

Bourbon County Preschool Head Start

Governing Body Handbook 2026-2027

Updated for alignment with current Head Start governance requirements

45 CFR §§ 1301.1–1301.6 and Head Start Act § 642

September 2026

ABOUT BOURBON COUNTY PRESCHOOL HEAD START

Head Start is a federal program that was established as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" in 1965. It began as an eight-week summer program and was soon expanded into an eight-month program.

Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program that provides not only education services but also a variety of other services to support children and families. Head Start service areas include education, health and nutrition, mental health, family and community partnerships, and parent and family engagement.

Three principles have guided the Head Start program since its inception in 1965. These principles are:

- **Comprehensive Child Development Services:** To develop and achieve social competence, children and their families need a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach to early childhood development, health services, and family and community partnerships.
- **Parent and Family Engagement:** Parents and families are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the Head Start program, including shared governance and participation in program decisions that respond to their interests and needs. Head Start programs also work closely with parents and other family members to identify and build upon their strengths in order to successfully meet child, family, and personal goals.
- **Community Partnerships and Community-Based Services:** Head Start programs develop partnerships and collaborate with service providers, community organizations, and community leaders to meet children's and families' needs. Services and partnerships reflect the unique characteristics and needs of each community.

The **Bourbon County Preschool Head Start** serves children and families throughout Bourbon County. We serve **152 children and their families** through Head Start. Bourbon County Preschool Head Start is located at **369 Bethlehem Road, Paris, KY 40361**.

We offer a blended program that combines federally funded Head Start, state-funded preschool, and locally funded preschool services. The program currently has **five full-day Head Start classrooms** that operate five days a week and **four half-day classrooms** that blend Head Start, state-funded preschool, and locally funded preschool services and operate four days a week.

With our current classroom design, the program has the capacity to serve **236 students**.

Vision

We believe in our commitment to providing the highest quality family-focused services.

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to develop positive values and to live life fully.

We believe that cooperatively uniting our best efforts will enhance and support the achievement of our common goals.

We believe in fostering creativity and innovation as we develop effective services for children and families.

We believe that being loyal to our beliefs, even in the face of adversity, will ensure that trust exists at all levels.

We believe that acceptance of and respect for the individuality of all students, families, and staff contribute to our continual development.

Mission

To enhance school readiness for all young children in Bourbon County by ensuring quality services that are comprehensive, integrated, and family-focused.

Things to Know

The Bourbon County Board of Education serves as the Head Start governing body and retains the legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start program. The governing body is responsible for active, independent, and informed governance, including oversight of the program's legal and fiscal affairs and compliance with Federal requirements.

The Policy Council is a separate component of the formal Head Start governance structure and is responsible for the direction of the Head Start program, including program design and operation and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives. The governing body, Policy Council, and Head Start management work collaboratively within their respective responsibilities.

Head Start management is responsible for day-to-day program operations and implementation of policies and decisions made through the governing structure. Management does not replace the legal/fiscal authority of the governing body or the direction-setting responsibilities of the Policy Council.

Board of Education / Governing Body Responsibilities

- Maintain legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start program and safeguard Federal funds and assets.
- Exercise active, independent, and informed governance of the program.
- Ensure the program complies with Federal, State, and local requirements applicable to Head Start.
- Fully participate in the development, planning, and evaluation of the Head Start program.
- Ensure effective organizational planning and that sufficient resources are available to implement approved goals and objectives.
- Approve the Head Start grant application and amendments before submission, consistent with Federal requirements and the shared decision-making process.

- Approve major program policies and personnel policies within the governing body's legal responsibilities, including policies related to the Head Start Director and other program personnel.
- Review required financial and program information, including monthly financial statements, program information summaries, enrollment and attendance, audit information, self-assessment results, community assessment information, and other information needed for informed governance.
- Review and act on findings, corrective actions, program improvement plans, and other required monitoring information.
- Ensure an annual independent financial audit is conducted and review the results.
- Establish and maintain standards of conduct, conflict-of-interest procedures, and complaint procedures consistent with Federal requirements.
- Appoint a Board liaison to the Policy Council as a non-voting liaison/support role.
- Address staff grievances and community complaints through the appropriate Board, district, or Head Start process.
- Share decision-making about program direction with the Policy Council within the respective responsibilities established by the Head Start Act and Performance Standards.
- Approve the selection of the Head Start Director consistent with applicable governing body responsibilities and Board personnel policies.

Board of Education Individual Member Responsibilities

- Exercise the duty of care by attending meetings, reviewing pertinent materials, asking informed questions, and carrying out assigned duties responsibly.
- Understand Head Start requirements, Board policies, and how Head Start services are implemented.
- Stay informed about developments that affect the Head Start program.
- Participate in programmatic and fiscal reviews of performance.
- Protect confidential information and comply with conflict-of-interest and standards-of-conduct requirements.
- Use independent judgment and act in the best interest of the program and the children and families served.
- Avoid using Board service for personal financial gain or private benefit.

Key Elements of a High-Functioning Governing Body

Duty of Care

- Participate regularly in governing body meetings and assigned committees.
- Prepare for meetings by reviewing materials in advance.
- Stay informed about the program's key issues, fiscal condition, monitoring results, and progress toward goals.
- Use sound judgment when making decisions affecting the program.
- Take fiduciary responsibilities seriously when making decisions that affect Federal funds and program resources.

Duty of Loyalty

- Act in good faith and in the best interest of the Head Start program and the children and families served.
- Disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest.
- Do not seek personal gain from the organization's business transactions.
- Avoid conflicts between personal interests and the interests of the Head Start program.

Duty of Obedience

- Act consistently with the mission of the program and the legal responsibilities of the governing body.

- Follow applicable Federal, State, local, and Board requirements.
- Disclose financial, business, or personal interests that may affect impartial decision-making.

ABOUT THE POLICY COUNCIL

The Policy Council is a required component of the Head Start governance structure. It is responsible for the direction of the Head Start program, including program design and operation and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives. The Policy Council works with Head Start management and the governing body within their respective responsibilities.

The Policy Council is composed primarily of parents of children currently enrolled in the program, with community representatives. Parent representation must reflect proportionate representation of currently enrolled parents in each program option. The Policy Council may receive support from Board and Head Start staff, but staff do not serve as Policy Council members except as permitted by Federal requirements for parents who occasionally substitute as staff.

Officers

- The Chairperson presides over Policy Council meetings, helps develop agendas, facilitates discussion, and carries out other duties assigned by the bylaws.
- The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.
- The Secretary records and maintains accurate Policy Council minutes and records.

Meetings

- The Policy Council meets at least monthly, except when a different schedule is permitted by applicable requirements and approved through the governance process.
- Meeting times and locations are established with consideration for parent participation and accessibility.
- Members should notify the Director or Chairperson when they cannot attend.
- A quorum is required before the Policy Council conducts official business requiring a vote.
- Policy Council members serve as communication links with parent committees, families, the governing body, community partners, and the program.

Policy Council Responsibilities

Working with Head Start management staff and within the governing structure, the Policy Council approves or disapproves the following:

- Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding before submission.
- Procedures describing how the governing body and Policy Council will implement shared decision-making.
- Procedures for program planning.
- The program's philosophy and goals.
- The composition of the Policy Council and procedures by which members are chosen.
- Criteria for defining recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- The annual self-assessment of the program.
- Program personnel policies and decisions regarding employment of program staff, consistent with the governing body's legal and fiscal responsibilities.
- Policy Council bylaws and election procedures.
- Recommendations regarding delegate agencies and service areas when applicable.

The Policy Council also:

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- Maintains a link with parent committees and assists in communicating parents' rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.
- Plans, coordinates, and organizes parent activities with staff and parent committees.
- Assists in recruiting volunteers and mobilizing community resources.
- Receives and uses program, fiscal, monitoring, enrollment, attendance, school readiness, self-assessment, community assessment, and other required information to fulfill its governance responsibilities.
- Participates in annual self-assessment and program improvement activities.
- Receives required communications and guidance from the Office of Head Start.
- Participates in appropriate training and technical assistance.

Policy Council Roster and Representation

The Policy Council shall have parent representation that is proportionate to the number of currently enrolled parents in each program option. The program will review enrollment by program option when establishing the annual roster and will document how representation was determined.

- Parent representatives: currently enrolled parents elected by the parents of the applicable program option/classroom, consistent with the approved selection procedures.
- Alternate parent representatives: selected through the same parent election/selection procedures and used when the corresponding parent representative is absent.
- Community representatives: selected according to Policy Council procedures and representing the community served or former Head Start parents, as appropriate.
- Board liaison: a non-voting liaison who communicates information between the governing body and Policy Council; the liaison is not a Policy Council voting member.
- Head Start staff may attend and provide information/support but may not serve as Policy Council members except as permitted for parents who occasionally substitute as staff.

Governance Planning Calendar

Month	Primary Governance Activities
July	Annual Report to the Public; review/approve PIR; review required governance information.
August	Policy Council member survey; family orientation; appoint Board liaison; governance leadership/oversight activities; health and safety certification; review school readiness goals; review/revise safety and emergency plan.
September	Seat new Policy Council members; elect Policy Council officers; establish meeting dates; review Governing Body Handbook; complete required governance training as scheduled.
October	Shared governance training; internal dispute/impasse training; review bylaws and impasse procedure; eligibility training.
November	School readiness goals; CLASS and program data review; fall school readiness report.
December	Ongoing governance monitoring and required reports.
January	Independent audit review; community assessment work; self-assessment training/activities.
February	Parent surveys/evaluations; budget and grant application planning; service area plan; ERSEA review; disability plan annual review.

Month	Primary Governance Activities
March	Community assessment; professional development plan; transition plan; grant/budget approval; staff surveys/evaluations; program improvement plan; five-year goals; program options/services; winter school readiness report.
April	Annual curriculum review; registration/enrollment planning.
May	Ongoing governance monitoring, planning, and training as needed.
June	End of fiscal year; spring school readiness report; emergency plan review; governing body performance survey; self-assessment.

BOURBON COUNTY PRESCHOOL HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL BYLAWS

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Bourbon County Preschool Head Start Policy Council.

Article II: Purposes

Section 1

The purpose of the Policy Council is to fulfill the Policy Council responsibilities established by the Head Start Act and 45 CFR Part 1301 and to provide an effective parent and community voice in the direction, design, operation, planning, and evaluation of the Bourbon County Preschool Head Start program.

Section 2

The Policy Council shall approve or disapprove, as applicable, the following activities before implementation or submission:

1. Activities to support active parent involvement in program operations and responsiveness to parent and community needs.
2. Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
3. Funding applications and amendments before submission.
4. Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities.
5. Bylaws for Policy Council operation.
6. Program personnel policies and decisions regarding employment of program staff, consistent with the governing body's legal and fiscal responsibilities.
7. Procedures for electing Policy Council members.
8. Recommendations regarding delegate agencies and service areas, when applicable.
9. Suggestions and recommendations for program improvement and receipt of periodic reports on actions taken.

The Policy Council also performs the following functions directly:

10. Plan, coordinate, and organize agency-wide parent activities with staff and parent committees.
11. Recruit volunteer services and mobilize community resources.

12. Assist in communicating with parents and encouraging full participation.
13. Receive required financial, enrollment, program, monitoring, school readiness, self-assessment, and audit information.
14. Participate in the annual self-assessment and program improvement process.
15. Assist with community assessment and strategic planning activities.
16. Attend appropriate training and technical assistance.

Article III: Membership

Section 1 – Composition and Representation

The Policy Council shall be composed primarily of parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program. Parent representation shall be proportionate to the number of currently enrolled parents in each program option. The program shall document the annual calculation used to determine parent representation.

Policy Council members may not be employees of the Head Start agency, except for parents who occasionally substitute as staff, as permitted by 45 CFR § 1301.3.

All Policy Council members shall comply with applicable Head Start requirements, conflict-of-interest requirements, and standards of conduct. The program may establish additional eligibility requirements when necessary to prevent conflicts of interest or maintain compliance with applicable laws, regulations, or Head Start requirements, provided that such requirements do not conflict with federal Head Start requirements or unnecessarily restrict parent participation.

Section 2 – Categories

The Policy Council shall include the following categories of membership: parent members, alternate members, and community representatives.

- **Parent Members:** Each Preschool Head Start classroom shall be eligible to elect one (1) Parent Member and one (1) Alternate Parent Member to serve on the Policy Council. Parents or legal guardians of children currently enrolled in the respective classroom shall be eligible for election to these positions. If only one parent or legal guardian is willing to serve, that individual may be selected to serve as the Parent Member, and a separate Alternate Parent Member may be selected if another parent or legal guardian is willing to serve. If more than one parent or legal guardian from a classroom wishes to serve as the Parent Member or Alternate Parent Member, the names of the individuals willing to serve shall be presented to the parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in that classroom. The parents or legal guardians of that classroom shall conduct an election to select the Parent Member and Alternate Parent Member. The program shall document the selection process and election results.
- **Alternate Parent Members:** Alternate parent members shall be selected through the same procedures as parent members. An alternate parent member shall vote only when serving in place of the corresponding parent member.
- **Community Representatives:** The parent members of the Policy Council shall approve two (2) Community Representatives before they may be seated as members of the Policy Council. Community Representatives shall represent major agencies, organizations, or other community interests within the community served by the Preschool Head Start program. A former Preschool Head Start parent may also serve as a Community Representative. Community Representatives shall be nominated and elected by a majority vote of the Policy Council members present and voting, provided a quorum is established. Nominations may be made by any Policy Council

member. The election may be conducted by voice vote, show of hands, or written ballot, as determined by the Policy Council. Community Representatives shall serve for the term specified in these Bylaws and may be re-elected if they continue to meet the eligibility requirements.

- **Board Liaison:** The Board liaison shall serve as a non-voting liaison and support person between the governing body and the Policy Council. The Board liaison shall not be considered a voting member of the Policy Council and shall not be counted when determining quorum or voting requirements.

Section 3 – Term of Office

- Policy Council members serve one-year terms.
- Members may be re-elected in accordance with approved procedures.
- No member may serve more than five one-year terms.
- The existing Policy Council will not be dissolved until the successor Policy Council is seated.

Section 4 – Voting Rights

- Each seated voting member has one vote.
- Alternate parent members vote only when the corresponding parent member is absent.
- Voting will occur by members present at a properly convened meeting with a quorum.
- Written absentee votes will not be used for official Policy Council decisions unless specifically permitted by applicable law/regulation and confirmed by the responsible Office of Head Start/Regional Office.

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

A member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Policy Council if the member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without first submitting a legitimate written excuse to the Policy Council Chairperson. The member will be provided appropriate notice of the concern and an opportunity to address the matter before removal is considered.

Section 6 – Resignations

A member may resign by providing written notice to the Chairperson or program Director.

Section 7 – Conflict of Interest / Nepotism

Policy Council members must comply with all applicable conflict-of-interest and standards-of-conduct requirements. A person may not serve as a member of the Policy Council if the member has an immediate family member employed by Bourbon County Schools when such employment creates a conflict of interest.

Section 8 – Duties

- Attend meetings regularly and actively participate.
- Review agendas and information provided before meetings.
- Communicate with the parents and constituencies represented by the member.
- Keep informed of the Policy Council's purpose, plans, and progress.
- Consider available program and fiscal information before voting.
- Respect and support decisions reached through the Policy Council's lawful decision-making process.

Article IV: Officers

Section 1

The Policy Council shall elect a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. Additional officers may be established as needed.

Section 2 – Elections and Term

Officers shall be elected by the seated voting membership after the annual Policy Council has been seated and shall serve one-year terms.

Section 3 – Replacements

An officer who fails to perform the duties of their office may be removed and replaced by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Policy Council. The officer will be provided appropriate notice of the concern and an opportunity to address the matter before a vote is taken.

Section 4 – Chairperson

The Chairperson presides over meetings, works with staff to prepare agendas, recognizes speakers, confirms quorum, explains motions, and facilitates orderly discussion. The Chairperson votes as provided by the Policy Council's adopted parliamentary procedure and applicable bylaws.

Section 5 – Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson shall preside over meetings in the absence of the Chairperson and shall assume the Chairperson's duties when the Chairperson temporarily vacates the position.

In the event of the Chairperson's resignation, death, or permanent inability to serve, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume the office of Chairperson until a permanent Chairperson is elected by the Policy Council.

Section 6 – Secretary

The Secretary records accurate minutes, maintains Policy Council records, and ensures minutes are provided to the program for official recordkeeping.

Article V: Meetings

Section 1 – Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Policy Council will be held monthly.

Section 2 – Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called whenever the Policy Council determines that a meeting is necessary. The Chairperson shall call and provide notice of all special meetings at least three (3) days in advance.

Section 3 – Notices

Written notice and meeting materials will be provided at least five (5) days prior to the date of each meeting.

Section 4 – Quorum

An official quorum of the Policy Council shall consist of three (3) members present, provided that proper notice of the meeting has been given to each member in accordance with these Bylaws.

If a quorum is not present at a scheduled meeting, the members present may discuss informational items and receive reports; however, no official business requiring Policy Council action may be conducted, and no official votes or decisions may be made.

If a quorum is not established, the meeting shall be adjourned. The Chairperson, or designee, shall schedule a new meeting and provide proper notice to all Policy Council members.

Article VI: Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by providing each Policy Council member with a copy of the proposed amendment at least one (1) week prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be considered. The Policy Council may discuss and debate the proposed amendment before taking action. An amendment must be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Policy Council.

Signatures/Approval:

Approving Party	Signature	Date
Superintendent, Bourbon County Schools		
Bourbon County Preschool/Head Start Administrator or Designee	<i>Melissa Hamilton</i>	9/14/26
Chairperson, Policy Council		

Revised September 2026

Relationship Between the Bourbon County Preschool Head Start and the Bourbon County Board of Education

The Bourbon County Board of Education serves as the governing body for the Bourbon County Preschool Head Start program and maintains legal and fiscal responsibility for the program. The Policy Council is responsible for the shared governance responsibilities assigned to it under the Head Start Act and applicable federal Head Start regulations.

The following procedures are established to promote effective communication, collaboration, and shared decision-making between the Bourbon County Board of Education and the Policy Council:

1. Policy Council Reports to the Governing Body

The Policy Council shall meet regularly, generally on a monthly basis, or as needed to fulfill its responsibilities. The Policy Council Chairperson or designated Policy Council representative may provide a report to the Bourbon County Board of Education regarding Policy Council activities, recommendations, program information, and other matters requiring governing body awareness or action.

2. Board Liaison

The Chairperson of the Bourbon County Board of Education, or the Chairperson's designee, shall serve as the liaison between the governing body and the Policy Council. The liaison shall support communication and collaboration between the two governance bodies and may attend Policy Council meetings as a non-voting liaison.

3. Shared Governance

The governing body and Policy Council shall work collaboratively in carrying out their respective responsibilities under the Head Start Act and applicable federal regulations. Neither body shall assume responsibilities assigned to the other, and Head Start management shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and operation of the program.

4. Information Sharing

The Head Start program shall provide the governing body and Policy Council with timely and

accurate information necessary for each body to fulfill its governance responsibilities. Information may include program planning and goals, financial information, enrollment and attendance, school readiness, monitoring and self-assessment results, community assessment information, program improvement activities, and other information required for informed decision-making.

5. Recommendations and Required Action

When the Policy Council makes a recommendation or takes action on a matter requiring governing body review, approval, or action, the recommendation shall be communicated to the governing body through established procedures. The governing body shall consider and respond to the matter in accordance with applicable Head Start requirements and its legal and fiscal responsibilities.

INTERNAL DISPUTE / IMPASSE PROCEDURE

Policy

It is the policy of Bourbon County Preschool Head Start to resolve disagreements between the governing body and Policy Council fairly, promptly, and in accordance with 45 CFR §1301.6.

The governing body and Policy Council shall jointly establish and follow written procedures for resolving internal disputes and impasses. The procedures are intended to provide an orderly process for addressing disagreements while preserving the separate legal, fiscal, and governance responsibilities of the governing body, Policy Council, and Head Start management.

Informal Grievance Procedure

Before initiating the formal impasse process, the parties shall make reasonable efforts to resolve the concern through the program's informal grievance procedure.

1. Written Grievance

A grievance concerning a disagreement between the Policy Council and the governing body may be submitted in writing by the Policy Council Chairperson or the Head Start Program Director. The written grievance shall clearly identify the issue, the action or decision being requested, and the reason for the grievance.

2. Forwarding to the Governing Body

When a written grievance is submitted through the Policy Council, the Policy Council shall forward the written grievance to the Bourbon County Board of Education within **three (3) working days** of receiving or approving the grievance.

3. Board Review

The governing body shall review the written grievance and consider the matter within its legal and fiscal responsibilities. The governing body may request additional information or clarification from the Policy Council or Head Start management as necessary.

4. Attempt to Resolve Informally

The Policy Council and governing body shall make a good-faith effort to resolve the concern

through communication, discussion, clarification of responsibilities, and, when appropriate, compromise or consensus.

5. Response

The governing body shall provide a response to the written grievance within a reasonable timeframe established through the program's governance procedures. The response shall communicate the Board's decision or the steps that will be taken to address the concern.

Formal Impasse Procedure

If the disagreement cannot be resolved through the informal grievance procedure, the matter may proceed to the formal impasse process required by 45 CFR §1301.6.

1. Identify the Issue

Each party shall clearly identify the issue, the decision or action being requested, and the authority, requirement, policy, or other basis supporting its position.

2. Good-Faith Consideration

Each party shall consider the other party's position and proposal in good faith and shall make reasonable efforts to understand and address the concerns raised.

3. Written Explanation

If a proposal is not accepted, the party declining the proposal shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for nonacceptance.

4. Established Process and Timeline

The parties shall follow the established decision-making process and timeline for attempting to resolve the dispute.

5. Discussion, Compromise, and Consensus

The parties shall first seek resolution through discussion, compromise, and consensus.

6. Mediation

If the dispute remains unresolved, the parties shall use a mutually agreeable mediator in accordance with applicable federal requirements.

7. Further Dispute Resolution

If mediation does not resolve the dispute, the parties shall proceed according to the remaining requirements and procedures established under 45 CFR §1301.6.

8. Compliance With Federal Requirements

No party may use the impasse process to avoid compliance with Federal law, the Head Start Act, the Head Start Program Performance Standards, or a lawful decision of an authority with jurisdiction.

9. Documentation

The program shall maintain appropriate documentation of the grievance or dispute, the steps taken to resolve the matter, and the final outcome.

Nothing in this procedure shall limit or replace any rights, responsibilities, or procedures required by the Head Start Act, 45 CFR Part 1301, other applicable Federal regulations, or the legal responsibilities of the Bourbon County Board of Education.

This section replaces references contained in older versions of this handbook to 45 CFR §1304.50(h), Appendix A (1996), and other superseded Head Start governance requirements. The current Federal governance requirements are contained in 45 CFR Part 1301.

Important Head Start Governance Documents

- Head Start Act, including Section 642 (42 U.S.C. § 9837).
- Head Start Program Performance Standards, 45 CFR Part 1301 – Program Governance.
- 45 CFR 1301.1 – Purpose.
- 45 CFR 1301.2 – Governing Body.
- 45 CFR 1301.3 – Policy Council and Policy Committee.
- 45 CFR 1301.4 – Parent Committees.
- 45 CFR 1301.5 – Training.
- 45 CFR 1301.6 – Impasse procedures.
- Current Office of Head Start Information Memoranda, Program Instructions, and other official guidance.
- Federal monitoring protocols and monitoring reports.
- Current grant application, budget, program plans, self-assessment, community assessment, school readiness goals, and program improvement plans.
- Annual financial audit and required fiscal reports.
- Annual Report to the Public and Program Information Report (PIR).

All references in this handbook should be reviewed periodically against the current Head Start Act, HSPPS, and official Office of Head Start guidance. When a Federal requirement changes, the current Federal requirement controls until the handbook is formally updated.

BOURBON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY

Administration – Head Start Shared Governance

The Bourbon County Board of Education is the grantee agency and governing body for the Bourbon County Preschool Head Start Program. The Board retains legal and fiscal responsibility and provides active, independent, and informed governance and oversight.

The Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the Head Start program, including program design and operation and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives. The Policy Council is composed primarily of parents of currently enrolled children and includes community representatives as required.

Head Start management, including the program administrator/director, supervisors, and staff, is responsible for day-to-day operational management and implementation. Management supports the governing body and Policy Council by providing accurate, timely information needed for informed decision-making.

In cases where a necessary course of action is not specifically addressed by this handbook or local policy, the program will first identify the applicable Federal requirement, Board policy, grant condition, or other controlling authority. The governing body and Policy Council will act within their respective responsibilities and will not use a general policy clause to displace a responsibility assigned by Federal law or regulation.

Shared Decision-Making

The governing body and Policy Council share responsibility for Head Start governance within their distinct Federal roles. Shared decision-making means that each body receives accurate, timely information; has

meaningful opportunity to review and act on matters assigned to it; considers the other body's recommendations when required; and documents decisions.

Grant Approval and Budget

- Management prepares and presents required grant and budget information.
- The Policy Council reviews and acts on funding applications, amendments, and budget planning responsibilities assigned to it.
- The governing body reviews and approves the grant application and amendments within its legal and fiscal authority before submission.
- The process must provide sufficient time for both bodies to review information and exercise their respective responsibilities.
- Monthly financial information will be provided to both governance bodies, including required financial statements and credit card expenditures.

Management and Operations

After required approvals are obtained, management is responsible for implementing the approved program and operating procedures. The governing body and Policy Council monitor program performance and use required data to inform governance decisions; they do not manage individual day-to-day staff assignments or routine operations unless a specific legal or Board responsibility requires action.

Shared Decision-Making Responsibility

Parent Committee

- Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services.
- Plan, conduct, and participate in informal and formal parent and staff activities.
- Communicate parent perspectives to the Policy Council.

Policy Council

- Act on funding applications and amendments before submission.
- Approve or disapprove shared decision-making procedures.
- Approve or disapprove program planning procedures, philosophy, goals, and objectives.
- Approve or disapprove Policy Council composition and election/selection procedures.
- Approve or disapprove recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- Approve or disapprove the annual self-assessment.
- Approve or disapprove applicable personnel policies and employment decisions within its Federal role.
- Approve bylaws and election procedures.
- Provide direction regarding program design, operation, and short- and long-term planning.
- Use program data, school readiness information, monitoring results, community assessment information, and other required information to carry out governance responsibilities.

Governing Body

- Retains legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start program.
- Safeguards Federal funds and assets and maintains appropriate internal controls.
- Approves grant applications and amendments before submission.
- Approves major policies and personnel policies within its legal authority.
- Reviews the annual audit, financial information, monitoring results, self-assessment, program improvement plans, and other required reports.
- Ensures compliance with Federal requirements and applicable Board policies.

- Appoints a non-voting liaison to the Policy Council.
- Participates actively in program planning, evaluation, and oversight.

Head Start Management

- Implements the approved program and policies.
- Manages day-to-day operations and supervises staff.
- Provides accurate and timely information to the governing body and Policy Council.
- Facilitates shared decision-making without delegating Federal governance responsibilities to staff.
- Tracks action items and communicates follow-up to both governance bodies.

Monitoring and Assessment

The Policy Council and governing body will participate in the annual self-assessment and other governance monitoring activities appropriate to their responsibilities.

Both governance bodies will receive and use relevant information from ongoing monitoring, school readiness data, community assessment, annual self-assessment, Federal monitoring, financial audits, enrollment and attendance, and other required program data to make informed decisions.

Program improvement plans and revisions to service plans will be presented to the appropriate governance bodies for review and approval when required.

Policy Council Levels of Responsibility

General Responsibility

The Policy Council maintains an active governance partnership with the Head Start program and exercises the responsibilities assigned to it by the Head Start Act and 45 CFR Part 1301.

Planning

- Program planning procedures.
- Program goals and objectives.
- Recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- Funding applications and amendments before submission.
- Annual self-assessment and program improvement.

General Procedures

- Composition and recruitment/selection of Policy Council members.
- Shared decision-making procedures.
- Internal dispute/impasse procedures.

Human Resources

Policy Council responsibilities related to personnel include review and approval/disapproval of applicable personnel policies and employment decisions within the Policy Council's Federal role. These responsibilities do not eliminate the governing body's legal and fiscal responsibilities or the authority of the governing body under applicable Board policy.

Consultation

The Policy Council must be given appropriate opportunities to provide input on matters for which consultation is required. The program will document consultation and how recommendations were considered.

Day-to-Day Operations

Policy Council members may provide information and recommendations regarding program operations, but management remains responsible for day-to-day implementation and supervision.

Shared Governance Policy and Procedures

The Bourbon County Board of Education will appoint a Board member to serve as a non-voting liaison to the Head Start Policy Council. The liaison will:

- Attend Policy Council meetings when appropriate.
- Provide information from the governing body to the Policy Council.
- Communicate Policy Council information to the governing body.
- Support communication between the Policy Council and governing body.
- Participate in self-assessment and review processes as appropriate.
- Avoid voting or serving as a Policy Council member.

Governance Action Plan

Action	Outcome	Responsible	Time Frame	Documentation
Board appoints a Policy Council liaison.	Information is communicated between the governing body and Policy Council.	Bourbon County Board of Education	Annually	Board minutes
All governing body and Policy Council members receive this handbook.	Members understand roles and responsibilities.	Head Start Administrator/Director	Annually	Signed receipt/documentation
Governance bodies receive required training.	Members understand HSPPS, governance roles, shared decision-making, conflicts, and eligibility requirements.	Head Start Administrator/Director	Annually and as needed	Training sign-in/records
Required Head Start information is shared with both governance bodies.	Governance is active, independent, and informed.	Director/Management Team	Monthly/as required	Agendas, packets, minutes
OHS Information Memoranda and Program Instructions are shared.	Governance bodies remain informed of Federal guidance.	Director/Designee	As released	Meeting agendas/minutes

Required Information for Active, Independent, and Informed Governance

The program will provide information required by the Head Start Act and HSPPS to the governing body and Policy Council. Monthly information will include, as applicable:

- Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures.
- Program information summaries.
- Enrollment and attendance information.
- Meals and snacks information.
- Health and mental health services information.
- Family and community partnership information.
- Education and early childhood development information.
- Volunteer and parent participation information.
- Monitoring and school readiness information.
- Other information required by the Head Start Act, HSPPS, grant conditions, or Office of Head Start guidance.

Bourbon County Preschool Head Start Reports and Plans

Report/Plan	Time Frame	Governance Bodies	Documentation
Program Information Report (PIR)	July	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved PIR/meeting records
Annual Report to the Public	July	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved annual report
School Readiness Information	Three times annually / program schedule	Policy Council and Governing Body	Reports and minutes
Parent/Staff Evaluation Information	February	Policy Council and Governing Body	Evaluation summary
Community Assessment	March / as updated	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved assessment
Professional Development Plan	March/program schedule	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved plan
Transition Plan	March/program schedule	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved plan
ERSEA Plan/Procedures	March / annual review	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved plan/procedures
Program Improvement Plan	March / as needed	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved PIP
Grant/Budget	March/grant cycle	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved grant/budget
Self-Assessment	March / annual schedule	Policy Council and Governing Body	Approved self-assessment

Office of Head Start Guidance

Office of Head Start Information Memoranda, Program Instructions, and other official guidance will be shared with the Policy Council and governing body when relevant to program governance, operations, compliance, or required decision-making.

Regulatory Reference Note

This handbook was revised to replace obsolete governance references, including references to former 45 CFR 1304.50 governance provisions and the 1996 Appendix A framework. Current governance provisions are located in 45 CFR Part 1301, including §§ 1301.1–1301.6. The Head Start Act, including § 642, also establishes governing body and Policy Council responsibilities.

If Federal regulations, the Head Start Act, grant conditions, or official Office of Head Start guidance conflict with this handbook, the controlling Federal requirement applies and this handbook must be updated.

Revision Summary – 2026

- Clarified that the Board of Education is the governing body with legal and fiscal responsibility, while the Policy Council has responsibility for the direction of the Head Start program.
- Removed language that could make the Policy Council appear to be merely advisory to the Board.
- Revised Policy Council representation to require proportionate representation by program option rather than fixed minimums alone.
- Removed the ability to conduct official Policy Council business without a quorum.
- Removed routine written absentee voting from the bylaws unless specifically authorized by applicable requirements.
- Updated the internal dispute/impasse process to reflect 45 CFR 1301.6.
- Replaced obsolete 1304.50/1996 Appendix A governance citations with current 45 CFR Part 1301 references.
- Clarified the non-voting Board liaison and the role of Head Start staff so staff are not treated as Policy Council members.
- Added required governance information, including monthly financial statements and credit card expenditures.
- Added the requirement that governing body and Policy Council members use monitoring, school readiness, self-assessment, community assessment, and other required data for informed governance.
- Added language addressing support for low-income parents to participate fully in Policy Council activities.
- Clarified the distinction between governance responsibilities and Head Start management's day-to-day operational responsibilities.

