

**WILLIAMSON-BURNET COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES, INC.
HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL BY-LAWS**

ARTICLE I

Name The name of this organization shall be the Williamson-Burnet County Opportunities, Inc. (hereafter WBCO) Head Start Policy Council (hereafter Council).

ARTICLE II

Purpose The purpose of this organization shall be to implement the Head Start Performance Standard 1304.50 (Program Governance and Appendix A), provide participation for parent members and community representation in planning, program policy and oversight.

ARTICLE III

Membership The membership of the Policy Council shall be consisted of:

a) **Parent Representation**

The Policy Council shall consist of up to 20 Parent Representatives. These representatives are defined as parent/guardians of currently enrolled children, and are allocated in the following manner, according to the current number of enrolled children per center:

Bartlett Head Start – 1
Burnet Head Start – 2
Bagdad Head Start – 2
Florence Head Start – 1
Highland Lakes Head Start - 1
Liberty Hill Head Start – 1
Harris-Ross Head Start – 3
Marble Falls I and II Head Start – 1
Mary Bailey Head Start – 2
Rawleigh Elliott Head Start – 1
Burnet Early Head Start -1
Bagdad Early Head Start - 1
Harris-Ross Early Head Start – 1
Rawleigh Elliott Early Head Start – 1
Round Rock Head Start - 1

Each center may have one (1) selected alternate. The selected alternate may attend Policy Council meetings as an observer, but may only vote upon the absence of the elected parent Policy Council Representative. In the absence of both the parent Policy Council Representative and the alternate, the Policy Council Representative will designate a parent from the Center and vote at any Policy Council meeting at which a quorum is present.

b) **Community Representatives**

Community Representatives may be recommended by Head Start staff or parents, however, the final decision to seat the member rests with the Council. There are two (2) Community Representative seats on Policy Council, one (1) from Williamson County and one (1) from Burnet County.

c) **WBCO Board Member**

There shall be one seat for a representative designated by the WBCO Board of Directors. This seat shall not be filled by the member that represents Head Start Policy Council on the WBCO Board of Directors.

The total number of voting Council members shall be 23, 16 from Head Start, four (4) from Early Head Start, two (2) Community Representatives and one (1) WBCO Board of

Directors representative. All official members of the Council have one (1) vote, and equal voting rights. During the transition period when the outgoing and incoming Policy Council members are meeting together, old and new voting members will vote on each agenda item, including election of officers.

New Policy Council representatives are elected for a yearly cycle until new Policy Council representatives are elected at the beginning of the next operational year. All terms are one (1) year in length. The maximum number of one (1) year terms a person may serve on the Policy Council may not exceed three (3) such terms. If the Policy Council member's child is still eligible for the program, and the Policy Council member removes the child from the program, the member shall forfeit their position immediately.

The duties of all members of this Policy Council are as follows:

- a) Attend meetings regularly.
- b) Arrive on time for all Policy Council meetings.
- c) Arrive on time for all Committee meetings.
- d) Actively participate in meetings by reading the Agenda and being aware of the matters at hand.
- e) Read and keep copies of Policy Council and Committee minutes.
- f) Stay aware of the Council's purpose, plan and progress. Make and plan monthly reports back to Center meetings, as well as report information and concerns from the Center meetings to Policy Council.
- g) Consider all sides of a matter before voting.
- h) Debate the issues; not the people.
- i) Accept and support all decisions made by the majority of the Policy Council.
- j) Respect the opinions of fellow members.
- k) Attempt to interpret the needs of the constituents to the organization.
- l) Call to the attention any issues that will have an adverse effect on the organization or our Center constituents.
- m) Direct constituent complaints to the proper level on the command chain.
- n) Represent the WBCO head Start Policy Council in a professional manner at all times.
- o) Refrain from discussing the confidential proceedings of the Policy Council outside meetings.
- p) Provide to the WBCO, Inc. Head Start Administration their current address and telephone number, and update this information in a timely manner as necessary.

Training on Head Start Standards and Program Policies will be made available to all Parent and Community Representative members each year.

Membership in the WBCO Policy Council is voluntary and is performed without compensation. Members may receive reimbursement for child care and transportation to attend Policy Council and related meetings.

ARTICLE IV

Representation It is the duty of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, and/or person elected by the Policy

Council for a special purpose, to represent the Policy Council to the public and to other organizations. Policy Council members may not represent the Policy Council or the Head Start program as a whole unless designated as a spokesperson. Head Start Administration and Management issues will be addressed by the appropriate current Head Start staff spokesperson.

ARTICLE V

Selection

Parent Representatives shall be selected by the Center Parent Committee that is comprised of all parents who have children enrolled in the HS/EHS program at their local center. Each center shall elect by majority vote the designated number of parent representatives to serve on Policy Council and one (1) alternate, in accordance with Head Start Performance Standards 1304.50(a)(1)(iii), 1304.50 (a)(2), and 1304.50(b)(7).

Community Representatives shall be recommended to Council by Head Start staff or by parents, however the final decision to seat the prospective member rests with the Council.

Nepotism. No one can serve on the Policy Council while he/she, or any member of their immediate family is employed by WBCO, Inc. Only those employed in a substitute capacity are exempt from this provision. Additionally, only one (1) immediate family member in any family may serve as a voting member of the Policy Council. Other immediate family members may serve as non-voting members of the Policy Council and/or may serve on other Head Start committees.

The definition of immediate family will be the following: wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, brother, sister, grandparents, grandchildren, partner sharing a home, or relative by marriage of comparable degree (in-laws). This may extend to other relationships if conflict of interest and confidentiality are in jeopardy.

In the event of vacancies, parent representative members shall be replaced by a new delegate, selected by the Center Group they represent. Community Representative members shall be replaced in the manner described above.

ARTICLE VI

Removal

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Policy

Any officer or member of this Policy Council who fails to perform their duties, or is deemed to have otherwise engaged in misconduct, can be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the

Council members present at the meeting. Misconduct shall include, but is not limited to:

- a) Failure to attend three consecutive meetings.
- b) Removal of child or children from Head Start program.
- c) Gross neglect of duty.
- d) Indulging in offensive conduct or using offensive language.
- e) Theft or intentional destruction of money or property belonging to the Head Start Program.
- f) Breach of confidentiality; or
- g) Failure to comply with these By-Laws, WBCO Policies and Procedures (as it applies to volunteers of the program), and/or the Head Start Performance Standards.

Notification will be given to all members of the Policy Council in the regular agenda or agenda of the special meeting, the intent to consider a Policy Council member's removal. In addition, the aforementioned member shall receive notice of this agenda item and it shall be delivered to the member via certified mail, return receipt requested. If the notice of termination is undeliverable or unexpected, the termination shall be effective seven (7) from the date it was mailed. A removed member may appeal by submitting a written request for a hearing within seven (7) days of the effective date of the termination. The Policy Council shall hold the hearing on the next regularly scheduled Policy Council meeting, and shall determine by majority vote whether the removal should be reversed. Prior to voting, the Policy Council may deliberate outside the presence of the appealing member and the group he/she represents, if any. The decision of the appeal shall be

provided to the member making the appeal in writing within seven (7) days. Failure to attend the appeal hearing by the appealing member is grounds for removal. The Policy Council is the authority on this matter and their vote is final.

Any member who wishes to resign should give the Executive Committee and/or the WBCO Head Start Director a written statement of resignation. If a member verbally informs the Chairperson that he/she is resigning, the Chairperson should inform the Policy Council of their intent to resign.

ARTICLE VII

Meetings

Regular Meetings. This Policy Council shall convene at such time and place as determined at its first meeting each year, and are conducted as per Robert's Rules of Order. This Policy Council will meet at 10:00 am on the third (3rd) Tuesday of each month in the conference room at the Mary Bailey Center in Georgetown. Meetings may also be facilitated utilizing technology as allowed per Texas Open Meeting Act law.

Attendance. If a Policy Council member misses three (3) consecutive meetings they will automatically be removed from the Council. The Center will be notified in writing and will need to re-elect a new representative before the next meeting.

Special Meetings of the Policy Council may be called at the discretion of the Executive Director or the Chairperson and must be coordinated through the Executive Director. All Special Meetings shall be called by the Chairperson at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of said meeting.

A Quorum for the conduct of official business shall consist of 51% of the currently seated members of the Council. Vacancies shall not be included in this total.

Motions may be made by any voting member during a meeting and voting on motions may be made by any method permitted under the *New Robert's Rules of Order*, except by proxy or cumulative.

Voting. All actions taken by the Policy Council shall be after approval upon a majority vote of the members. A majority vote shall be fifty-one percent (51%) of the members in attendance at any meeting during which a vote is taken.

Written Notices shall be mailed and e-mailed to each member of the Policy Council at least five (5) days prior to the date of each regular meetings, with a copy of the Agenda for the meeting and the Minutes from the previous Policy Council meeting. Notice of a Special Meeting may be called with seventy-two (72) hours notice and an explanation of the reason for calling the special meeting. Such notice shall be given in writing, by telephone, and/or e-mail.

Minutes. The secretary shall take or cause to be taken with the assistance of the Administration, minutes of each meeting. All minutes shall be retained for a period of not less than five (5) years.

Open Meetings. It is the intent of the Policy Council to hold all Regular and Special Meetings in an open forum, with opportunity for public comment. However, the Policy Council reserves the right to hold an executive session for items that may be sensitive in terms of human relations, real estate holdings, certain work sessions, and hiring or terminations. The Policy Council will take no action in Executive Session.

The WBCO Head Start Policy Council will follow the Texas Open Meetings Act and all of the amendments and future amendments of these Acts.

ARTICLE VIII

Officers

The following officers shall be elected:

Chairman
Vice-Chairman
Secretary

and the Candidates for officers shall be selected by nomination from Policy Council members and the candidates must agree to the nomination.

Terms of office shall be for one (1) year. Officers may succeed themselves, but they may not exceed three (3) such terms.

DUTIES OF CHAIRPERSON

1. Preside over all meetings of the Policy Council.
2. Call regular and special meetings in collaboration with staff.
3. Assist staff to develop an agenda for monthly meetings and Executive Committee meetings.
4. Attend WBCO Inc. Board Meetings.

The Chair opens the meetings and calls members to order. Parliamentary procedure as per Roberts Rules of Order is used in meetings. The Chair should know what is on the agenda for the meetings and keep the meeting moving along. It is courteous to begin and end the meetings on time. Try to be impartial when questions come up. You will be working closely with the Head Start Director and Executive Director. Keep meeting discussion and debate focused on the issues and move the Council to a decision. Certain official documents require the signature of the Policy Council Chairperson.

DUTIES OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON

1. Attend all Policy Council meetings.
2. Assume the duties of the Chairperson in the event of his/her absence.
3. Serve as a member of the Executive Committee.
4. Fill unexpired term of a Policy Council Chairperson.
5. Work closely with the Chairperson to become familiar with the duties and the responsibilities of the Chairperson position.

DUTIES OF SECRETARY

1. Attend all Policy Council meetings.
2. Maintain accurate minutes of Policy Council meetings in collaboration with staff and ensure their timely distribution to all centers for posting.
3. Notify Policy Council Chairperson in case of absence so he/she can arrange a substitute for that particular meeting.
4. Serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Secretary would call a meeting to order and preside until a Chair is elected. Names of those present at the meeting are obtained by an in-kind form signed by each person present. This position works closely with the Director and staff to keep an accurate account of all meetings.

An officer who misses three (3) consecutive meetings is automatically dismissed from office. The vacancy shall be filled by majority vote at the meeting in which the office is declared open.

ARTICLE IX

Committees The following Standing Committees shall be formed each year:

- a.) Executive Committee which will consist of officers of the Policy Council. This Committee will serve as a planning group for the training of Policy Council members and will act on matters not requiring the vote of total membership.
- b.) Health Services Advisory Committee, will be a sub-committee of the Policy Council, serving the Head Start Program as outlined in the Performance Standards and reporting regularly to the Policy Council.
- c.) All other Committees will serve in an advisory capacity.

Special Committees as needed will be appointed by the Chairperson.

ARTICLE X

Conflict Resolution Plan

Purpose

1. To resolve impasse situations without outside binding and impartial arbitration as required.
2. To promote the spirit of cooperation and reflect the principles of Shared Governance as per the Head Start Performance Standards, despite differences of parties involved.
3. To uphold the partnership principle in Head Start which refuses to place any governing or policymaking group's interest or power above the interest of the children being served by the program.

Definition of Impasse

Impasse is defined as having occurred when the Board or Executive Director proposes final action that does not have Policy Council concurrence as defined by the Performance Standards.

Impasse Committee's Composition and Duties

The Impasse Committee shall be made up of six (6) persons selected by the Board and Policy Council.

Three (3) from the WBCO Board
Three (3) from the Policy Council

The Executive Director and/or Head Start Director shall act as resource persons to the Impasse Committee.

The Impasse Committee shall convene on an informal basis for the purpose of discussing issues and reaching concurrence and the subsequent assurance of mutually agreed recommendations to the Governing Board and the Policy Council.

Notice of Impasse

The Governing Board President and the Policy Council Chairperson shall be authorized by their respective groups to send written notice of impasse on non-concurrence within five (5) working days following preliminary decisions of non-concurrence.

The Impasse Committee shall be called to convene by the Executive Director within fifteen (15) working days (or the scheduled meeting date of the Policy Council or Board, whichever is later) following non-concurring action by the Policy Council or WBCO Board.

Non-Binding Arbitration Committee's Composition and Powers

In the event that the Impasse Committee does not achieve resolution, The Non-Binding Arbitration Committee shall be called to convene within fifteen (15) working days (or the scheduled meeting date of the Policy Council or Board, whichever is later) following the Impasse Committee's final attempt to resolve issues of impasse or non-concurrence.

The Non-Binding Arbitration Committee shall be made of three (3) disinterested persons¹ who have agreed to serve as arbitrators.

One (1) Representative selected by the WBCO Board

One (1) Representative selected by the Policy Council

One (1) Representative mutually agreed upon/selected by the Representative of the Board and Policy Council as described below.

A list of six (6) arbitrators, (three (3) representing Policy Council, and three (3) representing the Board) with their addresses and phone numbers and ranked in the order in which they were called upon to serve on the Non-Binding Arbitration Committee will be submitted for consideration by the Board Representative and Policy Council Representative. One (1) will be selected to fill the third position on the Committee.

ARTICLE XI

Changes in By-Laws

These By-Laws may be amended or changed by a 51% majority vote of the members of this Council.

¹ Disinterested parties shall not include any parent or family member of children currently enrolled in the Head Start Program, or any staff or member of their family, or any Board Member or Member of their family of the Grantee or Delegate Agency or any Head Start Program.