



**AUSTIN**  
Independent School District

**Head Start Policy Council**  
**BYLAWS**

## Article I: Authority

*Section One. Establishment.* Under provisions of district policy BDF (LOCAL) and Part 1301 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Head Start Policy Council (HSPC) is established by the Superintendent and serves at the will of the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall designate an appropriate staff member to serve as the Head Start Policy Council coordinator.

*Section Two. Limitations.* The HSPC shall serve strictly as an advisory body at the will of the Superintendent. The HSPC shall have no power to expend public funds, enter into contracts, or otherwise place obligation or liability upon the district.

*Section Three. Bylaws.* Under the provisions of district policy BDF(LOCAL), it shall be the responsibility of the coordinator of district advisory bodies, in consultation with the committee coordinator, to establish and amend the bylaws, as needed.

## Article II: Charge

*Section One. Purpose.* The purpose of the HSPC is to provide direction to the district's Head Start program, including program design and operation, and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives, taking into account community needs.

*Section Two. Responsibility or Goals.* To accomplish its purpose, the HSPC shall have the following responsibilities as outlined in the Head Start Act:

- 1) Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Head Start agency is responsive to community and parent needs.
- 2) Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities.
- 3) Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding for programs under this subchapter, prior to submission of applications described in this clause.
- 4) Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in policy council activities.
- 5) Bylaws for the operation of the policy council.
- 6) Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, consistent with Board policy, including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff.
- 7) Developing procedures for how members of the policy council of the Head Start agency will be elected.
- 8) Recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies.

## Article III: Meetings

*Section One. Regular Meetings.* The HSPC shall conduct regular meetings, and the committee coordinator shall determine the regular meeting schedule. The regular meeting schedule shall be placed on the HSPC website. The regular meeting schedule may be revised as necessary by the committee coordinator. If necessary, the committee coordinator may cancel a regular meeting with good cause (i.e., inclement weather or other adverse conditions), and determine if the meeting should be rescheduled. Members shall be given the reason for meeting cancellations, and be given sufficient notice of canceled or rescheduled meetings.

*Section Two. Subcommittees.* The committee coordinator will request approval from the Chief Officer of Intergovernmental Relations & Board Services and the district advisory body coordinator to establish a subcommittee and shall provide a description of the purpose and the desired outcome of the requested subcommittee. Subcommittees may not constitute a quorum of the HSPC committee. Subcommittee shall meet at the discretion of the committee coordinator.

*Section Three. Open Meetings.* Regular and other plenary meetings of the HSPC shall be open to the public and conducted in accordance with the district standard citizen's communications and visitor guidelines.

*Section Four. Quorum.* For regular and other plenary meetings of the HSPC, a quorum shall be the majority of current membership. Regular and other plenary meetings may be held without a quorum for purposes of presentations or discussions; however, no actions or voting may take place without a quorum.

*Section Five. Attendance.* Member attendance shall be monitored by the committee coordinator, who shall work with members to try and resolve any attendance problems. More than three unexcused absences within a one-year period may result in dismissal by the committee coordinator. Excused absences include, but are not limited to, personal or family illness, emergency situations, jury or military duty, or mandatory employment duty. It shall be the responsibility of members to report excused absences to the committee coordinator who shall record excused absences. In cases of numerous excused absences or long-term absences, the committee coordinator shall consider the factors in each individual case and determine whether continued service on the HSPC is practicable.

*Section Six. Virtual Attendance.* Members may participate in meetings virtually through various means, to the extent they are readily available to the committee coordinator. However, members shall not participate virtually on a recurring basis.

*Section Seven. Decision-Making.* Members shall attempt to reach decisions by consensus. However, if a clear consensus cannot be obtained, decisions shall be reached by a majority vote. Each member shall be entitled to one vote per motion. Members in virtual attendance may vote, but proxy voting is not allowed. In accordance with open meetings procedures, any voting must be done openly during meetings, normally by a show of hands (zoom poll or google doc)— any non-open voting methods, such as paper ballots or email, are not allowed.

*Section Eight. Agendas.* Agendas shall be prepared for all regular meetings and posted on the HSPC website at least 72 hours in advance of meetings. Agenda items shall be determined by the committee coordinator and co-chairs in consultation with the voting committee members.

*Section Nine. Minutes.* Minutes shall be kept for all regular meetings and other plenary meetings. Minutes may be kept for subcommittees at the direction of the committee coordinator. Minutes are records of meeting highlights, and are not intended to provide a high level of detail. At a minimum, minutes shall include: attendance of members, staff and visitors; the time the meeting was called to order and adjourned; the outcome of any votes or other actions; and a brief synopsis of the meeting proceedings. Minutes for regular meetings and other plenary meetings shall be approved by the HPSC and posted on the HSPC website.

#### Article IV: Membership

*Section One. Membership Criteria.* Members are selected by in accordance with District Policy BDF (LOCAL) and Part 1301 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Membership of the HSPC will strive to reflect the geographic, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, and economic diversity of the district. The committee shall be comprised of 51% parent members and 49% community members using the following parameters:

- One parent from each Head Start campus (8)
- One alternate parent from each Head Start campus (8)
- 2-3 community members from agencies engaged in Early Childhood Work

*Section Two. Restrictions.* The following restrictions apply to the HSPC membership

- *Parent* means a Head Start child's mother or father, other family member who is a primary caregiver, foster parent or authorized caregiver, guardian or the person with whom the child has been placed for purposes of adoption pending a final adoption decree.
- A district employee may not count as a parent member;
- Any business members must live or work within the district;
- Any community members must live or work within the district; and
- Close relatives may not serve on the HSPC at the same time.

*Section Three. Term of Service.* In accordance with BDF (LOCAL) and Part 1301 of the Code of Federal Regulations, members shall serve a one-year term. Members may serve one additional term, but renewed membership is not automatic. Members seeking a second term shall submit a standard application to the district advisory bodies coordinator.

*Section Four. Member Selection.* The Chief Officer of Intergovernmental Relations & Board Services, committee coordinator, committee chair and district advisory body coordinator shall be responsible for recommending individuals to the Superintendent for service on the HSPC, based on applications received, referrals, and recruitment. The district's standard membership selection considerations shall be applied.

*Section Five. Mid-Term Vacancies.* If a member resigns or is dismissed, the committee coordinator shall fill the position if a year or more remains in the term; if less than a year remains in the term, the position may be left vacant for the remainder of the term at the discretion of committee coordinator.

*Section Six. Change in Member Status.* If the status of a member changes, the committee coordinator may allow the member to fill an appropriate vacancy. If no appropriate vacancy exists, the coordinator may allow the member to continue to serve in the current position for a period of up to one year.

*Section Seven. Continued Operation.* Any vacated terms left unfilled under Sections Five and Six of this Article shall not cause the HSPC to discontinue its operations.

*Section Eight. Conflict of Interest.* Conflicts of interest shall include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Having a pecuniary interest in any discussion or recommendations of the committee or subcommittee; and
- Involvement in any litigation or procedural challenges against the district.

Any cases or possible cases of conflict of interest shall be referred to the coordinator of district advisory bodies for appropriate action. If a member is determined to have a conflict of interest, appropriate action may include:

- Recusal from a particular agenda item or items;
- Recusal from a particular meeting or meetings; and
- Removal from the committee or subcommittee.

*Section Nine. Code of Conduct.* The district welcomes freedom of expression and debate. However, HSPC members, as well as subcommittee members, shall conduct themselves, in meetings and at all other times, with courtesy and respect to fellow members, district parents and students, district staff and trustees, and members of other district advisory committees. In meetings, members must be recognized by the co-chairs before speaking, and otherwise respect the order maintained by the co-chairs. Unless otherwise authorized by the HSPC, members shall not speak for the HSPC, and, unless otherwise authorized by the administration, members shall not speak for the district. Members, by their comments and/or actions, shall not reflect badly on the HSPC or the district. Violation of this code of conduct may result in reprimand or dismissal by the coordinator of district advisory bodies.

*Section Ten. Undue Advantage.* HSPC members shall not use their position to gain or attempt to gain an undue advantage for themselves or anyone else. Violation of this requirement may result in dismissal by the coordinator of district advisory bodies. (As examples, it would be considered an undue advantage if a person included his or her membership in the HSPC in attempting a student transfer or for student entry into a particular program; it would be considered an undue advantage to request information that would ordinarily require a formal process to acquire; however, it would not be considered an undue advantage to include HSPC membership on his or her resume.

#### Article V: Roles on HSPC: Chair and Secretary

*Section One. Eligibility.* To be eligible to serve as a chair or secretary, a member must have attended annual HSPC training and be a current member of the HSPC.

*Section Two. Terms of Service.* HSPC chair or secretary shall serve one-year terms. Elections shall normally be held during the first regular meeting of the HSPC year and members will serve from October to October.

*Section Three. Mid-Term Vacancies.* If a vacancy occurs after the chair or secretary term has commenced, the HSPC shall elect a new chair or secretary to serve for the remainder of the term.

*Section Four. Responsibilities.*

The responsibilities of the chair shall include:

1. Consulting with the committee coordinator in the development of HSPC agendas. The chair and voting committee members shall have the final decision on the agendas, with the understanding that some proposed agenda items may require coordination with the committee coordinator district departments and personnel, who may not be available to the HSPC.
2. Presiding at meetings of HPSC, following basic meeting procedures provided by the coordinator of district advisory bodies.

The responsibilities of the secretary shall include:

1. Take meeting minutes during the meeting
2. Preparing formal meeting minutes for approval by HSPC

*Section Five. Removal of Chair or Secretary.* Elected chair and secretary serve at the will of the HSPC. A two-thirds majority of the HSPC may at any time remove a chair and/or secretary. Such action in itself does not equate to dismissal of the member, from the HSPC.

Article VI: Committee Coordinator

*Section One. Role of the Coordinator.* The committee coordinator shall provide ongoing support to the HSPC. Responsibilities of the committee coordinator shall include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that adequate arrangements are made for venues for regular and other plenary meetings, as well as any subcommittee meetings;
- Providing members and applicable staff with agendas and background materials sufficiently in advance of regular and other meetings;
- Serving as custodian of HSPC records, including the status of member terms;
- Keeping minutes of regular and other plenary meeting;
- Ensuring that agendas and approved minutes for regular and other plenary meetings are posted in a timely manner;
- Serving as a point of contact and information for stakeholders, and conveying any pertinent information to the HSPC;
- Ensuring that new members are sufficiently oriented to service on the HSPC; and
- Consulting with the coordinator of district advisory bodies as needed.

*Section Two. Technical and Specialized Support.* The committee coordinator shall ensure that appropriate technical and specialized support, either internal or external to the district, are available to the HSPC as needed.

Article VII: Sunset Review

*Section One. Review of the Committee.* Superintendent appointed-advisory committees that are not required by law shall sunset either on a specific date or upon the conclusion of an action or occurrence as set out in the committee's bylaws, unless specifically reauthorized by the Superintendent. The district advisory bodies coordinator shall consult with the committee coordinator to request a position statement or recommendation as to the reason why the committee shall continue.

## Article VII: Shared Governance Procedures

*Section One. Mutual Communication.* Any formal action of the HSPC shall be communicated in a timely manner to the Board, through the Superintendent. Likewise, any formal action of the Board related to the district's Head Start program shall be communicated in a timely manner to the HSPC, through the Superintendent.

*Section Two. Impasse Procedures.* Any disagreement or dispute between the formal actions of the HSPC and those of the Board must also be part of mutual communication. If a disagreement or dispute cannot be resolved within a reasonable timeframe through mutual communication, the Coordinator of District Advisory Bodies shall be informed, who will in a timely manner convene an impasse resolution committee to consist of the HSPC Co-Chairs and Board President and Vice-President.

*Section Three. Arbitration.* If the impasse resolution committee cannot reach a mutually acceptable resolution, the involved parties must select a mutually agreeable third-party arbitrator, who shall reach a decision in a timely manner which shall be final.