

## POLICY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

### **Article I: Name of Policy Council:**

This organization shall be known as CenClear Head Start Policy Council, serving Clearfield and Centre Counties.

### **Article II: Purpose:**

- Serve as a link to the Parent Committee, the Board of Directors, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve.
- Assist Parent Committees in communication with parents enrolled in all programs 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.
- Provide assistance to the Parent Committee by promoting collaborative thinking and problem solving to develop program activities while assuring funds are available to support activities by using strategies that are most effective in their community. (e.g. recognizing volunteers, parent engagement activities, etc.)
- Encourage currently enrolled parents to volunteer in the program along with seeking volunteers from community agencies by establishing healthy attachment relationships. Specialized efforts are utilized when there is an identified need such as transportation.
- Participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees.
- Hold regularly scheduled parent committee meetings during months where Policy Council meetings occur ensuring open communication
- Establish and maintain procedures for working with the Board of Directors to resolve community complaints about the program.

### **Article III: MEMBERSHIP:**

- Section I-Definition of Members
  - Responsible for the direction of the Early Head Start and Head Start programs
  - Responsible for electing an Executive Committee: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Representative to the Board
  - Oral reports will be given by representatives of each center at each Policy Council meeting.
- Section II-Selection of Members
  - A representative from each Head Start and Early Head Start center will be annually elected and approved by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start/Early Head Start Programs. This approval must be documented in PG-21 meeting minutes
  - The Council will consist of at least 51% of Early Head Start and Head Start parents

- The remainder of the Council may consist of Community Representatives who come from the following categories:
  1. Interested members of the community at large served by CenClear.
  2. One representative from the Board of Directors.
  3. Parents of children who were formerly enrolled in the Head Start program (No more than 30% of the Community Representatives shall be past parents)
- Recommendations for Community Representatives may be made by any of the following individual or groups:
  1. Parents of enrolled children
  2. Parent Committees
  3. Head Start staff
  4. Director
  5. Board of Directors
- Community Representatives shall be reviewed and approved yearly by incoming Policy Council.
- Ensure that Community Representatives do not outweigh program parents, with the option of Policy Council to increase or decrease this number according to the local interest and Policy Council needs at such time.
- A CenClear staff member or a program parent with an immediate member who works for CenClear may not serve
- Head Start and Early Head Start staff must receive approval by Policy Council to attend meetings.
- Section 642(c)(2)(C)(ii) of the Head Start Act prohibits members of Policy Council to receive compensation for serving on the policy council or for providing services to the Head Start agency.

- Section III-Terms of Office
  - A member shall serve for one year
  - If the member intends to serve for another year, they must stand for re-election
  - The term of office for all Policy Council representatives shall be October 1 through October 30 of the following year.
  - No Policy Council Representative may serve for more than five years.
- Section IV-Voting Rights
  - A. Each member of the Policy Council has one (1) vote.
  - B. There shall be no proxy voting (form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to a representative, to enable a vote in absence) by, or for, any member
- Section V-Termination of Membership
  - If a Policy Council Representative is not present for two consecutive meetings, the Parent Engagement Director will reach out regarding their intent to serve on Policy Council. If the absences are found to be inexcusable or a response is not received regarding intent, those representatives will be dismissed from the Council.
  - An email or phone call regarding the Policy Council Representative is made to the Home Visitor/Classroom Teacher stating that two consecutive, unexcused absences have occurred and the representative has been terminated from the Council. The Home Visitor/Classroom Teacher will be notified that a new

- representative needs to be selected.
  - Anyone who has been convicted of a crime against children is ineligible to be a Policy Council Representative.
  - When it is known and/or if the conviction occurs while on Policy Council, it will be automatic dismissal.
  - Conviction of Crimes greater than a traffic violation will be dealt with individually during a special meeting.
- Section VI-Transfer of Membership
  - Representatives are to attend the October Policy Council Meeting to transition new representatives to the council.
- Section VII-Resignation of Members
  - A member shall submit a written statement of resignation to the Policy Council Chairperson
- Section VIII-Vacancy
  - Vacancies in Parent Representatives will be filled by the appropriate Parent Committee. The representative's vacancies will be presented to Policy Council for approval. (Seating)

#### **ARTICLE IV: Executive Committee (officers)**

- Section I-Officers-Definition
  - The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Representative
- Section II-Election and Term of Office
  - The election of officers shall take place at the November meeting in each program year.
    - Executive Committee offices will be posted prior to the November meeting on Class Dojo for representatives to express interest. Voting at the November meeting will be completed through a poll using a QR code or link.
  - Officers are elected for a one-year term, from November to November and may be re-elected for a second term
- Section III-Removal from Office
  - Anyone who has been convicted of a crime against children is ineligible to be a Policy Council Representative.
  - When it is known and/or if the conviction occurs while on Policy Council, it will be automatic termination.
  - Conviction of Crimes greater than a traffic violation will be dealt with individually during a special meeting.
  - Any officer of the Council who fails to perform the duties as outlined in the bylaws, can be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Policy Council
- Section IV-Officer Vacancy
  - In the event the office of Chairperson becomes vacant, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the office until the vacancy can be filled by election at the next regular

- monthly meeting.
- Other offices shall remain vacant until filled at the next Policy Council meeting.
- Officers elected in mid-term shall serve only until the next regular election the following November.
- Section V-Duties of the Chairperson
  - The Chairperson shall be executive officer of the Council and shall preside at all meetings. The Chairperson shall:
    - Shall preside at all Policy Council meetings
    - See that orders and resolutions of the council are executed
    - Shall understand the By-Laws
    - Refrain from entering debates of questions before the assembly
    - Call meetings to order and formally close them
    - Note whether a quorum is present
    - Explain each motion before it is voted on
    - Has all voting rights
    - Serve as a representative of the Policy Council to the Board of Directors
    - Shall call special meetings
    - Shall note any changes in Policy Council representation and bring these changes to the attention of Policy Council
    - Check signer on the Policy Council account
- Section VI-Duties of the Vice Chairperson
  - The Vice-Chairperson shall act in the absence of the Chairperson and perform those duties assigned by the Chairperson.
  - Also be responsible for organizing special programs and/or activities
  - Check signer on the Policy Council account
- Section VII-Duties of Treasurer
  - The Treasurer shall:
    - Ensure Parent Activity Funds are spent appropriately
    - Give a monthly Treasurer's Report regarding Policy Council accounts
    - Disburse all approved expenditures after collecting completed reimbursement forms (ex: signing checks).
  - Check signer on the Policy Council account
- Section VIII-Duties of the Secretary
  - The Secretary shall:
    - Record the minutes of each Policy Council Meeting
    - Keep an attendance sheet of Policy Council members present at meetings and record those who are absent in the Policy Council minutes
    - Keep a list of unfinished business and copies of agendas
    - Send completed minutes to office for typing within 1 week from the date of the last Policy Council meeting
    - Perform other duties as set by the Council
    - Check signer on the Policy Council account
- Section VIV-Duties of Representative to the Board:

- Serve as a representative to the Board of Directors to ensure open communication between the Board and Policy Council
- Check signer on the Policy Council account

\*The Officers of the Council shall perform such other duties and functions as may from time to time be required by the Council, By-Laws, or Federal requirements. The officers are part of the Grievance Committee

## **ARTICLE V-Committees**

### **COMMITTEES:**

- Section I-Standing Committee
  - Grievance
    - A group comprised of the Executive Officers and Personnel Committee members that consider and remedy parent/staff grievances
- Section II-Special Committees
  - Health/Mental Health Advisory Committee
    - An advisory group that brings together staff, parents, Mental Health providers, and local health care providers to talk about the planning, operation, and evaluation of the health and mental health services in each Head Start program.
  - Education/Special Services
    - Provide feedback on curriculum and potential curriculum changes
  - Interview/Personnel
    - Part of the interview process (recording interviewee responses & selecting new hires)
    - Active member of the Grievance Committee
  - Family and Community Partnership
    - Share experiences, concerns, and ideas regarding parent and staff responsibilities, duties, and activities at center council levels
    - Assist with planning of Child Abuse Prevention Carnival
  - Building Center
    - Review center safety committee reports (quarterly); make recommendations for center renovations; aid in finding center space
  - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Leadership Team
    - Develop and implement tier systems and interventions for academic and social success; monitor fidelity of implementation of Tier systems and support; monitor academic and social progress for all children; and screen, select, and refer children in need of additional supports.
  - Recruitment/Enrollment
    - Provide input on updating Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-K eligibility criteria based on information in the Community Needs Assessment
    - Discuss ways to improve recruitment
  - Budget
    - Provide input on Early Head Start, Head Start, and Pre-K budgets
  - Bylaws
    - Provide input on updating Policy Council by-laws

- Section III-Term of Office on Committee
  - At the October meeting and ongoing, all interested Head Start parents and Community Representatives will sign up for committees and serve for one year
  - CenClear CEO, Senior Leaders, and Directors may attend any committee meetings

## **Article VI-Meetings**

- Section I-Regular Meetings
  - Notices of all regular meetings shall be sent out at least one week in advance.
  - All new members will be seated at their first meeting.
  - It is permissible for virtual and phone conference calls to conduct meetings
  - In the event of a cancellation, Policy Council will be rescheduled for a later date.
  - In the event of inclement weather, flu, etc. and we need to cancel or revert to a virtual or phone conference meeting, you will be notified.
- Section II-Special Meetings
  - Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson.
  - Notices of special meetings shall be sent out at least one week in advance
- Section III-Location and Scheduling of Meetings
  - Policy Council shall meet at least once per month, excluding September, July, and August.
  - The meetings will be held on a date and at a time agreed upon by representatives through survey.
  - Meetings will be held at the administrative building in Bigler or via Teams
- Section IV- Notice of Meeting
  - Written notices, announcements, agendas, and meeting minutes will be emailed or sent through Class Dojo one (1) week prior to the date of each regular or special meeting
- Section V-Quorum
  - 51% of Policy Council Representatives must be present to constitute a quorum in order to conduct business for regular or special meetings. In the event there is no quorum and action is required before the next meeting, the members can vote by email, telephone or Class Dojo. This will be coordinated by the Parent Engagement Director.
- Section VI-Conduct of the Meeting
  - "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used as a guide at all meetings. The procedures for meetings will be reviewed with new Council members with the Council deciding on procedure to be followed.

## **Article VII Impasse Procedures**

An impasse occurs when there is a disagreement between the Board of Directors and the Head Start Policy Council with regards to decision making as specified in the performance Standards (1304.50)

1. Procedures
  - If the Board of Directors and the Policy Council do not agree on an action to be taken, regarding decision making for services to children and families,

- each entity is responsible to notify the other, in writing, of the reasons that support the proposed action or decision.
- Within 10 (ten) days after the receipt of the notice, the Policy Council must hold a special meeting to review the statement of the Board regarding the proposed action. Immediately following the meeting the Policy Council must notify the Board of their decision and the reason for the decision.
- If the issue is resolved the matter is settled. If the issue is not resolved, a joint meeting of the Board and the Policy Council is scheduled to attempt to resolve the matter.
- If the issue is resolved at this meeting the matter is settled. If the issue is not resolved the issue will go to arbitration.

## 2. Arbitration

- The arbitration shall be conducted by a panel of three (3) arbiters, one to be designated by the Board, one to be designated by the Policy Council and the third, the chairperson, to be designated by the other two arbiters. The arbiters should be persons of good standing in the community and not associated with the Head Start Program. If the two arbiters appointed by the Board and the Policy Council cannot agree on the third, an attorney will be contacted for assistance in assigning the third person, which will serve as the Chairperson.
- When the Board decides to submit the impasse to arbitration, it shall notify the Policy Council in writing, The notice will include: a statement of the issue, the name and address of the person selected by the Board as the member of the arbitration panel and a request that the Policy Council designate a member of the arbitration panel within seven (7) days. The Policy Council member of the panel must contact the Board's designated member of the panel to select the third member.
- Failure of either party to designate a member of the arbitration panel within seven (7) days will be deemed a default and considered to be an approval of the decision as stated in the written notification.

## 3. Arbitration Panel

- The arbitration panel will resolve the issues in question as quickly and fairly as possible.
- The proceedings will include: oral presentations of each entity, responses by both entities to questions asked by the panel, responses to each other as allowed by the panel, and any additional information or materials needed to make an informed decision.
- The arbitration panel shall issue its decision in writing fifteen (15) days after the panel meets. Copies are to be sent to each entity.

## 4. Compromise

- The arbitration procedures do not preclude both entities from compromising their differences and reaching a settlement. In the event a compromise is reached the panel must be notified in writing. A compromise must be met prior to a decision being reached by the panel
- The decision of the panel is final

## Article VIII Parent Complaint Grievance Procedure

1. If the condition originated at the center, the parent will talk to the staff involved at the center. The staff member will take the necessary steps to resolve the complaint as soon as possible, if it is their power to do so.
2. If the staff person is unable to resolve the complaint, they will contact the appropriate Supervisors in writing within five (5) working days. The Supervisor will attempt to resolve the complaint as soon as possible if it is in their power to do so.
3. If the Supervisor is unable to resolve the complaint, they will contact the appropriate Directors within five (5) working days. The Director will attempt to resolve the complaint as soon as possible if it is in their power to do so.
4. If there is still not an acceptable response, the grievance will then go to the CEO in writing within five (5) working days.
5. The Senior Officer or CEO would make the Policy Council aware if the Grievance Committee needs to be activated.
6. The Grievance Committee shall hear all parties to the complaint, make a complete report of its findings and render a decision to the Policy Council at the next scheduled meeting.
7. If the Policy Council is unable to resolve the grievance, the written grievance and finding will be submitted to the Board of Directors at the next meeting. A report will be developed and submitted in writing to the parent within five (5) working days.

## **ARTICLE VIV- AMENDMENTS:**

- These By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Policy Council. Notice of any amendment change must be given at least ten days before such meeting.
- Chairperson and Treasurer of Policy Council shall be bonded or otherwise protected.
- Paid babysitting services will be offered on site at the CenClear administrative office by CenClear staff, at their hourly rate, for Policy Council meetings outside class times. Babysitting will be paid to Policy Council Representatives for attending Policy Council meetings and Policy Council business as designated by the Policy Council with the rate to be determined by Policy Council. Reimbursement is \$7.00/hour. Baby-sitting is not paid to a child's immediate family members, including mother and father. Babysitting forms must be signed by the sitter before being reimbursed and include the babysitter's phone number. You must sign off on all the information. In the event of suspicious misconduct, CenClear reserves the right to verify all information.
- Mileage will be paid to Policy Council Representatives for attending Policy Council meetings and Policy Council business as designated by the Policy Council with the rate to be determined by Policy Council, not to exceed the agency rate. Odometer readings must be written in the space provided.
- Policy Council will have six possible signatures for the checking account. Two signatures are required for all checks.
- CenClear will not allow an individual on CenClear premises, either as a staff person or volunteer, or participate in parent functions sponsored by CenClear, when children are present under the following circumstances:
  - An individual who has been convicted or awaiting trial on charges of child abuse or child neglect resulting in child endangerment.
  - An individual who has been convicted or awaiting trial on charges of moral corruptness.
  - An individual who is on the Megan's Law Website.
  - An individual who has been convicted or awaiting trial for violent crimes.

- An individual may be removed from CenClear premises for the use of threats, using an elevated voice or using profanity. Restriction from future activities may also occur.
- Children will not be prohibited from participating in classroom and other activities. However, the offending adult would be limited to home visits and the location would be determined. Children and families are the highest priority.

When staff are made aware of an individual who meets the above criteria, the information will be forwarded to the Senior Leader. The Senior Leader will verify information through the appropriate legal entities. Once information is verified, the Senior Leader will make the final decision on the level of involvement the individual may or may not have in CenClear programs.