



Legislation Text

File #: 26-0308, **Version:** 1

Interoffice Memorandum

DATE: February 18, 2026

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings and County Commissioners

THROUGH: Venerria L. Thomas, Director

FROM: Sonya L. Hill, Manager

CONTACT: Sonya L Hill

PHONE: (407) 836-7409

DIVISION: Head Start Division

ACTION REQUESTED:

Approval and execution of the amended Head Start Policy Council By-laws for Article VII, Procedures for Council Meetings, Section A - Regular Meetings. (Head Start Division)

PROJECT: N/A

PURPOSE: The Head Start Division requests approval of an amendment to the Orange County Head Start Policy Council By-laws, as required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start.

The Head Start Policy Council By-laws establish shared governance between the Board, the communities served, and the Policy Council. The Policy Council is comprised of parents of enrolled children, former parents, and community representatives from public, private, civic, and professional organizations.

The proposed by-law amendment includes a revision to Article VII, Procedures for Council Meetings, Section A - Regular Meetings that adjusts the schedule of Regular Council Meetings from the third Thursday of each month to the fourth Thursday of each month, with the exception of October. This change will allow additional time for staff to compile required monthly reports, reproduce meeting packets, and ensure timely distribution to Council members in advance of scheduled meetings.

All other provisions of the Head Start Policy Council By-laws remain unchanged.

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The Head Start Policy Council reviewed and approved of this amendment at its meeting on January 21, 2026.

BUDGET: N/A

Orange County Head Start Policy Council By-Laws Proposed Changes

Article VII, PROCEDURES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS, Section A - Regular Meetings, P g. 7
Current: Regular Meetings. Regular Council meetings and Council Committee meetings will be held on the third Thursday of every month, with the exception of the Month of October in which training may occur on a Saturday.
Proposed Change: Regular Council Meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of every month, with the exception of the month of October.
Rationale: Moving the meeting one week later will allow program staff sufficient time to finalize and compile all required reports that must be submitted to the Council for review. In addition, this additional time will ensure that meeting packets can be delivered to the Copy Center for reproduction and mailed to members with adequate notice.
Expected Outcome: This change will improve efficiency, ensure compliance with reporting timelines, and support Council members in receiving complete materials in advance of each scheduled meeting.
Implementation: Upon approval, the revised meeting schedule will take effect with the April Policy Council meeting cycle. All Council members will be notified of the updated meeting date to support planning, participation, and consistent attendance.

HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I COUNCIL CREATION AND PURPOSE

Section A. Creation of Head Start Policy Council. As the Governing Board of Orange County's Head Start Program (the "Program"), and in accordance with the Head Start Act ("Act"), codified at 45 U.S.C. §9801 *et. seq.* and the Head Start Performance Standards ("Performance Standards"), as promulgated in 45 CFR 1301 *et. seq.*, both as may be amended from time to time, the Orange County Board of County Commissioners (the "Grantee") created the Orange County Head Start Policy Council (the "Council") to administer and manage all grants funds received relating to the Program.

Section B. Council Purpose. The Council shall serve as a liaison between the private and public sectors, the Grantee, the communities served, and the parents of the children enrolled in the Program. The Council shall maintain a structured form of shared governance through which parents are able to participate in policy making decisions and other decisions relating to the Program, in accordance with the Performance Standards.

Section C. Cooperative Governance. The Grantee shall appoint one (1) individual, preferably an Orange County Commissioner or their designee, to serve as the Grantee's non-voting liaison. The Council may elect a member, preferably the Chairperson and an alternate, to serve as the Council's Representative on the Grantee's Community Action Board.

ARTICLE II COUNCIL MEMBERS

Section A. Membership. Council members shall consist of parents of children currently enrolled in the Program ("Parent Representatives") and selected representatives from the community ("Community Representatives") (Parent Representatives and Community Representatives are hereinafter collectively referred to as "Council Representatives"). Council membership for Parent Representatives shall be retained at no less than fifty-one percent (51%) with the remaining members of the Council being composed of Community Representatives. No Orange County staff members shall serve on the Council.

- 1) **Parent Representatives.** The Council shall include one Parent Representative, and an alternate ("Parent Alternate"), from each Program center ("Program Center").

Parent Representatives and Parent Alternates for each Program Center shall be determined based upon elections held each year during each Program Center's September Parent Committee meeting. Separate elections shall be held for each Program Center.

Elected Parent Representatives shall serve for a term of one-year, with a limited combined total of five (5) years in a lifetime, as set forth in the Performance Standards. Service by Parent Representatives for any portion of a year shall be considered as a full year of service.

All Parent Representatives shall be required to have a child enrolled in the Program at the time of election and throughout the term, with the exception of those Parent Representatives whose child **will** be transitioning into kindergarten.

- 2) **Community Representatives.** The Council shall include Community Representatives who are chosen from (i) the local community; (ii) businesses; (iii) public or private community, civic, and professional organizations; or (iv) individuals who are familiar with resources and services available for low-income children. Former Parent Representatives shall be eligible to serve on the Council as Community Representatives so long as they do not exceed their five (5) year lifetime service limit.

Community Representatives shall be selected by a majority vote of the Parent Representatives from recommendations made by Program staff members. Community Representatives shall not make up more than forty-nine percent (49%) of the total Council membership. Each Community Representative may designate an alternate, from the same organization ("Community Alternate"), to represent them in case of absence. Alternates shall be approved by the Council Representatives (Parent Alternate and Community Alternate are hereafter collectively referred to as "Alternates").

As required by the Performance Standards, Community Representatives shall be selected on an annual basis and serve for a term of one-year with a combined total of no more than five (5) years in a lifetime, which shall include time served as a Parent Representative, Community Representative, or a combination of the two. Community Representatives shall be required to maintain their affiliation with the organization or business they represent for the entire one-year term served. In the event that such affiliation ends before the completion of the one-year term, a replacement Community Representative shall be selected in accordance with the process set forth in these By-Laws.

Section B. Voting. Each Council Representative shall be entitled to one (1) vote. Community Alternates shall be entitled to a vote only in the absence of their associated Representative.

Section C. Absenteeism and Scheduled Leave. Council Representatives and Alternates may be removed from the Council as a result of unexcused absences from three (3) consecutive regular monthly meetings during a one-year period. Alternates shall not be deemed as absent for any regularly scheduled meetings, so long as their associated Representative is present.

Every effort shall be made to notify all Representatives and Alternates with two (2) unexcused absences of their status within five (5) business days after their absence, In addition, a letter shall be sent to the Supervisor of the relevant Program Center to advise that Program Center's Parent Committee of their Council Representative's attendance status. This absenteeism policy shall apply to the Council as well as all Council sub-committees.

Representatives and Alternates shall submit a request for an excused absence to the Program's staff no less than seven (7) business days before the scheduled meeting date. Excused absences shall not be included when calculating the number of unexcused absences for any Representative or Alternate. In the event of an unforeseen absence, the Representative shall notify Program staff in a timely manner and shall attempt to notify their Alternate to ensure representation at the Council meeting.

Section D. Vacancies and Replacements. The Parent Committee for each Program Center shall elect a replacement for any Parent Representative vacancy to the Council within thirty (30) days. Vacancies left by Community Representatives shall be filled through a recruitment process performed by the Program Division Manager, or their designee, in order to fill the vacancy within the thirty (30) day period. Replacements for all vacancies left by any Representative shall require approval by the Council.

Section E. Termination and Recall. An Officer and/or Representative's position as either an officer or member of the Council shall automatically terminate in the event that the Officer and/or Representative ceases to either represent his/her original appointment category or Program Center.

Officers and/or Representatives may also be removed from their position on the Council for cause which shall include:

- 1) Any action which adversely impacts the operations or services of Orange County government;
or
- 2) By a recall vote approved by a super-majority (66%) of the voting Council members.

Upon the vote, the position shall be deemed vacant and the council shall immediately move to fill the position as provided herein.

Section F. Resignation. A Representative's term shall terminate upon submission of the Representative's written notification of resignation to the Council.

Section G. Conflict of Interest. No individual shall serve as a Representative to the Council so long as they or any member of their immediate family is a permanent or casual employee of the County.

Any Representative who is hired by the County as a permanent or casual employee shall tender their resignation to the Council prior to accepting any such position. Parents who occasionally substitute as staff may serve on Policy Council, in accordance with the Performance Standards at 45 CFR 1301.3(b)(2), as amended. In accordance with the Orange County Policies and Procedures Manual, all Council members shall comply with the County's Code of Ethics, as amended.

ARTICLE III REPRESENTATIVE FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Section A. Representative Functions. Council Representatives shall directly perform the following functions:

- 1) Serve as a link to the various Parent Committees, Grantee, public and private organizations, and the communities they serve;
- 2) Assist the various Parent Committees in communicating with those parents enrolled in all of the Program options to ensure that they understand their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities, as well as encourage parent participation, in the Program;
- 3) Assist the various Parent Committee in planning, coordinating, and organizing Program activities for other parents, with the assistance of Program staff;
- 4) To ensure that funds set aside from the Program budget are used to support parent activities;
- 5) To assist in the recruitment of parents, community residents, and community organizations for volunteer services;
- 6) To assist in the mobilization of community resources to meet identified needs; and
- 7) To establish and maintain procedures for working with the Grantee to resolve community complaints about the Program.

Section B. Representative Responsibilities. Council Representatives shall work, in partnership with key Program management staff and the Grantee to develop, review, and approve or disapprove policies and procedures that conform to the Head Start Act, codified at 45 U.S.C. §9801 *et. seq.* and the Head Start Performance Standards, as promulgated in 45 CFR 1301 *et. seq.*, both as may be amended from time to time.

ARTICLE IV
COUNCIL MEMBER ORIENTATION AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Section A. Orientation. Orientation for all Council members shall be provided and shall include an overview of the Program, as well as training in leadership development, team building, and the roles and responsibilities of the Council.

Section B. Training. Council members shall be provided with training which shall commence at the beginning of each fiscal year and shall continue throughout the year. A minimum of two (2) training sessions shall be offered during each Program year. Training sessions shall include (i) Program governance; (ii) Performance Standards, By-Laws, and Standard Operating Procedures; (iii) Public Records and Florida Sunshine law; and (iv) the budget process. Council members shall attend no less than two training sessions during each fiscal year. Such training shall be mandatory in order to serve as a member of the Council. Further training sessions shall be made available to all Council members as may be deemed necessary to enable them to carry out the Program governance responsibilities effectively.

ARTICLE V
COUNCIL MEMBER REIMBURSEMENT

Section A. Purpose. To ensure that all Council members are able to fully participate in their Council responsibilities, the Grantee shall provide the reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by low income Council members in connection with the Program. Procedures for reimbursement shall be governed by the Grantee, as set forth in the Program Policies and Procedures and in accordance with the Performance Standards.

Section B. Out-of-Town Travel. Council members may receive reimbursement for certain transportation expenses for out-of-town travel as it may relate to official appointments. Eligible transportation shall be the least expensive and the most convenient means of transportation available, which shall include public transportation. Should public transportation not be available, taxi or private vehicle may be considered. Reimbursement rates to Council members using private vehicles shall not exceed Orange County's approved rate. In addition to travel, allowances and reimbursement may be provided to Council members for lodging and other per diem expenses, as approved by the Grantee.

In the event child care services are required and not otherwise made available by the Program, child care reimbursement may be provided at the current rate established by Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc.

Section C. Local Expenses. The Grantee may provide allowances and reimbursement for travel and child care incurred by Council members as they relate to the Council members' attendance at the

Council meetings or training. Child care expenses shall only be considered if such services are not otherwise provided for by the Program. All allowances or reimbursements require Grantee approval and must be in accordance with the Grantee's Policies and Procedures and the Performance Standards.

**ARTICLE VI
COUNCIL OFFICERS**

Section A. Authority to elect officers.

- 1) The Council shall have the authority to elect Council members to serve as officers ("Council Officers"). Council Officers shall serve in that capacity for a one-year term unless otherwise re-elected during the Council member's next year-term.
- 2) Council officers shall consist of the following: (i) Chairperson; (ii) Vice-Chairperson; (iii) Secretary; (iv) Treasurer; (v) Parliamentarian; and (vi) other elected officers, as may be deemed necessary.

Section B. Duties of Officers. Council Officers shall have those duties described in these By-Laws.

- 1) **Chairperson:** The Chairperson shall be the chief officer of the Council, subject to those limitations imposed by the Council, and shall be responsible for performing the following: (i) preside over all meetings; (ii) restrict debates of committee issues before the Council; (iii) make requests for motions; (iv) determine and make declaration whether a quorum is present; and (v) request special meetings and ensure that notices and explanations for any such special meetings are provided to each Council Representative.
- 2) **Vice-Chairperson:** The Vice-Chairperson shall preside over the Council meetings in the absence or abstention of the Chairperson, as directed by the Chairperson or Council, or in the event office of Chairperson is temporarily vacant. The Vice-Chairperson shall continue to assume the duties and responsibilities of the office of Chairperson until a permanent Chairperson is elected by the Council.
- 3) **Secretary:** The Secretary shall ensure that accurate recordings are made of all meetings of the full Council and Executive Committee. The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that all regular secretarial duties are completed, and may sign official documents, as appropriate. The Secretary shall receive additional support by the Program administrative staff, as needed.

- 4) **Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall work closely with the Program's Fiscal Manager to monitor Program and Council expenditures. The Treasurer shall make regular financial reports to the Council regarding all expenditures and other fiscal business.
- 5) **Parliamentarian:** The Parliamentarian shall be familiar with parliamentary procedures, as stated in the most recent publication of Roberts Rules of Order, and shall ensure that all such rules of order are maintained. The Parliamentarian shall also assist the Chairperson in keeping order during meetings. In the event of a conflict regarding rules of order, the decision of the Parliamentarian shall be final.

Section C. **Removal from office.** Officers elected by the Council shall be subject to removal from office according to the process set forth in Article II, Section E of these By-Laws.

ARTICLE VII PROCEDURES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

Section A. **Regular Meetings.** Regular Council meetings and Council Committee meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of every month, with the exception of the month of October in which training may occur on a Saturday. Notification for regularly scheduled Council and Committee meetings shall be: (i) properly publicly noticed in conformance with Florida's Sunshine Law; and (ii) mailed, or e-mailed when possible, to all Council Representatives at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Section B. **Quorum.** At any Council meeting, one-third (1/3) of the current membership shall constitute a quorum. Alternates shall not count toward quorum if their respective Council Representative is present. For all committee meetings, a quorum shall require at least three (3) active committee members. Active members shall be defined as those members who are eligible, in accordance with Performance Standards, and are presently in good standing with the Council. Regular meetings failing to have a quorum shall be for informational and administrative purposes (i.e., approval of agenda and previous meeting minutes) only. Quorums are constituted after any duly advertised or notified meeting.

Section C. **Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Council may occur on an as needed basis. All special meetings shall be called by the Chairperson, with notice to the public and all Council Representatives.

Section D. **Public Notice.** In accordance with the State of Florida Sunshine Law, all meetings of the Council and its Committees shall be publicly noticed and open to the general public with minutes recorded and an opportunity for public comment provided.

Section E. **Rules for Conduct of Council Meetings.** The most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail when questions of parliamentary procedure arise.

**ARTICLE VIII
COMMITTEES**

Section A. **Committee Appointments.** The Council, through the Chairperson, shall appoint such committees as deemed necessary to properly conduct Council business. Council Representatives shall serve on a maximum of two (2) of the Council Committees at any one time. Alternates shall serve on the same Council Committees as their respective Council Representative and shall only have voting rights in the absence of the Council Representative.

Section B. **Executive Committee.** There shall be an Executive Committee and it shall be composed of the Council Officers and two (2) Council Representatives. When the Council is not in session (does not meet for the month), the Council, by a majority vote, may delegate other responsibilities and authority to the Executive Committee. Such delegation may include the voting authority on behalf of the entire Council during the summer months of June through August. In addition, the Executive Committee may convene as a fact gathering body whose recommendations shall be submitted to the Council for approval at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

**ARTICLE IX
MISCELLANEOUS**

Section A. **Amendments.** Amendments to these by-laws must be approved by the Council by a majority (51%) vote and then ratified by the Grantee to be put into effect.

Section B. **Review.** These by-laws shall be reviewed by staff and the Orange County Attorney's Office every five (5) years to ensure continued compliance with the Head Start Act, codified at 45 U.S.C. §9801 *et. seq.* and the Head Start Performance Standards, as promulgated in 45 CFR 1301 *et. seq.*, both as may be amended from time to time.

Section C. **Conflicts.** If at any point any term of these by-laws come into conflict with the Head Start Act, codified at 45 U.S.C. §9801 *et. seq.* and the Head Start Performance Standards, as promulgated in 45 CFR 1301 *et. seq.*, both as may be amended from time to time, the terms of those regulations will prevail.

Section D. **Supersession.** These by-laws shall supersede any and all previous versions.

[ADOPTION HEREOF ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE]

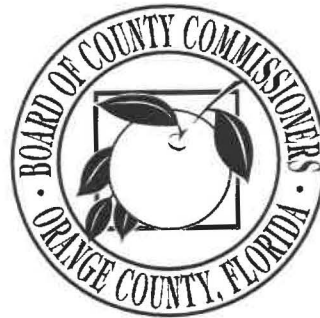
ADOPTED by the Head Start Policy Council on this 21st day of January 2026.

By: Sharon Jacob
Sharon Jacob
Chairperson, Head Start Policy Council

ADOPTED by the Orange County Board of County Commissioners on this 10 day of March 2026.

ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA
By: Orange County Board of County Commissioners

By: Jerry L. Demings
Jerry L. Demings
Orange County Mayor



ATTEST: Phil Diamond, CPA, County Comptroller
As Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners

BY: Jennifer Horn - Kinety