

# Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council By-Laws

## **Article I Name**

The name of this council shall be the Douglas-Cherokee Head Start Policy Council.

## **Article II Purposes and Functions**

### **Section 1 Purposes**

The purpose shall be to implement the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act for which this Head Start Policy Council is created. The Policy Council must perform the following functions directly:

- a. Serve as a link to the Parent Committees, grantee agency governing bodies, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve.
- b. Assist Parent Committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities and the opportunities available in Douglas-Cherokee 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 funds set aside from program budgets are used to support parent activities (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.
- e. Establish and maintain procedures for working with the grantee to resolve community complaints about the program.

### **Section 2 Functions**

The general functions of the Douglas-Cherokee Head Start Policy Council are to work in partnership with key management staff and the governing board to ensure shared program governance. The

Policy Council shall approve and submit to the governing body decisions about each of the following activities:

- a. Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the 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 Douglas-Cherokee 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. Bylaws for the operation of the policy council.
- f. Program personnel policies and involvement in the decisions regarding the employment of program staff consistent with the Board's responsibilities, including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, 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.
- h. Procedures describing how the governing board and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making.
- i. Procedures for program planning, the program's philosophy, and long-range and short-range goals and objectives of the program.
- j. The annual self-assessment of the grantee agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the Federal monitoring review.
- k. The annual independent audit.
- l. The Community Needs Assessment and updates.

## **Article III Membership and Duties**

### **Section 1 Composition**

At least 51% of the membership of the Douglas-Cherokee Policy Council shall be comprised of parents of currently enrolled children. Parents of all program options must be proportionally represented.

### **Section 2 Membership and Duties**

Membership shall be comprised of two types of representatives: *parents or legal guardians of children currently enrolled and community representatives.*

#### **A. The membership shall consist of:**

1. Two (2) parent representatives per initial sixty (60) children per county and program option. Thereafter one (1) additional parent for each additional sixty (60) children per county and program option. And one (1) additional parent, per county and program option, to serve as an alternate.

Election of members to the Douglas-Cherokee Head Start Policy Council shall be made by the Parent Committee in August of each school year, to take office at the September meeting of the Council.

Each Parent Committee will elect a representative who will be a candidate for Policy Council membership. All elected candidates within a county will meet together to elect Policy Council members in the ratio described above. At the election meeting of the Policy Council Representatives, Policy Council by-laws and responsibilities will be reviewed.

2. One community representative from each of the eight (8) counties serviced by Douglas-Cherokee Head Start. The representative must be elected by Parent Committee and Policy Council.

All community representatives will be drawn from the local community; businesses; public or private community, civic, and professional organizations; and others who are familiar with resources and services for low income children and families. Former Head Start parents may also be community representatives.

3. The governing board is responsible for developing procedures for how members of the Policy Council are selected consistent with section 2(A1). The proposed procedures must be

approved by the Policy Council. The procedures will remain effective until revisions are made and approved.

**B. Duties:**

All members of this Council should attend meetings regularly; arrive on time for all Council and Committee Meetings; participate actively in meetings by reading the agenda and previous meeting minutes prior to the meeting and discussing matters to be considered with other parents in the center or program he/she represents; keep informed of the Council's purpose, plans and progress; report back to the parents in the center or program he/she represents any action taken by the Council; remember the rights of other members to express their opinions; consider all information and arguments before voting, remembering those he/she represents; debate the issues, not persons; and accept and support any final decisions of the majority of the Council members.

**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 for more than five (5) one-year terms. Partial year service counts as one-year. All Policy Council members must be elected or re-elected annually.

**Section 4 Voting Rights**

Each member of the Policy Council shall have one (1) vote. A duly elected and designated alternate of Policy Council is authorized to vote in the absence of a Policy Council member.

**Section 5 Termination of Membership**

Any member of this Council who fails to perform his/her duties as outlined herein can be removed. Absence from two (2) consecutive meetings without having submitted a legitimate excuse would be one cause for removal.

After two (2) consecutive absences, Policy Council members will be contacted to determine the reason for absences. The Policy Council member will be replaced after three (3) consecutive absences or the Council may vote to retain member if a sufficient reason for the absences is provided.

Policy Council members should conduct themselves in a proper manner with dignity for the position to which they are elected, and serve as a role model for parents. The Policy Council members may be asked to resign for violations of the code of conduct or for non attendance.

**Section 6 Resignation:**

A member shall give a statement of reason before resigning.

**Section 7 Vacancy**

Duly elected, eligible alternates will assume vacancies on Policy Council. To fill the vacant alternate position, Parent Committee chairpersons will be contacted to determine interest in serving on Policy Council. If more than one chairperson is willing to serve; an election will occur prior to the next scheduled Policy Council meeting. If a community representative creates the vacancy, that vacancy will also be filled within 30 days and approved by the council.

**Section 8 Nepotism**

Neither members of the Policy Council nor members of their immediate family shall receive compensation for serving on the Policy Council or for providing services to the Head Start agency.

**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 Council.

**Section 2 Election and Term of Office**

Each officer shall be elected by the full membership of the Policy Council once the full Council has been seated, and shall serve a term of one (1) year. The Council will be seated in September of every year.

**Section 3 Removal**

Any Officer of the Council, who fails to perform the duties as outlined in the By-laws, can be removed by a two-third vote of the Policy.

**Section 4 Chairperson**

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings and maintain order. Prior to the meeting, the Chairperson will prepare the agenda with the Head Start Director and any other pertinent persons. The Chairperson is knowledgeable of Council By-Laws, Head Start policies and requirements, will serve on committees, and coordinate activities as needed; act as the official representative of the Council, serve on the governing board, and perform other duties as appropriate.

**Section 5 Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or whenever the Chairperson temporarily vacates the chair. In case of resignation or death of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chair shall assume the office until a permanent chair is elected.

**Section 6 Secretary**

The chairperson of the personnel committee will serve as secretary of the Policy Council. The Secretary shall sign giving her agreement to the content of the minutes of every Policy Council meeting; keep copies of the By-Laws, standing rules, roster of members, a list of unfinished business and a copy of each agenda; keep a file of all correspondence received; read correspondence as needed; telephone members about special meetings as needed; maintain a file/record of minutes; assist the Chairperson in following the agenda; read minutes of the last meeting; and perform other duties as assigned.

**Treasurer**

The chairperson of the finance committee will serve as the treasurer. The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of parent involvement distributions and Policy Council activities and give treasurer's reports to Policy Council.

**Article V Committees**

**Section 1** The Policy Council shall appoint such committees as are necessary to the proper conduct of business, including but not limited to the following: Executive Committee, Personnel Committee, Grievance Committee, and Finance Committee.

**Section 2 Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Officers of the Policy Council and four parent Policy Council members appointed by the Chairperson. The Executive Committee shall have the power to conduct business for the Policy Council between regular meetings of the Policy Council. At least four (4) committee members must be present to constitute a quorum at these meetings, three (3) of whom must be parents. All action taken by the Executive Committee must be reported at the next meeting of Policy Council.

**Section 3 Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee will be represented by one parent from each county and will participate in the following:

- a. Review Personnel Policies and Procedures and make recommendations of changes to Policy Council.
- b. Act upon the recommendation of the Head Start Director to approve or disapprove the hiring and/or termination of Head Start staff and will report to the Policy Council.
- c. Participate in training regarding duties, responsibilities, and confidentiality. Personnel Committee members may have a specific knowledge of personnel matters and must maintain confidentiality at all times as specified in the Code of Conduct.
- d. Assist the Head Start Management Staff in interviewing personnel and making recommendations for employment to the Director.
  - i. During an interview, no less than two (2) Head Start Management Team members and one (1) Personnel Committee member, from the county in which the vacancy occurs, will participate. If a county representative is not available, any active Committee member may participate. If the vacancy occurs at the Central Office all Personnel Committee members will be contacted. If no Personnel Committee member(s) attend interviews, the hiring decision must be ratified by the Personnel Committee at the next scheduled meeting before being presented to the Policy Council.
  - ii. The Head Start Director and Personnel Committee may select a second choice from original interviewees. Should the first choice not complete the orientation period; or if a similar position opens in the same county, the second choice may then be selected. Should the second choice become necessary, such action must occur before the completion of the six-month orientation period and be approved by Policy Council.
  - iii. On occasion, the Head Start Director may present to the Personnel Committee an applicant for hire which is considered an 'obvious choice' (either a former employee who left in good standing or an active substitute with the education, training, and experience to fill the position). For Substitutes, the Personnel Committee member from the county in which the vacancy exists will have the opportunity to observe the prospective hire prior to the individual being presented to the Policy Council for consideration.

Personnel Committee meetings are closed to everyone except the Committee, Head Start Director (or staff designated by the Head

Start Director). Head Start supervisors may attend when necessary to provide information concerning promotions and/or disciplinary actions.

**Section 4 Grievance Committee**

The Grievance Committee shall be composed of one member from each county appointed by the Chairperson, and shall hear grievances from the community and from parents who have followed the grievance procedures at the Central Office level about the Head Start Program, and make recommendations to the Policy Council to resolve these complaints. At least four committee members must be present to constitute a quorum.

**Section 5 Finance 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 in monitoring the Parent Activity Fund.

**Section 6 Special Committees**

Special Committees may be appointed by the Chairperson or selected by the Council as the need arises. These special committees will receive instructions for the performance of their duties.

**Article VI Meetings**

**Section 1 Regular Meetings**

Douglas-Cherokee Policy Council meetings will be held monthly during the school year, and as needed during the summer months.

Meetings shall be held at a designated site and when children are in Head Start classes in order for parents to participate.

Family Service Workers will arrange and/or provide transportation to and from meetings for members if needed. Management staff will be available at the meetings to give reports, answer questions, and provide support and training.

When necessary, the program will provide reasonable reimbursement for expenses incurred by Head Start Parent Policy Council members, which may include:

- Travel in line with agency policies for staff travel
- Child care expenses

**Section 2 Quorum**

At least 51% of the voting membership must be in attendance to constitute a quorum. The Policy Council shall not take any official action at any meeting unless a quorum is present. However, if a matter on the agenda is deemed by the Chairperson or Head Start Director to be urgent, the chairperson or their designee may contact absent Policy Council members by telephone to achieve a quorum.

**Section 3 Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Council may be called at the discretion of the Chairperson, upon the request of the Executive Director, Deputy Director, or Head Start Director.

**Article VII Amendments**

These By-Laws may be amended by sending a copy of the proposed amendment to each Policy Council member at least two (2) weeks before the meeting. The Policy Council may debate an amendment before adoption. All amendments must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Policy Council. Policy Council must approve and submit to the governing board any amendments. Amendments will not be officially adopted until governing board approval is documented.