

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Head Start Policy Council Bylaws (as governed by the Head Start Performance Standards)

Head Start Policy Council Approval: 9/10/2024
KVCAP Board Approval: 9/25/2024

Article I --- Name of Policy Council

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program Head Start Policy Council (hereinafter Policy Council)

Article II --- Purpose

The purpose of the Policy Council is to function in the various capacities as cited in the Head Start Performance Standards (1301.3). Policy Council, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, is responsible for the direction of the 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. All references to “Head Start” shall imply all Head Start options 0-5.

Article III --- Policy Council Composition

Section 1: Head Start Parent/Guardian Representatives

Currently enrolled Head Start parents/guardians must always comprise at least 51% of all Policy Council seats, and be duly elected by Parent Committees. Every attempt should be made to elect parent/guardian representatives to the Policy Council from their respective Parent Committees prior to the November Policy Council meeting. Newly elected members must have written confirmation of their appointment as a Policy Council Member from the Parent Committee chairperson or program staff. HomeStart’s Representative may be voted onto the Policy Council through a Regional Parent Committee or through the Policy Council via recommendations from program staff. Parent/guardian seats are assigned as follows:

	# Seats
RSU#19	
Somerset Preschool	1
MSAD #54	
North Elementary Preschool	2
Canaan Preschool	1
Mill Stream Preschool	1
Skowhegan Early Head Start	1
Educare Central Maine	
All ages/options	4
Kennebec Valley Community College	1
HomeStart	1
Total	12

*If a location is unable to identify a Head Start parent to fill a seat, an interested Head Start parent from another location in the district may be elected.

*Locations/options are reviewed/updated annually based on approved federal grants.

Section 2: Community Representatives

There are up to 10 Community Member seats that represent the communities served, not exceeding 49% (including the Board of Directors’ designee if not also an elected parent member) of the total Policy Council. All staff and parents are responsible for recruiting Community Members, including parents/guardians of children enrolled in a KVCAP/early childhood collaboration slot, past parents/guardians, or members with special interests or involvement related to Head Start. Community Members shall be chosen via vote based upon Letters of Interest or recommendations submitted to the Policy Council.

Employees:

No grantee or delegate agency staff (or members of their immediate family) may serve on Policy Council or Policy Committees. Staff may attend meetings, in a non-voting capacity.

Section 3: Term of Representation

Term of representation for membership on the Policy Council shall be for one year, from November of the current year through October of the succeeding year. A member can be re-elected to serve additional one-year terms, not to exceed five (5) terms.

Section 4: Voting Rights

- A. Each Policy Council Member will have one vote, including the Chairperson. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson will ask members to express the basis of their vote, solely for the purpose of hearing all issues. After discussion, the Chairperson will cast the final vote.
- B. No proxy votes will be accepted in rendering decisions on Policy Council business.
- C. Each member of the Council shall review, sign, and follow the Policy Council “Code of Conduct” assuring involvement is not for personal benefit, disclosure of potential conflict of interest is made, and confidentiality maintained (refer to Policy Council Code of Conduct).

Section 5: Termination of Membership

If a member is unexcused for two (2) meetings, a written warning of termination will be sent to the member and that members’ Parent Committee. If a member is unexcused for three (3) meetings within a year, the Policy Council may terminate their membership after a vote. The Parent Committee will then fill the position by election. An excused absence will require prior notification to another Policy Council Member, the Administrative Assistant, or the Head Start Director.

Section 6: Resignation

Any resignation of a Policy Council Member (Parent/Guardian or Community) must be submitted in writing to the Policy Council Chairperson, and to the Parent Committee if applicable.

Section 7: Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs, the location/option from which the member resigned or was terminated will fill the vacancy at the next Parent Committee meeting.

Article IV --- Meetings of Policy Council**Section 1: Policy Council Meetings**

Meetings will be scheduled monthly throughout the year. The Policy Council will designate the place and times of meetings.

Section 2: Special Meetings

When issues arise that require immediate attention, the Policy Council Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson may call a special Executive Committee meeting, giving members five (5) days written notice, stating the time, place, and agenda to be covered. The Executive Committee will have the power to vote on issues warranting immediate action.

Section 3: Notice of Meetings

The Head Start Program will send out written notices of all meetings to the Policy Council members. Policy Council agendas and minutes will be posted at each site.

Section 4: Advisory Decisions

Decisions and recommendations of the Policy Council will be referred to the Head Start Director.

Section 5: Bylaw Amendments

Bylaws may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the members of the Policy Council.

Section 6: Quorum

A quorum for purposes of transacting business shall consist of a 1/3 vote of the members of the Policy Council.

Article V --- Committees and Officers

Section 1: Executive Committee

The Officers of the Policy Council and a designated member of the Board of Directors, will constitute the Executive Committee. When necessary, the Executive Committee will conduct routine and ordinary business between meetings of the Policy Council and will recommend and/or report its actions at the next meeting of the Policy Council.

Section 2: Election

Elections of officers will be held annually in December. Currently enrolled Head Start parents/guardians must always comprise 51% of all officer seats. Officers will remain seated until new officer elections have been completed the following December. If an officer vacancy occurs, the vacancy may be filled at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting by a vote.

Section 3: Removal from Policy Council and Policy Council Office

Any Policy Council Member can be removed from office for an act or acts detrimental to the goals of Head Start or the Policy Council. Removal would be by 2/3 majority vote. If removal from the Policy Council is also recommended, a second 2/3 vote must occur. The Chairperson of the Policy Council will send a written notice of decisions to the Member.

Section 4: Duties of Officers

A. Chairperson

The Chairperson will preside over all meetings and assist with the agenda. They assist in setting up training sessions of Policy Council members, promotes Policy Council to local Parent Committees and individual parents, and assists all other Executive Officers. The Chairperson will appoint and disband Policy Council Ad Hoc committees and may request information from parents and staff that would help Policy Council to plan, monitor, and/or evaluate program operations.

B. Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson will preside over meetings in the absence of the Chairperson, keep track of attendance of individual Policy Council members at each meeting, and recommend to the Council when a written warning of termination should be sent. The Vice-Chairperson will serve as substitute Treasurer or Secretary in the absence of either.

C. Secretary

The Secretary will record minutes of the Policy Council and Executive Committee meetings and correspond with other Parent Committees and agencies as directed by the Chairperson. They will give a report at monthly meetings.

D. Treasurer

The Treasurer will keep track of Policy Council Activity Funds and In-Kind sheets, which are generated at Policy Council meetings. They will give a report at monthly meetings.

E. Policy Council Liaison to the KVCAP Board of Directors

The Policy Council shall designate any current Policy Council Member as the Policy Council Liaison to the KVCAP Board of Directors. This Officer will be a voting member on the KVCAP Board of Directors for the purpose of assuring strong channels of communication, a coherent/non-duplicative planning process, and shared decision making between the Policy Council and the KVCAP Board. This seat can be held in conjunction with another Officer seat.

Article IV --- Communication and Joint Committee

Section 1: Communication

In order to improve communication:

1. Any non-elected parent can observe or participate in any committee, but cannot cast a formal vote. Regular meeting times and places are to be arranged at the discretion of elected members. Community/collaborative partners may be invited to join to offer their perspective and assistance in the program planning, decision, and implementation process.
2. To support participation in Policy Council and committees, Child & Family Services will reimburse parents and participants who are community members for travel consistent with the Agency reimbursement rate. Childcare and meals will be available at Policy Council meetings.
3. A Program Content Lead will be invited to attend Policy Council meetings a minimum of quarterly to receive parent input and provide information on program plans.

Section 2: Joint Committee

To augment shared governance between the Policy Council and the KVCAP Board, both bodies have established the *Joint Committee*. Joint Committee meetings will be held on an as needed basis for the expressed purpose of enhancing communication when disputes regarding shared governance arise. Refer to the Internal Dispute Resolution Policy.

The Joint Committee will have six (6) members: the President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Board of Directors and the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary of the Policy Council with the Chief Executive Officer and Head Start Director as staff to the committee.

Section 3: Personnel Committee

The Policy Council functions as the Personnel Committee during regular meetings. The personnel committee will periodically review decisions regarding personnel policies for employment of program staff, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff. The program will always seek a Policy Council or Parent Committee parent to participate in the screening/interview process of Head Start staff.

Section 4: Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee

The Health and Mental Health Services Advisory Committee is a sub-committee of the Policy Council. The Committee meets a minimum of three times annually. Minutes of meetings are included in the Policy Council packets and/or the Health Services Manager will attend the meetings periodically to provide a report and update.