

# Puget Sound ESD Early Learning Policy Council Bylaws

Approved by Policy Council October 14, 2014

## ARTICLE I: NAME

This organization shall be known as the Puget Sound Educational Service District Early Learning Policy Council. The PSESD Early Learning Policy Council is established under the authority of Federal Head Start regulations 45CFR1304.50 and state ECEAP regulations RCW 28A.215. The grantee, which is Educational Service District 121, is charged with the legal and fiscal responsibility for the overall administration of the Head Start and ECEAP grants. The terms below will be used through this document:

**Early Learning Program:** Includes ECEAP, Head Start (HS), Early Head Start (EHS)

**ECEAP:** Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program

**Center:** Sub-contractor or grantee

**Site:** A building within the center

**Model:** Service delivery approach (part-day, full-day, center-based, home-based, wrap-around)

## ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council shall be to:

- A. Participate in developing program design and operations, reviewing program philosophy, long and short range program goals and objectives related to service delivery, budget, program policies and recruitment of families.
- B. Network and serve as a link between center/site parent committees or parent groups, grantee governing body, professional and community organizations, public agencies and PSESD Early Learning Programs.
- C. Assist parent committees in communicating with parents enrolled in all program options to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, goals and variety of opportunities in Head Start/ECEAP/Early Head Start and to encourage their participation in the program.
- D. Establish and maintain policies and procedures for working with the Puget Sound ESD to resolve community complaints about the program and to resolve internal disputes.
- E. Participate in the formulation, review and approval of applications for Head Start and ECEAP services to Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families, and Washington State Department of Early Learning, respectively.
- F. Recruit, mobilize and network with community organization and community resources to promote and strengthen the goals of Early Learning.
- G. Consider program-wide issues and initiate recommendations for program improvements.
- H. Review and approve policies in conjunction with PSESD Early Learning Administration and the PSESD Governing Board, following state and federal guidelines.
- I. Participate and assist in the development and approval of the annual Program Review (Self-Assessment).

## ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

### Section 1: Composition of the Policy Council

There shall be up to 2 elected current parent representatives from each program site and model, elected past parents, and elected community representatives.

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## A. Elected current parent representative

Each representative must be a democratically elected parent/guardian of children currently enrolled in an ECEAP, Early Head Start, Head Start program,

1. Each site shall elect up to 2 representatives from each program site and for each program model. Program models include part-day, full-day, full school year, extended full day, home-based.
2. Representative vacancies shall be promptly filled by election at the site level with parents as soon as possible.

## B. Community Representatives

There shall be up to 20 Past Parents (10 ECEAP, 10 Head Start/Early Head Start) and up to 5 Community Agency Representatives elected on the Council. At no time shall the Community Representatives make up more than 49% of the seated Policy Council.

1. Community Representatives must be drawn from the local community: businesses; public or private community, civic, and professional organization; and others who are familiar with resources and services for low-income children and families, including for example the parents of formerly enrolled children.
2. Community Agency Representatives are representatives of local community groups (public or private) or professional organizations who are familiar with resources and services for children and families who are knowledgeable of the culturally, ethnically, socio-economic, linguistic diverse, and can contribute to the continuous development of the Early Learning Program.
3. Past Parent Representatives Past Parents are defined as a parent/guardian who has had a child (or children) in the ECEAP, Early Head Start or Head Start program during a previous program year. Policy Council votes to ratify Past Parent Community Representatives' membership after they attend one Policy Council Meeting.

## C. PSESD Board Representatives

One or more representatives for the PSESD Board attends and participates in Policy Council Meetings serving as a link between Policy Council and the PSESD Board and to support shared governance. This is a non-voting position.

## Section 2: Terms of Membership

- A. Terms of membership shall be one year, beginning in November through the following November when the new Policy Council is elected and seated. The past year's Executive Board chairs the November Policy Council meeting until the election of new officers is complete.
- B. No person, in a voting capacity (including community representatives), may serve on Policy Council for more than a total of three, one-year terms, in their lifetime.

## Section 3: Representative Voting Rights

- A. Each Representative shall be entitled to one vote on each decision that requires a vote of the Council.
- B. As members of the Council, each past parent community representative and each community agency shall be entitled to one vote.
- C. Absentee voting by proxy is not permitted.
- D. The Chairperson shall have no vote, except in the event of a tie. The voting Chairperson will be determined at the beginning of each meeting.

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## Section 4: Duties

- A. Each Policy Council representative shall consider the interests, opinions, suggestions, and recommendations of their site parent committee and/or group(s) in matters of business which affect their center.
- B. Representatives will report back to their site parent group(s) on a regular basis with regard to Policy Council and subcommittee business.
- C. Past parents' primary responsibility is to:
  1. Offer input to Policy Council based on their previous experiences while enrolled in a PSESD early learning program and/or serving on PSESD Early Learning Policy Council
  2. Promote the PSESD Early Learning programs in their own community,
  3. Assist in training of new Policy Council representatives and support the growth and leadership of the new Policy Council representatives.
- D. Attend Policy Council meetings and any subcommittee meetings regularly.

## Section 5: Attendance Guidelines

Attendance will be documented at each meeting.

- A. If unable to attend a Policy Council meeting, it is the responsibility of the representative to contact the program specialist who staffs PSESD Policy Council.
- B. An absence is considered unexcused when the Policy Council representative fails to notify their staff at the PSESD.
- C. After two (2) unexcused absences:
  1. Representative and their Family Support Specialist will be contacted to discuss what supports are needed to help them fulfill their responsibilities.
  2. After 3rd consecutive unexcused absence, ESD Staff will contact the representative and their Family Support Specialist to discuss whether they are able to continue their commitment as a Policy Council Representative.
  3. If no response is received by the following Policy Council meeting, that member shall be considered terminated.

## Section 6: Vacancies

Representative vacancies shall be promptly filled by election at the next Parent Committee meeting. Family support staff shall submit updated Letter of Introduction to PSESD Policy Council staff.

## Section 7: Nepotism

No individual can serve as a representative of Policy Council while any member of his/her immediate family (a member of an immediate family shall include those persons related by blood or marriage or living in the same household and shall include, but not be limited to: father, mother, spouse, mate, son, daughter, sister, brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law) is employed in PSESD's Early Learning Programs.

## ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

### Section 1: Executive Board

The Executive Board makes recommendations to Policy Council and PSESD Early Learning Program Administration regarding operation of the program

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## Section 2: Officers

Officers shall be elected from the membership of the Council. All officers shall be members of the Executive Board. The officers of this Council shall be:

- A. 2 Co-Chairpersons (1 from Head Start and 1 from ECEAP)
- B. 2 Co-Vice Chairpersons/Board Liaisons (1 from Head Start and 1 from ECEAP)
- C. 2 Co-Secretary/Treasurers
- D. 3 Members-At-Large (1 for EHS, 1 for HS, 1 for ECEAP),
- E. 2 WSA Representatives (1 from EHS/HS and 1 from ECEAP).

## Section 3: Terms of Office

The officers shall be elected for a one-year term by a majority vote in November and shall take office at the close of that meeting.

- A. The officers of the past year may serve as advisors to the new officers for a period of 30 days.
- B. No officer shall be eligible for the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- C. Executive Board members may hold only one elected position on the executive board.
- D. No more than five (5) past parents may be elected to the Executive Board.

## Section 4: Qualifications

All voting members of the Policy Council are eligible to run for any office.

## Section 5: Nominations

The procedure for nomination of officers shall be:

- A. Nominations are requested from the floor. Nominations may be made by representatives themselves or by a sponsor from the members of the Policy Council.
- B. Chairperson states the names of the representatives nominated for office.
- C. Nominations for specific office are then closed.
- D. Each candidate delivers a short speech advocating his/her candidacy for office by answering three key questions.

## Section 6: Election

- A. Election of officers is by secret ballot of the voting representative members of the Policy Council.
- B. Counting of the votes will be by two (2) persons i.e. staff, community rep, board liaison, etc.
- C. Chairperson will vote only in the event of a tie between two candidates.
- D. Officers will be elected by majority vote in November and will take office at the close of the meeting.

## Section 7: Attendance Guidelines

- A. Officers are expected to attend all Executive Board and monthly Policy Council meetings and are subject to the Attendance Guidelines in Article III, Section 5.
- B. After three (3) absences from Executive Board and/or Policy Council meetings the Officer will be contacted by PSESD Staff to discuss what supports are needed to help them fulfill their duties.

## Section 8: Removal

- C. Any officer who fails to perform his/her duties as listed in Article IV Sections 7 and 10 can be removed by a simple majority vote of the Policy Council. A majority vote at an Executive Board

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meeting to remove the officer will result in a recommendation being brought to the next Policy Council meeting for vote by secret ballot. (See Article IV, Section 5)

## Section 9: Vacancies

- A. A vacancy in the office of Chairperson shall automatically be filled by the Vice-Chairperson from the vacant Chairperson's program (e.g. ECEAP Chairperson will be filled by the ECEAP Vice-Chairperson). A vacancy in any other office shall be filled at the next regular meeting by a majority vote of those present.
- B. An Executive Board member should submit a resignation in writing or by phone call if no longer able to serve on Policy Council and/or Executive Board.
- C. Every effort will be made to fill vacant executive board positions as they occur.

## Section 10: Duties

The duties of the officers will be as follows:

- A. Attend Policy Council and Executive Board meetings.
- B. Help other representatives understand their responsibilities.
- C. Make telephone or other contact with Policy Council representative to encourage regular attendance.
- D. Participate in reviewing and making recommendations regarding staff hires/terminations, for subsequent approval/disapproval by the entire Policy Council.
- E. The Executive Board will assume those duties as outlined in other sections of these bylaws.

The **Chairpersons** shall:

- A. Preside over Policy Council and Executive Board meetings.
- B. Sign all correspondence as required by Performance Standards.
- C. Attend Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP (WSA) meetings. Chair will also attend and represent Policy Council at the annual Head Start Parent Conference hosted by the National Head Start Association (NHSA), budget permitting.
- D. Assure adherence to Policy Council bylaws.
- E. In conjunction with EL administration, draft the Policy Council agenda and notice of the next regular meeting at least five (5) days prior to the meeting date;
- F. Call special Policy Council and Executive Board meetings as required and notify members of the agenda by phone, text, mail, email or fax at least three (3) days prior to the meeting date.
- G. In conjunction with the Vice Chairpersons and ESD's Governing Body representative(s), participate in resolving internal disputes.

The **Vice-Chairpersons/Board Liaisons** shall:

1. Perform all duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence.
2. Represent Early Learning Policy Council at the PSESD Governing Board meetings, serving as a link between Policy Council and the PSESD Board and supporting shared governance. This is an ad-hoc, non-voting position on the PSESD Board.
3. Represent Early Learning Policy Council at the PSESD Board Advisory Committee.
4. Share reports/information with Policy Council from the PSESD Board in conjunction with the PSESD Board rep.
5. Share reports from the Policy Council in conjunction with grantee staff with the PSESD Board.

The **Secretary** shall:

1. In conjunction with ESD support staff, take minutes of all regular meetings of the Policy Council and Executive Board, with emphasis on recording motions to approve/disapprove action items;
2. Keep record of attendance at Policy Council and Executive Board meetings

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The **Treasurer** shall:

1. In conjunction with ESD fiscal staff, report to Policy Council on all monies pertaining to Policy Council budget and expenses.
2. Attend Budget Subcommittee meetings

The **ECEAP Member at Large** shall:

1. Temporarily assume the position of any absent officer, other than the Co-Chairperson.
2. Perform other duties as assigned by the Co-Chairperson.
3. Be a current or past parent of an ECEAP child.
4. Represent Early Learning Policy Council at the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meetings, to be decided with other Members-at-Large after election.
5. Share reports/information with Policy Council from the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or HSAC meetings.

The **Early Head Start Member-at-Large** shall:

1. Temporarily assume the position of any absent officer, other than the Co-Chairperson.
2. Perform other duties as assigned by the Co-Chairperson.
3. Be a current or past parent of an Early Head Start child.
4. Represent Early Learning Policy Council at the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meetings, to be decided with other Members-at-Large after election.
5. Share reports/information with Policy Council from the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or HSAC meetings.

The **Preschool Head Start Member-at-Large** shall:

1. Temporarily assume the position of any absent officer, other than the Co-Chairperson.
2. Perform other duties as assigned by the Co-Chairperson.
3. Be a current or past parent of a preschool Head Start child.
4. Represent Early Learning Policy Council at the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) meetings, to be decided with other Members-at-Large after election.
5. Share reports/information with Policy Council from the PSESD Center Directors meetings and/or HSAC meetings.

The **Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP (WSA) Representatives** shall:

1. Attend Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP (WSA) meetings as a voting member and as a representative of Policy Council.
2. Report back to Policy Council any information received.

## ARTICLE V: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Section 1: Goals

The goal of professional development opportunities for Policy Council Representatives is to strengthen the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities as Policy Council Representatives.

- A. Training on Performance Standards and Program Policies will be made available to all members throughout the year. Training for Executive Board members specific to duties of their position will be provided ongoing throughout their term. Additionally, training on leadership skills will be provided throughout the year to all Policy Council Representatives.

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- B. The PSESD administrative staff will make arrangements for parents to share what they have learned at conferences and meetings with the entire Policy Council either in verbal or written form.
- C. **PSESD PC Representation & travel to conferences and other meetings:** Head Start/EHS will support travel and childcare expenses of officers, Policy Council representatives and/or alternates to attend meetings, trainings, conferences, etc.
  - 1. Officers and PC Reps are responsible to attend all workshops and conference sessions which are included in the paid registration and agenda of the conference.
  - 2. Officers and PC reps are responsible to conduct themselves in a professional manner (as outlined in the Policy Council Ground rules) as they are representing PSESD Head Start program.
  - 3. Officers and PC reps who travel are responsible for sharing what they have learned with the entire Policy Council either in verbal or written form.

## Section 2: WSA, REGION X, NHSA, OHS CONFERENCES, AND OTHER MEETINGS:

- A. **NHSA Annual Parent Conference:** PSESD Early Learning Policy Council Chairpersons will attend and represent Policy Council at the Annual Head Start Parent Conference hosted by NHSA in December, budget permitting. If the Chairperson is unable to attend, the opportunity will be offered to Executive Board members in this order:
  - 1. Vice Chairperson/Board Liaison from the same program as the Chairperson unable to attend.
  - 2. Secretary/Treasurers
  - 3. Member at Large from the same program as the Chairperson unable to attend (for Head Start the opportunity will be offered to EHS Member at Large and then to Head Start Member at Large).
  - 4. WSA Representative from the same program as the Chairperson unable to attend.
- B. **Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP (WSA):** A Policy Council rep who wishes to run for a position on the WSA board must receive written approval, in advance from the PSESD Early Learning Executive Director as appropriate. If elected, Policy Council shall provide financial support (childcare and mileage reimbursement at the prevailing rate) when the rep attends WSA Board meetings. WSA is responsible for reps per diem (meal costs) when they attend WSA Board meetings. PSESD will cover meals, childcare, mileage and registration if the Policy Council rep also attends the Fall/Winter WSA conference after the WSA Board meeting.
  - 1. PSESD Policy Council will pay these costs for reps serving the second year of their WSA Board term even if they no longer serve on the PSESD Policy Council (because of term limits). WSA Reps are expected to report regularly to fellow Policy Council reps about WSA and its activities.
- C. **Representative to National Head Start Association (NHSA):** a PSESD Head Start parent who is a representative to the Region X Association Board may run for the office of Region X Parent. If s/he wishes to be eligible for financial support s/he must receive the advanced written permission of the PSESD Associate Superintendent for Early Learning. In the event a parent is elected, the Region X Association is responsible for the costs of sending the representative to the meetings of the National Association Board each year. The PSESD Early Learning Policy Council will provide any additional financial support as needed for the representative to stay on for the Annual NSHA conference, which follows a NHSA Board meeting once a year. Typically, this will mean paying the conference registration and 2-3 days of lodging and per diem. National

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representatives are Policy Council Executive Board Members or Officers only if they are specifically elected to such positions.

## ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

### Section 1: Committees

The PSESD Early Learning Policy Council parent representatives will be members on program committees, such as:

- A. **Budget Committee:** The Budget committee is a group with representation from Policy Council, PSESD staff, Center Coordinators, Center Directors, and center staff. Its role is to review the budget input from other agency groups (those listed, as well as the Head Start Leadership Team), offer input of its own as to broad priorities, and make a brief report on its deliberations.
- B. **Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance (ERSEA) Committee:** The ERSEA committee meets as needed throughout the program year – usually two to four times – to discuss how children are selected and enrolled into the Head Start program.
- C. **Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC):** Assists program staff in planning for implementation and evaluation of the ECEAP health/nutrition services component. HSAC also serves as liaison between Policy Council, centers/site, community resources and health and nutrition services staff.

### Section 2: Committee Guidelines

- A. In addition, any other committees deemed necessary and proper to fulfill the objectives and purposes of this organization may be organized. Such committees shall be responsible to the organization and shall serve for the terms of their usefulness.
- B. Any currently enrolled ECEAP, Head Start, Early Head Start parent or current Policy Council member may serve on a Policy Council committee or taskforce.
- C. Each committee will discuss and agree on its charge and will report back at the next Policy Council meeting to the entire group.

## ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

### Section 1: Regular Meetings

- A. The regular meetings of the Puget Sound ESD Policy Council shall be held monthly in most cases except if written notice is given one month prior to the regular meeting.
- B. All committees will meet as needed either during regular Policy Council meeting or on separate day depending on the need.

### Section 2: Special Meetings

- A. Special meetings may be called at the discretion of the Chairpersons or PSESD Administrative Staff, and at such time and place as he/she may designate.

### Section 3: Non-Policy Council Members

- A. Non-Policy Council members are welcome at all meetings. Chairperson reserves the right to ask non-members to leave if they are disruptive. Child care and mileage reimbursement is available to a visiting, currently enrolled parent on a one-time basis.



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## **Section 4: Notice of Meetings**

- A. Written notice, agenda and minutes of the previous meetings shall be mailed either via US Mail or electronic mail to each member prior to each regular meeting.
- B. Written notice, agenda and minutes of the previous meetings shall be mailed either via US Mail or electronic mail to each member prior to each Executive Board meeting or special Policy Council meeting.

## **Section 5: Quorum**

A quorum shall consist of 16 voting members of the Council. If there is no quorum, a motion may be made to consider a body of the whole. In this case, regular business may be carried out. Such business must be ratified at the beginning of the next regular meeting in which there is a quorum.

## **Section 6: Executive Session**

The Policy Council has the right to meet in executive session for matters of confidentiality.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

The Executive Board may present amendments of the bylaws at any meeting of Policy Council. A majority is needed for approval, providing that a copy of each proposed amendment has been sent to the membership prior to the meeting date.

## **ARTICLE IX: PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES**

Parliamentary procedures shall govern the proceedings of all regularly scheduled Policy Council meetings of this organization, except as provided by the bylaws of this organization or by approval of the Policy Council representatives.

## **ARTICLE X: GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR POLICY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES**

- A. Process:** Policy Council meetings and meeting content is determined in partnership by the Executive Board and the PSESD Administrative Staff. If there are concerns regarding decisions that have been made by the council, or with specific individual issues, the following process will support the concern/issue being addressed. The Program Director can also give support or guidance in areas where conflict or disagreement is evident.
- B. Issues Concerning Policy Council**
  - 1. Attempt to work out problem with person involved.
  - 2. If a concern is not settled, talk with an Executive Board member or the PSESD Early Learning staff that support Policy Council.
  - 3. If concern is still not resolved and requires a policy change, ask any chairperson to refer the issue to Policy Council.
  - 4. Issues referred to Policy Council shall be discussed at a Policy Council meeting.
- C.** Confidentiality will be strictly observed throughout these processes.
- D.** Though policy council representatives may follow these steps in attempting to resolve a grievance, it does not ensure that the grievance will come out in their favor.