policy Council prior to receiving funds. Representatives must submit an expense voucher and receipts, if requested, payable to EPIC Early Head Start and Head Start Policy Council immediately upon return from the event.