

**SOUTH CAROLINA FIRST STEPS TO SCHOOL READINESS
EARLY HEAD START GOVERNANCE COUNCIL**

Charter for Early Head Start Governance Council

- I. The Council will be called the **Early Head Start Governance Council (herein, COUNCIL)**. The COUNCIL is authorized by the **South Carolina First Steps Board of Trustees**, (herein GOVERNING BODY), to serve at its direction to assist in fulfilling the Early Head Start governance and regulatory responsibilities pursuant to the Head Start Program Performance Standards and the Head Start Act.

II. PURPOSES

The *Early Head Start Governance Council*, as established and authorized by the *First Steps Board of Trustees*, shall provide detailed oversight for all required aspects of Early Head Start governance, including program, policy development, and fiscal oversight, and shall make keep informed and elevate high level recommendations to the Governing Body for needed actions.

The EHS Governance Council responsibilities shall include –

- Provide detailed oversight of the program and fiscal operations of the Early Head Start program on behalf of the Governing Board and present/elevate only major concerns, issues or recommendations pertaining to program, personnel and fiscal to the Governing Board.
- Review and approve proposed routine policies related to the fiscal, program and governance of the Early Head Start program.
- Ensure Early Head Start program is operated in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and participate in appropriate training to carry out these responsibilities. .
- Work with the Policy Council to vet and resolve potential conflicts or compliance issues prior to presentation to Governing Board as specified in the Internal Dispute Resolution Policy (Impasse Policy)
- Work as appointed by the EHS Governance Council Chairperson on appointed ad hoc committees to hear and help resolve community complaints, as per the Community Complaints Policy.
- Work with Policy Council to evaluate and approve all applications for funding and amendments to applications” for the Early Head Start program.

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III. RELATIONSHIP OF COUNCIL TO EDUCATIONAL GOVERNING BOARD

Any and all responsibilities delegated to the Governance Council are subject to final determination by the Governing Board at their discretion. All actions of the Governance Council shall be routinely provided to the Governing Body on the consent agenda with the exception of major important decisions requiring the Governing Body's action.

IV. MEMBERSHIP AND TERM

The ***EHS Governance Council*** will be comprised of a minimum of 5 of the following members:

- The Chairperson of the First Steps Board of Trustees or his/her designee selected from the Governing Board. This member will serve as the Chair of the Council.
- One (1) member from the First Steps *Finance and Administration Committee* (will not be the same person as the Chair) with a “background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting;
- One (1) member, professional or parent advocate with background and expertise in early childhood education and development
- One (1) member who is a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body.
- Up to six members chosen by the First Steps Board of Trustees from the larger First Steps and/or the at-large community, preferably members with the following professional experience or background:
 - Law
 - Minority Health issues
 - Parent Engagement
 - Accounting
 - Parent or Grandparent of a Child Enrolled in EHS

In the event that the “required” individuals are not available to serve as member[s] of the Governing Council, the Governing Body shall secure consultant[s], or another individual with relevant expertise, with the qualifications described [above], who shall work directly with the governing body.

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Membership will be prohibited for any staff members from the First Steps State Office or from any contracted EHS agencies. Nominations for Council membership will be made and approved by the First Steps Executive Committee as vacancies arise. Terms of membership will be renewed annually with a three year maximum length of service. A Chair will be annually appointed by the Chair of the First Steps Board of Trustees. The Chair may serve in this role for a one year term with option for two year tenure.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Chairperson: The Governance Council will be chaired by the Chairperson of the Governing Board, or by his/her designee from among the First Steps Board of Trustees.

Vice Chairperson: Will act on behalf of the Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence. Vice Chairperson shall be appointed annually by the Chairperson from among the committee members, and may serve in this capacity for up to two years.

VI. PROCEDURAL RULES

Meetings: The EHS Governance Council will meet a minimum of 6 times a year and more often as the need arises, in order to fulfill their shared governance responsibility with the EHS Policy Council.

Quorum and Voting: A quorum shall consist of at least fifty percent (50%) of voting members present at a meeting. A simple majority shall constitute a deciding vote for or against a proposed motion.

Minutes: Minutes of each meeting will be kept as assigned by the EHS Governance Council Chairperson. Copies will be provided to the Governing Board, local administrator(s), instructors, and committee membership within two weeks after a meeting. A consent agenda report will be routinely prepared for the Board of Trustees approving the actions of the Governance Council as well as any major action item agenda requiring the vote of the Board of Trustees (See also "Recommendations and Reports").

Non-Federal Match: As part of the requirement to provide 20% non-federal match for the Early Head Start Funding, attendance at all meetings will be recorded and reported as a contribution toward non-federal match.

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Recommendations and Reports: High-level Council recommendations and reports will be submitted in writing to the Governing Board. Documents will include both suggested action, justification for suggestions, possible adverse impact (if applicable) and budgetary impact (if applicable). All recommendations presented to the Governing Board for action shall be submitted as a written Resolution. Resolutions, as approved to be submitted to the Governing Body by the EHS Governance Council shall be prepared by the Executive Director of South Carolina First Steps (Director) or his/her designee and presented by the EHS Governance Chair to the Governing Board. The Director will present Resolutions to the Governing Board in the Chairperson's absence.

Dismissal: Members who are absent without an excused absence from four successive meetings per year will be considered to have resigned their seat. The committee will move to fill the position. An absence shall be considered excused as long as member communicates that they will be absent prior to the actual meeting.

Public Communication and Announcements: While members are expected and encouraged to discuss the Early Head Start Program within the community, members shall not report opinions expressed in meetings, nor shall they report independently on committee action.

Review of Charter: This Charter shall be reviewed and reassessed annually, in conjunction with the Governance Procedure. Any proposed changes shall be presented to the Governing Board for approval.

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