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<b>Ref #:</b> 1301.3; 1301.4	<b>Policy Council Approval Date:</b>	

**COMPONENT: PROGRAM DESIGN & MANAGEMENT – PROGRAM GOVERNANCE**

**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE-FORMAL STRUCTURE**

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE:** To establish and maintain a formal structure of shared governance through which parents/guardians can participate in policy making or other decisions about the program. This structure must consist of the following groups: Policy Council and Parent Committee. Parent Committees must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled. All Policy Councils and Parent Committees must be established as early in the program year as possible. Policy Councils and delegate may not be dissolved until successor Councils are elected and seated. The governing body and the Policy Council or Policy Committee must not have identical memberships and functions.

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE:**

As early in the program year as possible, Highland Rim Head Start Program must establish and maintain a Policy Council at the grantee level. The Policy Council and the Governing Body must not have identical memberships and functions. Parent committees must be established at the center level and must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled at the center. Policy Council may not be dissolved until a successor council is elected and seated.

At the first Parent Committee Meeting, parents will elect officers for the remainder of the year and select their representative(s) and alternate to the Policy Council. Offices include chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary.

The roles and responsibilities are outlined in the Parent Committee By-laws and the Policy Council By-laws.

**PARENT COMMITTEE**

The main functions of the Parent Committee are:

- Participate in the governance of the Head Start classroom and program by:
  - Attending and supporting the Parent Committee meetings.
  - Serving as officers of the Parent Committee.

- Serving as elected members of the Policy Council.
- Electing representative(s) to the Policy Council per the above established guidelines.
  
- Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities and services.
- Plan, conduct and participate in informal as well as formal programs and activities for parents and staff.
- Parent Committees vote on how the Parent Activity Funds are to be used.

Attendance at Parent Committee meetings by the one member of the classroom staff as well as the Family Service Manager and/or Family Advocates will allow them to gain an opportunity to learn and interact with parents in a group setting. Additional insight can be given as to the needs and/or problems that the parents may be experiencing as it relates to the family/ community partnerships service area. Additionally, volunteer services may be solicited from parents during parent committee meetings.