

Policy Council Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2025

1. Open Meeting

Motion to: Open Meeting

Motion by: Tram

Seconded: Ryan S.

Vote: AIF

2. Roll Call and Attendance (identify additional Orientation needs)

P=Present A=Absent E=Excused Z=Zoom

Representatives:

P	Karrie Breton (Educare 3-5 Part-Day)	P	Lauren Lancaster (Educare 3-5 Full-Day)
P	Cearra Cater (HomeStart)	P	Tram Martin (Community Rep)
P	Shaunda Cunningham (North El)	E	Ryan Riopell (Community Rep)
P	Bryan Deleonard (Community Rep)	P	Mary-Gene Rumery (Educare I/T Full-Day)
P	Lauren Fox (Mill Stream)	P	Ryan Savery (Community Rep)
P	Kristen Gammon (Educare Float)	P	Janalynn White (SEHS)

Staff:

P	Sarah Lavallee, Head Start Director	P	Kristin Ludwig, Program Assistant
P	Miriam Jacobs, Family Engagement Manager		

3. Review / Approval of February Policy Council Meeting Minutes

Motion to: Accept and approve meeting minutes from 2/11/2025

Motion by: Lauren L.

Seconded: Bryan

Vote: AIF

4. Family Engagement

- a. Parent Powered Update: Launched with good reception by families overall. The short texts are quick and easy to read. More than 600 parents/guardians were added into the system and only about 50 have opted out.
- b. Attendance: We continue to look at attendance data with follow up occurring with Family Services and Teaching staff to assure absence reasons are being reflected/updated. Staff are staying in communication with families and trying to help remove any barriers that are impacting regular attendance. We are hoping attendance will improve moving forward.
- c. Family Engagement Funds: Funds for each site's parent committee. Parents vote on how to best use those funds. Miriam will update the PC as requests for funds are submitted.
- d. Parent Topics:
 - i. Lots of parent advocacy occurring: Mary-Gene attended a Parent Ambassador Institute in Washington, D.C.. They did hill visits and spoke to representatives and their staffers about impacts of funding cuts to Head Start and Early Childhood Education. Mary-Gene also went to The State House in Augusta to protest the Governor's proposed budget cuts that would impact the field of Early Childhood Education in various ways. It was a powerful day with a massive turnout, and the advocacy helped in removing the cuts from the budget sent forward by the HHS Committee to Appropriations. Sarah and Mary-Gene have also drafted a letter to Senator Susan Collins to advocate for Head Start funding and an adequate COLA.
 - ii. NEHSA conference coming up, March 19-21. Mary-Gene, Lauren F, Sarah, and Miriam are attending along with 2 Educare staff who will be doing a presentation on Nature Based Education.
 - iii. Elevating Family Voice Summit coming up on March 26th. Mary-Gene, Lauren F. and Lauren L. planning to attend along with several staff.
 - iv. Discussed the subsidy wait list and the current and growing impacts on families and programs.
 - v. Lauren and Danielle offering kids Yoga at the MSAD54 elementary schools!

5. Head Start Director Updates

- a. Reports/Updates

- i. Program Information Summary: We remain fully enrolled! Attendance is below 85% and an analysis into the reasons continues to occur, with health reasons at 62%. A variety of illnesses have impacted regular attendance. Cases of Influenza A have been reported to the Maine CDC. Reminders for regular handwashing have gone to staff and families. The budget is on track. PIR comparison data shows program and state disabilities to be higher than the national average. Teacher and provider degrees/credentials are higher than national averages.
- ii. Credit Card Expenditures: Reviewed report and questions.
- b. One-Time Request: This was submitted and received by our Regional office. Awaiting a funding decision.
- c. State and Federal Landscape: State budget with Appropriations, hoping for continued ECE funding. Federal spending bill has been proposed, we are unsure what Head Start funding levels are in the proposal. If it doesn't go through there would be a shutdown. The timing of our Head Start grant creates stability for us until the end of the grant year, August 31, 2025. Expect/hope for resolution federally so the shutdown is averted. Discussed federal communication about possible block grants to states.
- d. Head Start's 60th Birthday Planning: Official date is May 18th, however Head Start is celebrating throughout 2025. We want to recognize teachers with longevity, past staff who contributed to child/family successes. We also want to celebrate past Head Start children. Idea for individual site birthday parties, tied into things already happening. Sarah will send a google doc for us to note site events and capture ideas.

Motion to: Accept and approve reports as given

Motion by: Ryan S.

Seconded: Karrie

Vote: AIF

- 6. **KVCAP Board Meeting:** Reviewed highlights from the 2/26/25 Board meeting. Mike Mitchell, an outgoing KVCAP board member who is now on the Educare board, was thanked for his service on the KVCAP Board. Pamela Thompson was welcomed as the new Board President. The Board received their annual Governance Training. The Community Complaint Procedure was approved. The Head Start One-Time request was approved and notified that we are still waiting to hear a review date for our Focus Area One virtual review expected this year. We are monitoring federal direction and executive order impacts. The new Performance Management system rollout is going well. Benefits overview was provided, including plan and prescription cost updates. Overview of recent tour of the new Hight Family Early Learning Center: Senior Management and KVCAP staff toured the new wing still under construction with 84% of the work finished as of the beginning of March. Elevating Family Voices opportunity was shared.
- 7. **Meeting Highlights:**
 - a. Parent Powered is going well; many are receiving the texts and enjoying them. We will continue to monitor the success of the app.
 - b. Children's Yoga is being offered by Lauren Fox: March 18th at Mill Stream and March 28th at Canaan.
 - c. KVCAP 60th Birthday party planning is underway.
 - d. Lots of staff and parent advocacy occurring on behalf of Early Childhood Education budgets and systems at the State House and in Washington, D.C.
 - e. Christina Stafford, Health Services Manager, will be joining Policy Council next month to speak about the Health & Mental Health Services Advisory Committee. If you have any questions or concerns to bring forward to her, please see your PC Rep. or Family Coach.
- 8. **Treasurer's Report:** Beginning Balance: \$200, Paid Out: \$95, Remaining Balance: \$105
Motion to: Approve the Treasurer's Report as given
Motion by: Bryan
Seconded: Janalynn
Vote: AIF
- 9. **Adjourn**
Motion to: Adjourn the meeting
Motion by: Karrie
Seconded: Ryan S.
Vote: AIF