

## Policy Council – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### What is Policy Council?

The Policy Council is a decision making group made up of parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program and community members served by the program.

### What is the purpose of Policy Council?

The Policy Council is established as a formal structure of shared governance through which parents and community members are responsible for the direction of the Head Start Program at the agency per Part 1301 – Program Governance, 1301.3 Policy Council.

### How does Policy Council affect the program?

The Policy Council membership is responsible for assisting in setting the direction of the program during the current year, which impacts future years. This includes:

- Assist in recruiting volunteer services from parents and families, community residents and community organizations.
- Review and monitor the annual operating budget for the program.
- Use ongoing monitoring data from all service areas, data on school readiness goals, and community assessment data to conduct responsibilities.
- Review, provide input and approve the:
  - funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Head Start.
  - program's philosophy, long and short-term goals and objectives.
  - program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
  - criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities.
  - annual Self-Assessment of the grantee agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application.
  - annual parent engagement activities.
  - budget planning for program expenditures, including procedures for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities.
  - Bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council and Parent Committee.
  - program decisions regarding the employment of program staff, including standards of conduct and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff.
  - procedure for how members of the Policy Council of the Head Start agency are elected.
  - recommendations on the selection of service areas for such agencies.

### When and where does the Policy Council meet?

- The Head Start program has scheduled meetings once a month.
- Members receive an invitation letter and agenda in the mail as well as follow-up reminders via phone calls or email as reminders of the upcoming meeting.
- Attendance is critical as there may be agenda items that have a deadline for approval and submission. Without a quorum (a majority of the membership being present) these items cannot be submitted.
- Bexar County Head Start Program meets at ESC-20 October through May in the evening.
- Tri-County Head Start Program meets at Medina Valley ISD Central Office September through May in the evening.
- A light meal is served at the meeting.

**What happens at the Policy Council meeting?**

- Each month that Policy Council meets there is an agenda of items be made aware of or items that need approval.
- Members have an opportunity to ask questions and give their input and ideas to the agenda items being presented.
- All agenda items are topics that affect the entire program of partnership school district areas.
- Individual campus topics are handled at the campus Parent Committee meeting level.
- Minutes are taken as formal record all decisions that are made and document topics that were discussed.

**Will I get reimbursed for my mileage expenses?**

- Yes, mileage expenses from your work or home to the meeting location and back to your home is reimbursed.
- The mileage reimbursement rate is set by the State of Texas.
- A mileage reimbursement form must be submitted within the month of the meeting.
- If a Head Start parent/guardian drives themselves to a meeting or training provided by the program, ESC-20 Head Start program will reimburse the parent/guardian in accordance with ESC-20 mileage reimbursement policy.
- Mileage is reimbursed at the current State rate per mile.
- Head Start staff will provide the parent/guardian a copy of the mileage reimbursement form.
- Either the parent/guardian or FSA staff will submit the mileage reimbursement form to the Community & Family Coordinator for verification and processing at ESC-20.
- Mileage forms from parents/guardians will be submitted for processing following ESC-20 timeline for submission.

**Will I get reimbursed for my childcare expenses?**

- Per Head Start Performance Standards, the program offers childcare reimbursement for parents/guardians who hold a position on the Policy Council.
- A childcare reimbursement form must be completed, signed by the person who provided care, and submitted within the month of the meeting.
- If a Policy Council member incurs a reasonable and necessary childcare fee while attending an official Policy Council meeting, such fees will be reimbursed at a rate of \$10.00 per hour.
- The person providing care for the child cannot be a parent/guardian of the child when receiving reimbursement for childcare.
- The Community & Family Coordinator provides Policy Council members the form at each Policy Council meeting.
- The Policy Council member completes the form and has the childcare provider sign the form as verification of the service.
- Either the Policy Council member or FSA staff will submit the childcare reimbursement form to the Community & Family Coordinator for verification and processing at ESC-20 within the month that the meeting occurred.