

Policy Council and Parent Committees Procedure

1301.2 Governing body

(a) *Composition.* The composition of a governing body must be in accordance with the requirements specified at section 642(c)(1)(B) of the Act, except where specific exceptions are authorized in the case of public entities at section 642(c)(1)(D) of the Act. Agencies must ensure members of the governing body do not have a conflict of interest, pursuant to section 642(c)(1)(C) of the Act.

(b) *Duties and responsibilities.* (1) The governing body is responsible for activities specified at section 642(c)(1)(E) of the Act.

(2) The governing body must use ongoing monitoring results, data on [school readiness goals](#), other information described in §1302.102, and information described at section 642(d)(2) of the Act to conduct its responsibilities.

(c) *Advisory committees.* (1) A governing body may establish advisory committees as it deems necessary for effective governance and improvement of the program.

(2) If a governing body establishes an advisory committee to oversee key responsibilities related to program governance, it must:

(i) Establish the structure, communication, and oversight in such a way that the governing body continues to maintain its legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start agency; and,

(ii) Notify the [responsible HHS official](#) of its intent to establish such an advisory committee.

1301.3 Policy council and policy committee.

(a) *Establishing policy councils and policy committees.* Each [agency](#) must establish and maintain a policy council responsible for the direction of the Head Start program at the agency level, and a policy committee at the delegate level. If an agency delegates operational responsibility for the entire Head Start or Early Head Start program to one delegate agency, the policy council and policy committee may be the same body.

(b) *Composition.* (1) A program must establish a policy council in accordance with section 642(c)(2)(B) of the Act, or a policy committee at the delegate level in accordance with section 642(c)(3) of the Act, as early in the program year as possible. Parents of children currently enrolled in each program option must be proportionately represented on the policy council and on the policy committee at the delegate level.

(2) The program must ensure members of the policy council, and of the policy committee at the delegate level, do not have a conflict of interest pursuant to sections 642(c)(2)(C) and 642(c)(3)(B) of the Act. Staff may not serve on the policy council or policy committee at the delegate level except parents who occasionally substitute as staff. In the case of tribal grantees, this exclusion applies only to tribal staff who work in areas directly related to or which directly impact administrative, fiscal, or programmatic issues.

(c) *Duties and responsibilities.* (1) A policy council is responsible for activities specified at section 642(c)(2)(D) of the Act. A policy committee must approve and submit to the delegate agency its decisions in each of the following areas referenced at section 642(c)(2)(D)(i) through (vii) of the Act.

(2) A policy council, and a policy committee at the delegate level, must use ongoing monitoring results, data on [school readiness goals](#), other information described in §1302.102, and information described in section 642(d)(2) of the Act to conduct its responsibilities.

(d) *Term.* (1) A member will serve for one year.

(2) If the member intends to serve for another year, s/he must stand for re-election.

(3) The policy council, and policy committee at the delegate level, must include in its bylaws how many one-year terms, not to exceed five terms, a person may serve.

(4) A program must seat a successor policy council, or policy committee at the delegate level, before an existing policy council, or policy committee at the delegate level, may be dissolved.

(e) *Reimbursement.* A program must enable low-income members to participate fully in their policy council or policy committee responsibilities by providing, if necessary, reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred by the low-income members.

1301.4 Parent committees.

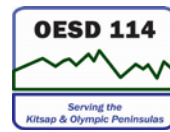
(a) *Establishing parent committees.* A program must establish a parent committee comprised exclusively of [parents](#) of currently enrolled children as early in the program year as possible. This committee must be established at the center level for center-based programs and at the local program level for other program options. When a program operates more than one option, parents may choose to have a separate committee for each option or combine membership. A program must ensure that parents of currently enrolled children understand the process for elections to the policy council or policy committee and other leadership opportunities.

(b) *Requirements of parent committees.* Within the parent committee structure, a program may determine the best methods to engage families using strategies that are most effective in their community, as long as the program ensures the parent committee carries out the following minimum responsibilities:

(1) Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families;

(2) Have a process for communication with the policy council and policy committee; and

(3) Within the guidelines established by the governing body, policy council or policy committee, participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees.



Policy Council and Governance

Policy Council is established and maintained within the OESD 114.

OESD Governing Board members are elected representatives from the OESD service area.

Parents and staff may nominate parents to run for elections, and parents may self-nominate. Policy Council representatives are elected at Parent Committees (Family Gathering and Socializations) September– October. Policy Council members are parents of HS and EHS children, plus community members. Policy Council is comprised of parents and community members as stated in the by-laws. 51% of the parents are HS and EHS parents. Community representatives on Policy Council are from local community organizations that are familiar with resources and services to low-income children and families, past parents of HS children and grandparents of HS/ECEAP/EHS children.

Policy Council members and parents in the currently enrolled year will receive notification regarding their opportunity to be on Policy Council. All Policy Council representatives are re-elected annually and serve no more than five years total. Community members are selected by Policy Council annually for one year term.

Policy Council members are limited to 5 years on the Policy Council.

- Policy Council members cannot be staff or members of their immediate family.
- Policy Council members who substitute and teach more than 40 hours per month cannot continue as a Policy Council member. The person in this situation must resign from Policy Council or chose not to accept more than 40 hours of work per month

New Policy Council Representatives first meeting is at the November Policy Council meeting of each year. Their terms are November through November.

Policy Council members are trained in their role as decision-makers and the relationship of the Governing Board to the Policy Council is explained. Policy Council training is planned by Policy Council and staff, and is provided at the October Policy Council Orientation for all parents, at the November Policy Council training, and on-going at each monthly Policy Council meeting. Policy Council training includes ideas about building community at their sites, encourage parent participation, and communicating with parents at their sites Family Gathering and Socializations.

Roles and Responsibilities

See OESD Early Learning Governance System of this procedure

Parent representatives for our Policy Council are representative of all parents at each site and program option.

“Circle of Leadership” was developed by parents and staff to assure that Policy Council leadership is shared among its memberships. All members share in facilitating, note taking and responsibility for the flow and structure of each meeting, as well as for the accountability of their responsibilities.

- Each Spring Policy Council approves the Selection Criteria process for the following year, and provides input.
- In December, Policy Council approves the yearly program Self-Assessment process and time line.
- Policy Council receives reports and Self-Assessment process updates, and any follow-up Action Plan as a result of the current self-assessment and or findings from the HS review.
- Policy Council representatives sit on hiring interview panels for EHS and HS employees. Parents can also be invited when Policy Council representatives are not available.
- Job openings are posted at each site and announced at Policy Council.
- OESD provides reimbursement funds for parents to attend Policy Council, Family Gathering and Socializations, and Head Start Parenting Classes for child care and transportation when funds are available.
- There is a written procedure in place that outlines appropriate steps in the case of an internal dispute between Policy Council and OESD Governing Board.
- Reauthorization has Policy Council responsible for decisions regarding the employment of program staff, not the Director.
- Representatives are responsible for reporting back to their program option (Family Gathering and Socializations, newsletters, bulletin boards, etc.) and for bringing information to Policy Council meetings.
- Policy Council promotes election of Washington State Association of Head Start representative.

Policy Council representatives assist the parents at Family Gatherings, Socializations and staff in providing a plan for the topics to be covered at Family Gathering and Socializations:

- Volunteer and service needs are discussed at Policy Council.
- Members provide input on possible sources of community resources.
- Each site has a budget for parent activities. Policy Council representative and parents at sites participate in deciding how parent activity funds are spent.

The Family Gathering and Socializations (parent committee) provide all parents with a broad range of opportunities to participate in the decision-making process, see Parent Committee Procedure, such as:

- Election of Policy Council representatives (if election needs to take place before a Family Gathering and Socialization a vote will occur by ballot.)
- Assist in the development of site program/curriculum activities.
- Plan activities for parents and staff that are based on what parents have said is important to them (i.e., Invitation to Be Involved and emergent needs)
- Suggest ideas including presenters for Family Gathering and Socializations.
- Plan how to spend the parent activity funds to assure that the planned activities will occur.
- Bring parents together to create informal supportive networks and relationships