

MERCER COUNTY HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL HANDBOOK

Our Core Values: Mercer County Head Start has established core values that lead and exemplify the work that we endeavor to complete in every aspect of our mission and vision. These core values include Trust, Integrity, Excellence.

Our Mission: Mercer County Head Start invests in individualized, comprehensive services which champion school ready children and self-sufficient families.

Our Vision: To establish Mercer County Head Start as the foremost leader in early childhood services.

It is our fervent belief that by living our core values throughout our mission, we will accomplish our vision. Children, families, community members, stakeholders, and peers will benefit from the exemplary work accomplished.

Mercer County Head Start staff will hold true to our core values, mission, and vision displaying the compassion needed to combat poverty, inequity, and social injustice; forever impacting our local, state, and national communities

1301.1 Purpose:

Celina City Schools Board of Education serves as the governing body for Mercer County Head Start program. Mercer County Head Start (herein known as MCHS) will establish a policy council to share in program governance with the Celina City Schools Board of Education. Mercer County Head Start has no delegate agencies that require a policy committee. All parents of enrolled children are members of the grantee's parent committee. The Policy Council and Board of Education share joint responsibility to administer and provide oversight to Mercer County Head Start program. The Executive Director of the Mercer County Head Start program provides information to the Policy Council to ensure accurate and responsible decision making.

The Head Start program is a comprehensive early childhood education program for low-income children and families that instills confidence, strengthens abilities, and encourages creativity. Children are provided with an environment, experience, and services, which meet their individual needs in the areas of intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth. It is recognized that parents are the primary educators of their children and encourage their involvement in many ways. Nationally the program began in 1965 during the "war on poverty" as a six-week summer program to assist "disadvantaged" children in preparing for school.

Parents have a lead role in decision-making within the organization. Mercer County Head Start's Policy Council members help plan and develop the goals of the program, approve various policies, approve hiring and firing decisions, and approve budget and work plans.

Beyond decision-making, parent participation takes place in many other ways. Parents volunteer in the classroom, assist with field trips, organize parent activity events, provide input on curriculum, and act as liaisons to community groups. Head Start offers positive social experiences for both parents and children. The Head Start families have played a vital role in making our program a success.

There is a set of Head Start core values that helped build the foundation of Head Start's success.

- Establish a supportive learning environment for children, parents, and staff, in which the process of enhancing awareness, refining skills, and increasing understanding are valued and promoted.
- Recognize that the members of the Head Start community: children, families, and staff have roots in many cultures. Head Start families and staff, working together as a team, can effectively promote respectful, sensitive, and proactive approaches to diverse issues.

- Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies, and staff, and when ideas and opinions of families are heard and respected.
- Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families, and staff which assure that basic health needs are met, encourages practices that prevent future illnesses and injuries and promotes positive, culturally relevant health behaviors that enhance lifelong well-being.
- Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual's development, including social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.
- Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual while at the same time, a sense of belonging in the group is reinforced.
- Foster relationships with the larger community so that families and staff are respected and served by a network of community agencies in partnership with one another.
- Develop a continuum of care, education, and services that provide stable, uninterrupted support to families and children during and after their Head Start experience.

1301.2 Governing Body

Celina City Schools Board of Education is an elected board by the public. Section 642 (c)(1)(D) applies to the Celina City Schools Board of Education.

All members of the governing body sign a statement outlining conflict of interest :(C) CONFLICT OF

INTEREST- Members of the governing body shall:

- i) not have a financial conflict of interest with the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency).
- ii) not receive compensation for serving on the governing body or for providing services to the Head Start agency.
- iii) not be employed, nor shall members of their immediate family be employed, by the Head Start agency (including any delegate agency); and
- iv) operate as an entity independent of staff employed by the Head Start agency.

The governing body is responsible for the safeguarding of federal funds.

The governing body participates in the development, planning, and oversight of the Mercer County Head Start program in collaboration with the Executive Director and management team.

The governing body determines the service area of the program utilizing data gleaned from the community needs assessment.

The governing body determines the procedures and criteria for all aspects of ERSEA following guidance provided by the community needs assessment and internal data from the program.

The governing body reviews all applications submitted for funding opportunities.

The Executive Director provides a monthly report to the governing board satisfying all requirements in subsection (d)(2).

The Executive Director provides information and guidance to the governing board for all major policies: annual self-assessment, fiscal audit, grant applications, corrective actions, personnel policies, procedure for policy council selection, fiscal policies, fiscal management, all major fiscal expenditures, annual approval of the operating budget, and selection of the auditor. The board must provide approval for all aforementioned items.

Celina City Schools Board of Education has established policies for the hiring, evaluation, compensation, and termination of administrative level employees. Included in these policies are areas addressing monitoring of any possible audit findings, conflict of interest, and complaints against employees. Celina City Schools Board of Education contracts with attorneys to serve in the event arbitration or mediation would need to be convened.

- Celina City Schools Board of Education may develop an advisory committee for the purpose of effective governance and improvements to the program.

- Celina City Schools Board of Education structure and protocol provide the ability to ensure that all requirements of the entity's duties are completed when committees are developed.

- Celina City Schools Board of Education communicates directly with the regional office if such committees are developed.

Policy Council Ground Rules

1. The Chair runs the meeting.
2. There must be quorum (51% of attendance) for business to be conducted.
3. Show up on time and read your packet before the meeting.
4. Raise your hand to be acknowledged by the Chair.
5. Speak loud enough so others can hear you.
6. Avoid side talking.
7. Debate the issue, not the person.
8. Encourage others to speak.
9. Be respectful and listen to others.
10. Summarize or restate a point. Ask for clarification.
11. Consider other perspectives.
12. Be creative in problem solving.

Member Responsibilities

1. Inform (R.S.V.P. the office staff) if you cannot attend the monthly meeting.
2. Share information from the Policy Council with the other parents in your classroom.
3. Represent Mercer County Head Start in a professional manner.
4. If you resign inform the Executive Director in writing to allow for a replacement in a timely fashion.

Expectations around Teamwork

1. Remember, communication will improve as we learn about each other.
2. Expertise of many will be used.
3. Problems will be resolved - this is a business.
4. A unified group will develop.
5. Ownership and personal accomplishments will be felt.

Qualifications

1. Must be a parent of a currently enrolled child in Mercer County Head Start and be elected by the parent committee.
2. A representative of the community that has an interest in low-income families, can contribute to the program, and has been approved by Policy Council.

Tasks

1. Attend New Policy Council Orientation - offered in the fall.
2. Attend Policy Council meetings: will be held monthly with the time and day to be decided within the first couple of meetings. Policy Council parents, who attend the meeting, will be provided \$15 stipend to help cover cost of childcare and transportation.
3. Share in decision-making process for Mercer County Head Start.
4. Assist the parent committee with helping enrolled parents know their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.
5. Encourage parent participation in the program.
6. Recruit for open slots in the program.

Areas of Responsibility

Monthly and periodically throughout the program year, the Executive Director of the Mercer County Head Start program provides the policy council information from ongoing monitoring tools (annually in July), school readiness goals (annually in July), program goal updates (annually in July) and monthly board reports

which include:

(2) CONDUCT OF RESPONSIBILITIES-Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and policy council, about program planning, policies, and Head Start agency operations, including:

- A. Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures.
- B. Monthly program information summaries.
- C. Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency.
- D. Monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture.
- E. The financial audit.
- F. The annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment.
- G. The communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates.
- H. Communication and guidance from the Secretary; and
- I. The program information reports.

Policy Council Minutes

One of the Policy Council Secretary's duties is to keep accurate records of all Policy Council business. A program secretary is available to assist with this process if needed.

The minutes should contain the following information:

1. Names of those in attendance
2. Approval of previous minutes; corrections of previous minutes
3. All reports, motions, and actions taken
4. Who made the motion, who seconded the motion and the number of members who opposed or abstained?
5. All information which is needed at future meetings

Minutes are mailed at least five days before the meeting. If you are not getting your minutes, please check in with the Family Engagement Services Manager to verify your correct address.

To be well prepared, **it is important to read the packet of information and note questions or suggestion beforehand** so that you are prepared when the issue/vote comes up at the meeting.

A sample of the agenda/minutes is on the following page.

MERCER COUNTY HEAD START
POLICY COUNCIL
Agenda FOR (Month) 2022



Date: 2022

Time: Noon

Location: CJ's High Marks / ZOOM

Roll Call (P-present, A-absent, R-regrets)

Policy Council Parents:

Policy Council Community Reps:

Others Present:

Previous Month's Minutes

Motion to Approve:

Second to Approve:

Approved by vote: ____ Yea ____ No

Fiscal Report

Motion to Approve:

Second to Approve:

Approved by vote: ____ Yea ____ No

Director's Report

Motion to Approve:

Second to Approve:

Approved by vote: ____ Yea ____ No

New Hire/Resignations:

Motion to Approve:

Second to Approve:

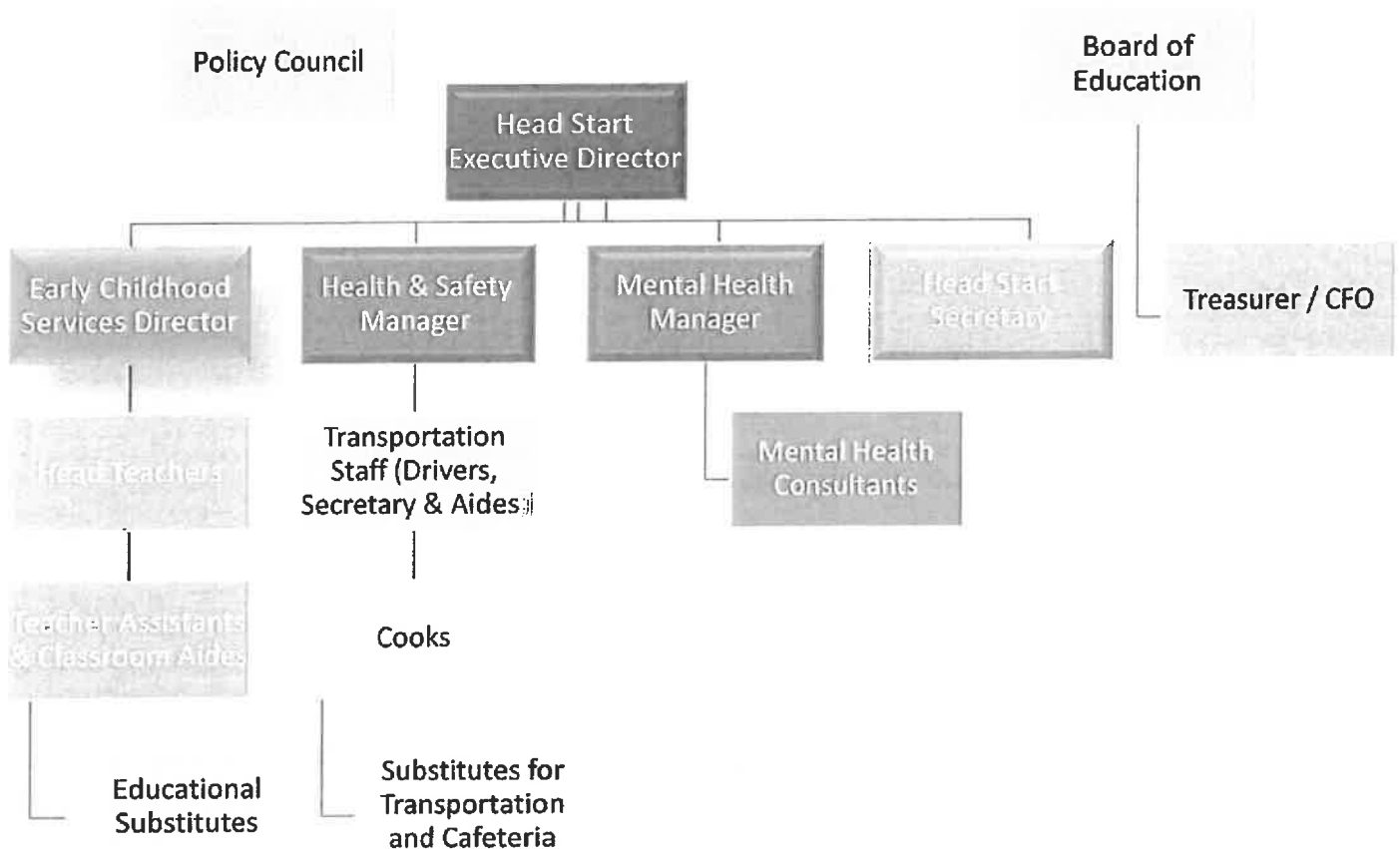
Approved by vote: ____ Yea ____ No

Next Meeting:

2022

12:00 pm

CJ's High Marks / ZOOM



1301.3 Policy Council

Mercer County Head Start program informs parents at the time of enrollment about the opportunity of participating in the policy council. Parents who indicate they are interested in being on policy council are then elected by their peers to serve on policy council for the year. Six seats on policy council are reserved for parents of currently enrolled children. Five seats are reserved for community members, totaling 11 members on policy council. Six voting members must be present to make a quorum. Elections are completed by October each year annually.

Policy Council meetings will always be scheduled and conducted prior to the monthly meeting of Celina City Schools Board of Education. This allows the policy council to submit decisions to the Board in a timely & effective manner.

Mercer County Head Start program has established a policy council for the program. Mercer County Head Start program has no delegate agencies as such no policy committee is required.

Parents who indicate they are interested in being on policy council are then elected, through a ballot by their peers, to serve on policy council for the year. A quorum (majority of voting seats) must be present to vote. If quorum is not met, a vote can be taken by phone or email. Elections are completed by October each year annually. The Mental Health Manager is responsible to educate local service providers of the opportunity to sit on policy council as a community member. For those individuals who are selected as voting members of Policy Council attendance is required. If a voting member misses (2) consecutive meetings without contacting the Executive Director, that member will be excused from Policy Council.

Monthly and periodically throughout the program year, the Executive Director of the Mercer County Head Start program provides the governing board information from ongoing monitoring tools (annually in July), school readiness goals (annually in July), program goal updates (annually in July) and monthly board reports which include:

(2) CONDUCT OF RESPONSIBILITIES—Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of

- A. accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and policy council, about
- B. program planning, policies, and Head Start agency operations, including:
- C. Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures;
- D. Monthly program information summaries;
- E. Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency;
- F. Monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture;
- G. the financial audit;
- H. the annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment;
- I. the communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates;
- J. communication and guidance from the Secretary; and
- K. the program information reports. See also Governing Body 1301.2

Policy Council Meetings are public meetings, and, because of this, people often attend the meeting who are not members of the Policy Council. However, only voting members will vote on decisions made by the Council. If a quorum is not present, then a vote via email is utilized to ensure business is conducted in a timely manner.

The Executive Director and Program Managers provide guidance and information to the policy council on:

Parent engagement, ERSEA, applications for funding opportunities, program budgets and policies, bylaws for policy council, personnel policies, employment of program staff, election of policy council members, and the service area of the grantee. Policy Council members make decisions and submit approvals to the Celina City Schools Board of Education for consideration.

A Celina City Schools Board of Education member sits on Policy Council as a non-voting member to serve as a liaison between the two entities.

Policy Council members cannot have a conflict of interest with Mercer County Head Start. In addition, policy council members cannot receive compensation for services provided to the grantee by serving on policy council. Staff cannot serve on policy council. Parents of currently enrolled children who provide substitute services to the program on an occasional basis MAY serve on policy council.

The grantee has no delegate agencies and is not a tribal grantee.

An Open Invitation

All parents have an open invitation to attend Policy Council meetings.

1301.4 Parent Committee

We believe parents and families are the most important influence in their child's education and development. One of Head Start's goals is to support you in this role. We make information, experiences, and other resources available throughout the year that can make your job a little easier. Family engagement in every part of the program is necessary to assure the most benefit for Head Start children.

You will have many opportunities for several kinds of direct involvement:

- In promoting school readiness for your preschooler(s).
- In decision-making for planning and operating the program.
- In activities you and other parents have helped develop.
- In the classroom and other educational activities.
- In the home and community setting.
- In the community as leaders and strong advocates for young children.

Systemic family engagement also requires an overall program philosophy that upholds partnerships with families at all levels of agency functioning: at the administrative level; in hiring, training, supervising, and evaluating staff; in the design and use of the program's physical space; and in program policy. It is everyone's responsibility and reinforced within all aspects of the program.

All parents of currently enrolled children are automatic members of the parent committee. Utilizing information gathered from the family interest survey, family engagement staff works with parents to develop meeting agendas covering topics of interests for parents.

The parent committee is a parent/staff get-together held regularly during the program year, often combined with a social event. The parent committee provides you the opportunity to be involved in planning your child's program, decision-making, and other activities of your choice. Parent committees are run by and for parents! Classrooms often combine their family activity events so parents get a chance to know each other. Part of your role as a Policy Council member is to encourage attendance at the parent committee meetings and family activity events.

Family Engagement staff utilizes parent committee meetings to solicit input from parents on program operations including curriculum ideas, school readiness objectives, program policies, and program goals.

Policy Council minutes are provided to members of the parent committee. Members of the parent committee may submit through written form information to the policy council or may attend a policy council meeting to address the council in person. Whenever possible, parents are included in the recruitment / interviewing process of potential employees.

You will have several chances during the year to attend or even help plan educational, parent activity or social events with Head Start parents. This is also an important kind of parent involvement.

During enrollment and orientation, the Executive Director, Mental Health Manager, and Family Advocates inform parents of the various opportunities for parent engagement. These opportunities are listed and described within the parent handbook as well.

Contributions In-Kind / Non-Federal Match

Time and donations also add up to money. The Federal government requires each Head Start program to match 20 percent of its total grant in contributions from parents and the community. These contributions are called non-federal match.

Teachers and staff at each classroom and in the main office will have forms for parents to record their contributions. Policy Council representatives can assist their Family Advocate Staff in coordinating and documenting volunteer activities.

1301.5 The Role of Parent Representatives to the Policy Council; Trainings & Terms

Annually, the Executive Director provides governance training to the members of the Board of Education and newly seated Policy Council. Resources used to provide this training come directly from the T/TA system and ECKLC website.

ERSEA final rule (3/15) training is provided at this time as well.

Mercer County Head Start provides governance training annually which informs parents of the term limits of policy council and the requirements to be re-elected each year with a maximum of 5 terms.

Included in program governance training is the annual schedule for elections.

Elections occur at the end of September annually, ensuring that a new policy council is seated in October and receives program governance training at the first meeting.

Here are some personal characteristics to consider:

- Ability to listen, analyze, think clearly and creatively, work well with individual people and groups.
- Willingness to prepare for and attend Council and committee meetings, ask questions, take responsibility, and follow through on a given assignment, contribute personal resources in a generous way according to circumstances, open doors in the community, evaluate oneself.
- Willingness to develop certain skills if you do not already possess them, recruiting new members and other volunteers, learning more about the organization.
- Possess honesty; sensitivity to and tolerance of differing views; a friendly, responsive, and patient approach; community-building skills; personal integrity; a developed sense of values; concern for the organization's development; a sense of humor.

1301.6 Impasse Procedure

Mercer County Head Start provides members of the governing board and policy council with a handbook for governance procedures for the Head Start program.

The policy and procedures section of the handbook, includes impasse procedures which include resolving internal disputes, use of arbitration, and mediation.

Annually, the handbook is reviewed by the governing bodies for any possible revisions and updates.

Concern/Feedback Procedures for Resolving Complaints

Policy

The Head Start program encourages communication between parents, community members and Head Start staff. If there are concerns, these should be documented after attempts have been made to resolve them through direct feedback and problem solving with the staff and supervisors involved.

Procedure

1. Written concerns should include a description of the problem, date of occurrence, names of people involved and possible solutions. Parents should consult their Policy Council Representative for advice and assistance.
2. The written concern form will be completed by the individual(s) involved and given to the Executive Director within ten (10) working days. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the situation. The Executive Director may invite all or part of the following to review the situation: Policy Council Chairperson, parent/community member, Policy Council representative, individual staff person addressed in the concern, Regional Manager, Consultants, Board of Directors Chairperson, or other members of the Board of Directors.
3. A written response will be prepared by the Executive Director outlining action taken and given to parent/community members within ten (10) working days of the meeting.
4. If parent/community member is not satisfied with the written response from the Executive Director, the parent/community member may request a joint meeting of the Policy Council and Board of Directors Executive Committee for final resolution of the concern through a written request to the Policy Council Chairperson.

This complies with Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR Section 1301.6(a)(2).

(See a copy of Complaint Form on the following page.)

**MERCER COUNTY HEAD START
COMPLAINT FORM**

Date _____

Explanation of Concern:

Suggestions:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Please mail and or hand deliver to:

**Amy Esser, Executive Director
Mercer County Head Start
585 E. Livingston St. Celina, OH 45822**

Parliamentary Procedure

In most organizations a process called "Parliamentary procedure" is used to run the meetings. This process was developed to help meetings run smoothly, to maintain order, and to make sure each member is given equal time and consideration for their input. To follow Parliamentary Procedure, one of things you must know is . . .

How a Motion is made

1. *Recognition.* Raise your hand to get the Chairperson's permission to speak: "Mr. (or Madam) Chairperson..."
2. *Make the motion.* Offer your recommendation to the rest of the group: "I move we have a spring picnic..."
3. *It must be seconded.* To support your idea, another member should say: "I second the motion..."
4. *Clearly state the motion.* The Chairperson puts the motion in words that everyone can understand and then states the motion: "It has been moved and seconded that we have a spring picnic..."
5. *Discussion.* The Chairperson invites members to discuss the motion: "Is there any discussion?"
6. *Restate the motion.* The discussion ends when the Chairperson prepares the members for voting by restating the motion: "The motion before us is to have a spring picnic."
7. *Motion.* The Chairperson calls for the vote. The vote can be done by voice, written ballot, or show of hands. If the vote is by voice, the Chairperson says: "All those in favor of a spring picnic, signify by saying, "Aye"; those opposed, say "nay"; those abstaining?"
8. *State the results.* The Chairperson announces whether the motion has carried or failed: "The motion carried."

Parliamentary Procedure Terms

Abstain: Not voting one way or the other.

Adjourn: Ending the meeting.

Adopt: To okay or accept.

Agenda: An outline of what is to be done at the meeting.

Amendment: Adding on to a motion usually to improve it, enlarges its intent, or make it more understandable.

Appeal: To question the Chairperson's decision and ask the group to change it.

Appoint: To place someone in a job or position.

By-laws: The rules that a group has agreed to follow and the goals of the organization.

Caucus: Getting together outside the regular meeting to decide on plans, position, and/or people to nominate.

Chair: The position held by the group's leader.

Committee: A small group that reviews and reports on a special task given them by the larger membership. A committee

General Consensus: Approval by the group. If even one member objects, a vote must be taken.

Majority Opinion: The decision of more than half the voting members.

Motion: A member's proposal for an action.

Nominate: To recommend a person for election to office.

Pending: Still "up in the air" and undecided.

Personal Privilege: Calling attention to something having to do with the well-being of the people at a meeting, such as asking to have a window opened.

Point of Information: Asking for more information before making a decision.

Point of Order: Correcting a mistake that is against the rules of the organization.

Pro tem: Temporary.

Proxy: Permission given (usually written) by one absent member for another member to vote in his name.

Question: A motion that is under discussion with a vote to be taken on it.

Recess: Taking a short break.

Rescind: To take back; withdraw.

Resolution: Usually a policy statement being suggested to the group for approval.

Second: Support for a motion. Before a group can handle a proposed action (motion), it must know that two people want it discussed.

Standing Committee: A committee that goes year-round, such as a program committee.

Special Committee: A committee selected to handle a single task or event (known in the By-Laws as "Ad Hoc").

Sub-committee: A small group of members serving on a large committee who take a special problem, study it, and report back to the whole committee so that a final decision can be made.

Suspending the Bylaws: Making an exception to the Council by-laws with approval from the body to suspend the by-law.

Unanimous vote: Everyone votes the same way.

Veto: To turn "thumbs down" (voting "no") on a motion or idea.

Scheduled Board of Education Meetings

September 25, 2023

October 16, 2023

November 20, 2023

December 18, 2023

Scheduled Policy Council Meetings

September 21, 2023

October 12, 2023

November 16, 2023

December 14, 2023

(Updated 7/10/2023)