July Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
7/17/2025 5:30 PMEDT
@ Through Zoom

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown (remote), Kristy Castanon (remote), Roni Fitch (remote), Leah Hill (remote), Samantha Mahoney (remote), Alisha Persinger (remote), Jennifer Smith (remote), Scott Sowder (remote), Paige Walters (remote)

Absent:
Members: Ana Alexander, Beth Bratcher, Samantha Lucas, Jessie Sakach, Stephanie Smith, Sarah Whitlock

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:54pm

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: April/May 2025

April/May Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve April/May 2025 Policy Council Minutes as is.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Scott Sowder. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services - Roni Fitch

selection as of 7/17/2025.docx

Roni shared with the council the updates on the federal level. Our program has received a new program specialist from the Southeast regional office. She is also awaiting more information and guidance from the Office of Head Start regarding enrolling students with a different immigration status.
The program is close to full enrollment and will plan to be at full enrollment when school begins in August.
Staff have been able to begin at the new location in Fairlawn with the mixed delivery grant students.
Leadership team is working on upcoming professional development opportunities for when teachers return.

Kristy has worked very hard and completed the program planning calendar for this upcoming school year.

IV. New Business –

A. Behavior Guidance policy 2025 discussion – Roni Fitch

Behavior Guidance Policy 2025.docx

Roni shared the revised program behavior policy for staff, parents, and children. How the program addresses safety for all was incorporated throughout the document. Roni highlighted to the council that she will be the person to make the final decision regarding a family's enrollment status because it's her responsibility to ensure all steps, strategies, supports and performance standards were followed.
Paige shared she has information she could provide to Roni regarding PBIS philosophy.
Roni asked the council to review, and she would like to seek their approval of policy at next meeting.

B. Child Outcomes 2024/2025 School year report – Kristy Castanon

Child Outcomes 2024/2025 Report.pdf

Kristy shared Period 3 Outcomes. This year, the program had equal amount of 3 and 4 year olds, 113 in each group. The program had lots of first year new students, 156 and 67 second year students.
Kristy hopes to see increase in the social and emotional domain as the Big 5 practices continue to be implemented effectively in the classrooms by teaching teams.

C. Self-Assessment Committee – Kristy Castanon

Kristy facilitated the self-assessment discussion by asking the committee several questions:
How does the council feel about transitioning to preschool and what do they see as pros and cons for students being on a reduced schedule? Comments included this is a great way to work with the kid and not forcing the kid to work for something they may not be able to do. This can allow extra time for the child to be ready to tackle a full school schedule.
What supports should be offered to families if child was on a reduced schedule? Be sure staff continue to touch base with families ensuring they have food and

housing information. A comment about not being able to provide transportation to the family could be a barrier for family enrolling or being able to contine to attend the program.
How would you feel if teacher/Site Administrator suggests child being picked up before nap or earlier? Felt that the approach needs to be respectful and presenting a few options, in person, would be the best way to approach the conversation.
When a child enters preschool, what resources to they feel all parents need or could benefit from? Parents need to know the flexibility they can have or extended transition time to ensure child will be successful in school, a list of doctors and dentists, and a handwashing picture schedule so parents can encourage good handwashing at home to help prevent some of those sicknesses that always occur at the beginning of the year.
Which transition schedule do they feel would be best for the students starting school - a full week of early release, two weeks of early release, a few days, etc? The program does need to take the parents work and school schedules into account when deciding what works best as well as just individualizing for those certain few students, not necessarily all the children. It's important that parents get the calendar and schedule ahead of time to allow for planning around work and school schedules if possible.
How can we improve the message that Head Start is a quality preschool experience? Suggestions included showing parents the school setting, showing everything that is in place like the public-school settings: curriculum and school routine, and what an actual school day consists of and looks like. Possibly making the Facebook pages public, because those highlight great activities and pictures of the kids on them, but the general public does not get to see it. Advertising more on social media regarding the preschool experience that students have.
What should be included in the program's sun safety policy? The sun safety policy should also include bug safety and how the program could provide bug spray or apply on children before going outside. (possibly have a natural bug spray available for students) Provide hats and glasses to children to wear (keep in their cubbies) and continue the education and teaching responsibility as to why children should wear sun safety gear. Policy should include how children will stay hydrated throughout the day, availability to water and incorporating regular water breaks.
How could second year med students be utilized in the classroom? The students could put on a career day, talk about what they are going to do when they graduate school, but could also highlight other careers, provide preschool

appropriate medical lectures (proper handwashing, what happens when you are around germs)

D. New PC/Board Liaison term begins July 2025 – Leah Hill

Jennifer Brown agreed to be the Policy Council/Board Liaison. This term begins now and lasts for two years.

V. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:11pm.

A. Tentative next Policy Council meeting: Thursday, Sept. 25th at 5:30pm, location TBD

September Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
9/25/2025 5:30 PMEDT
@ Christiansburg Head Start 135 Church St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown, Roni Fitch, Leah Hill, Sarah Huff, Samantha Lucas (remote), Stephanie Smith, Scott Sowder, Paige Walters

Absent:
Members: Samantha Mahoney, Alisha Persinger, Jennifer Smith

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:46pm

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: July 2025

July Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve Policy Council July 2025 minutes as is.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Scott Sowder. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. NRCA Board Updates and Minutes

August 2025 minutes.pdf

NRCA will be hosting two haunted events this season - one at the jail in Dublin and one in Pulaski.

A. New Board/Policy Council Liaison: Jennifer Brown

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

August Dashboard.pdf

Head Start FY26 Income Statement - August.pdf

HS FY26 Policy Council - August.pdf

Parent Fund Accts - 9.17.25.pdf

Sarah reviewed each line item on the dashboard. Credit card expenditures were available for review.

V. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services Report and Monthly Enrollment/Attendance Report - Roni Fitch

- PC and Board Report August 2025.doc
- PC and Board Report Sept 2025.doc
- Monthly enrollment dashboard Aug 2025.xlsx

Roni shared on the Federal Level that states keep challenging the "personal responsibility and work opportunity reconciliation act of 1996 (PRWORA), interpretation of federal public benefit." Therefore, no definite decision has been made with the proposals. There are some new changes with the performance standards and information has been given to programs to ensure we are honoring parent choice and connecting parents with the best early childhood experience that is aligned with family need.
Local program updates - our program is in the monitoring phase of the enrollment initiative; therefore, we must maintain at least 97% enrollment.
Our program is up for the Federal Review Focus Area two this school year.
Pearisburg was sent the wrong age playground. Will hopefully get the appropriate age playground and it will be installed in October.
The specialists were super busy moving into the Fairlawn location over the summer, and Blacksburg received new paint and flooring. All classrooms are in session. The Mixed Delivery and school age parents now have a data system that will allow to sign in their child, receive notifications and store child data.
Blacksburg Presbyterian has received a grant and approached Roni to offer a summer program to students.
Our program did not receive the Nutrition Grant; we are on the waitlist. They could award more programs if more money becomes available.
Our program was fully staffed for 6 days, then right before school began, we had several staff resign. Several specialists are working to fill in the gaps and continue to interview for the open positions. There are a few people we are waiting on background checks before the job can be offered.

VI. Specialists Reports – Included in your packet for review

- Education September 2025.docx
- ERSEA policy council report sept 25.docx

Individual Specialist Report.pdf

September 2025 Policy Council Report - Nutrition Health.doc

Enrollment update: There are still a few openings at Floyd Head Start and Project Grow and Learn. Will plan to have all spots filled by the end of October.

VII. New Business –

A. 5 year goal updates (Year 1) – Roni Fitch

5 year Goal updates end year 1.pptx

Roni shared with the council that we are meeting or moving towards goal achievement and will have met goals once this grant cycle ends, which is in 3 years. The program will still need to look at a salary comparison, to ensure our program is paying similar to other programs in the area.

B. 2024/2025 – Progress Information Report (PIR) Summary – Roni Fitch

PIR Summary Report 2024/2025.pdf

Request funds for parent celebrations for Blacksburg and Christiansburg Head Starts parent funds. Each site is requesting $300.

Motion:
Approve $300 from both Blacksburg and Christiansburg Parent Funds to host parent fall celebrations.

Motion moved by Scott Sowder and motion seconded by Jennifer Brown. All in Favor. Motion carried.

VIII. Announcements-

A. Blacksburg and Christiansburg Art Project - Roni Fitch

Blacksburg and Christiansburg Art experience.docx

B. Positive Solutions for Families Series (in-person) – Leah Hill

Positive Solutions for Families Series will be offered to families in person at two locations this semester: Head Start in Fairlawn and Pearisburg Head Start.

Jennifer Brown shared that SOS will be opening a sensory gym in Floyd over the summer. It will be open to the public and they will host field trips.

Samantha Lucas is working on getting donations from local businesses for Pearisburg to go on a field trip to Thornspring Farm.

IX. Certificate Presentation – Leah Hill

X. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 6:58pm

A. October Policy Council Meeting - Monday, Oct. 20th at 5:30pm Location: TBD

October Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
10/20/2025 5:30 PMEDT
@ 135 Church St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown, Leah Hill, Alisha Persinger, Stephanie Smith, Scott Sowder, Sarah Popczun, Nick Popczun
Guests: Alison Harris

Absent:
Members: Roni Fitch, Sarah Huff, Samantha Mahoney, Jennifer Smith, Paige Walters

Meeting was called to order at 5:44pm.

Motion:
Motion made to approve Policy Council September 2025 minutes as is.

Motion moved by Scott Sowder and motion seconded by Jennifer Brown. All in favor. Motion carried.

Leah Hill reviewed the Policy Council orientation PowerPoint and reviewed what the members should expect to receive in their monthly packet.

Alison Harris reviewed the 2024-2025 Self-Assessment report. She reviewed the take aways and next steps and how the program is progressing in the second year of the five-year grant cycle.

Alison Harris reviewed with the Big 5 practices. These five practices are part of the Pyramid Model. When these five practices are implemented and incorporated into the daily classroom schedules; children's negative behaviors should decrease, and teacher's classroom management skills should increase.

Jennifer Brown asked if we had any information on how the haunted attractions are going this season. She had seen where they had gotten good reviews from the local critics.

Members received a paper copy of the NRCA Head Start Annual Report.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:56pm.

Members received a survey through OnBoard to vote on the day of the week that they would prefer to hold Policy Council meetings. Wednesdays had the most votes. Next meeting will be Wednesday, December 3, 2025, beginning at 5:45pm at Christiansburg Head Start.
Fiduciary Training with company attorney will be on Tuesday, November 18th at 6:00pm, through Zoom. This is a combined training with NRCA Board.

December Policy Council Meeting Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
12/3/2025 5:30 PMEST
@ 135 Church St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown, Roni Fitch, Leah Hill, Sarah Huff, Samantha Mahoney (remote), Alisha Persinger (remote), Sarah Popczun, Stephanie Smith, Paige Walters (remote), Wanangwa Nhlema, Annie Shaba, Vonetta Williams

Absent:
Members: Nick Popczun, Jennifer Smith, Scott Sowder

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:04pm.

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: October 2025

October Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve October 2025 minutes as is.

Motion moved by Sarah Popczun and motion seconded by Stephanie Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. NRCA Board Updates and Minutes: Policy Council/Board Liaison: Jennifer Brown

The agency lost money from the Haunted Houses this season. Home to Stay Gala for Housing program grossed $15,000. Some new job descriptions were being created for other programs in the agency. HR and Jennifer have been talking with several health insurance brokers and exploring multiple options because the current health insurance premiums increased over 50% and employees and agency cannot afford this increase.

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

October Dashboard.pdf

HS FY26 Policy Council - October.pdf

Head Start FY26 Income Statement - October.pdf

Parent Fund Accts - 12.2.25.pdf

Sarah reviewed the Financial Dashboard and explained each line item in detail.
Credit card expenditures were passed around and available for members to review.
A member expressed her concern over the in-kind. They communicated every three-week rotation is not working for most families and the in-kind report seems to reflect this. They were concerned that the activities/resources that seem to build on what was provided weeks or even months ago, parents would not have kept and be unable to complete the current activity. The council feels the weekly in-kind sheets being sent home worked better for families. Suggestions also included having incentives and ensuring books are available for families to take home could help with getting the in-kind numbers up.

V. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services Report & Enrollment Report- Roni Fitch

PC and Board Report Dec 2025.doc

Enrollment Dashboard Dec 1 2025.xlsx

Roni noted it's been a slow month with the Office of Head Start, since they have not been working during the government shutdown. Roni wanted to assure the council that our program should be secure for at least until when the grant cycle ends which is May 31st. Some programs across the country have closed during the government shutdown due to their grants not being renewed in October and November.
Roni is looking to apply for one-time funding for age-appropriate playground equipment for the Fairlawn location.

VI. Specialists Reports – Included in your packet for review

December 2025 ED.docx

ERSEA policy council report dec 25.docx

Health Nov and Dec 2025- Policy Council Report.doc

ISS Report 11 25.docx

VII. New Business –

A. Elect Officers – Leah Hill

Sarah Popczun volunteered to be Chairperson of Policy Council.
Vonetta Moore-Williams volunteered to be Vice Chairperson of Policy Council.
Jennifer Brown volunteered to be Secretary of Policy Council.

B. Begin to review and update By-laws (Due February 2026) – Leah Hill

C. Floyd Parent Engagement Event Parent Funds Approval for $200 - Leah Hill

Motion:
Motion made to approve $200 from Floyd's parent fund for Winter Parent Engagement event.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Sarah Popczun. All in favor. Motion carried.

VIII. Announcements-

A. Single Point of Entry applications with School Mint Platform and Ready Regions – Leah Hill

Members were made aware of a new system for applying for the preschool programs in the area. Our program will participate with other school districts and Mixed Delivery grant sites in a single point of entry. Applicants will need to complete only one application to be able to be considered for all eligible preschool programs. Floyd County Public Schools is the only school division in the area that is not interested in participating this upcoming school year in this particular process.
Members did ask how this platform ensures confidential information is kept secure.

B. Applying for a Sunshade through American Academy of Dermatology Grant – Leah Hill

Our program will submit a grant for $8,000 by December 15th requesting a sunshade for the Floyd playground. If awarded, the program will be notified in March 2026.

C. Child & Adult Care Food Program Application approved – Roni Fitch

Child & Adult Approval .pdf

The program received approval for the continued Child & Adult Care Food Program application. The full application was available for members to review.

D. Head Start Grant Renewal Application will be due in February 2026 – Roni Fitch

E. Next Policy Council meeting will be virtual: Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 5:45pm

IX. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm.

January Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
1/21/2026 5:45 PMEST
@ Virtually

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown (remote), Roni Fitch (remote), Leah Hill (remote), Sarah Huff (remote), Samantha Mahoney (remote), Alisha Persinger (remote), Sarah Popczun (remote), Stephanie Smith (remote), Scott Sowder (remote), Paige Walters (remote), Vonetta Williams (remote)

Absent:
Members: Nick Popczun, Jennifer Smith

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:48pm.

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: December 2025

December Policy Council Meeting_Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion to approve December 2025 minutes as is.

Motion moved by Paige Walters and motion seconded by Jennifer Brown. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. NRCA Board Updates and Minutes: Policy Council/Board Liaison: Jennifer Brown

November 2025 Board Minute.pdf

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

December Dashboard.pdf

Head Start FY26 Income Statement - December.pdf

HS FY26 Policy Council - December.pdf

Parent Fund Accts - 1.16.26.pdf

SF-425 - Semi-Annual FY26.pdf

Sarah Huff reviewed the Financial Dashboard. With the fiscal year beginning in June; there are several months that most staff do not travel; therefore this line item is under

budget currently. Sarah anticipates this line item increasing by the end of the school year.
In-Kind numbers have gone up. They made a few adjustments to chart to include the goal amount for each site. This goal is based on the number of students that are enrolled at each location.
The semi-annual report that Sarah provided to the council is a checks and balances from the Head Start Administration. Sarah must submit this report to ensure the grant is being spent as required.

V. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services Report and Monthly enrollment and attendance report - Roni Fitch

PC and Board Report Jan 2026 doc.doc

Enrollment Dashboard January 2025.xlsx

Roni shared her reports. The program had several community partners provide gifts, supplies, and food to several Head Start families during the holiday season.
This is the program's last month in the full enrollment initiative. We were able to maintain full enrollment through this period. There are currently 4 open positions in our program.

VI. Specialists Reports – Included in your packet for review

ED January 2026 .docx

ERSEA policy council report .docx

VII. New Business –

VIII. Eligibility Training – Leah Hill

Eligibility Training for Board and Policy Council 2024.pptx

Leah Hill provided the council the annual eligibility training. PowerPoint is attached in minutes.
A question included do you count the family's members income that the family doubled up with, in the income? The answer is no. If a potential family is eligible under experiencing homelessness based on the McKinney Vento definition; no other income is documented.

IX. Selection Criteria approval – Leah Hill

Selection Criteria 2026 Draft.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve the 2026 Head Start Selection Criteria.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Alisha Persinger. All in favor. Motion carried.

X. In-kind Discussion – Roni Fitch

Roni mentioned that the program cannot have one source where the required 20% in-kind match comes from. This burden cannot be on parents solely. Fortunately, we have several school partners and community partners that provide a substantial amount of the 20% match.
The administrative team will be looking at ways to improve the parent portion of in-kind, with the suggestions from Policy Council at December meeting. Do not want to change the process up mid-year but will be updating for next school year. Roni is also looking at ways to incentivize the parent in-kind participation at each Head Start location for this current school year.

XI. Any suggestions to update Policy Council By-laws – Leah Hill

Policy Council ByLaws 2023 w Board approval.docx

Suggestions included the childcare reimbursement be updated to reflect the country average pay rate as well as the travel reimbursement rate to reflect the current federal reimbursement rate.

XII. Announcements-

XIII. 5-year goals mid-year updates and mid-year MBI reports – Roni Fitch

5 yr Goals PY2 mid year update (1).docx

December 2025 Mid.Year data Meeting docx.docx

PY2 mid year MBI data.pdf

Roni reviewed the key takeaways of the mid-year data in the attached reports.

XIV. Head Start Grant Renewal Application will be due in February 2026 – Roni Fitch

XV. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm

XVI. Mark your calendars: February Policy Council will be Wednesday, February 25th at 5:45pm, virtually.

February Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
2/25/2026 5:45 PMEST
@
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85000145377?pwd=ohLsTwhDraaaMP10wLZwY6wKVnhw7U.1

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown (remote), Roni Fitch (remote), Leah Hill (remote), Sarah Huff (remote), Samantha Mahoney (remote), Wanangwa Nhlema (remote), Alisha Persinger (remote), Sarah Popczun (remote), Annie Shaba (remote), Stephanie Smith (remote), Scott Sowder (remote), Vonetta Williams (remote)

Absent:
Members: Nick Popczun, Jennifer Smith, Paige Walters

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:47pm.

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: January 2026

January Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve minutes with the correction of Nick Popczun being present and attending virtually during January meeting.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Scott Sowder. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. NRCA Board Updates and Minutes: Policy Council/Board Liaison: Jennifer Brown

December Board Minutes.pdf

Jennifer was unable to attend February Board meeting. Roni shared that she was able to attend. The Board had a lengthy discussion on the agency benefit package. As well as working on a program planning calendar and understanding that all programs may not be able to be the same, specifically Head Start's and To Our House, since they do not have the flexibility to close as often. There will be more coming out about how staff can earn more PTO if they volunteer at community events.

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

- January Dashboard.pdf
- Head Start FY26 Income Statement - January.pdf
- HS FY26 Policy Council - January.pdf
- Parent Fund Accts - 2.19.26.pdf
- FY27 Head Start Budget.pdf

Sarah reviewed the Financial Dashboard through January. There are still a few line items under budget; but by the end of the year; subscriptions, renewals, and contract services will be paid; which should balance the budget. There may be also some line items that need to be adjusted; because some costs went up and some items (such as local travel) have not been used as much.
In-kind numbers have increased and are looking on track for this time of year.
The question was asked what does USDA not reimburse all USDA associated costs? USDA will only reimburse an agreed amount for each meal. If a school system charges more than the contracted rate; then the Head Start basic budget will have to reimburse the déficit.
The OnBoard annual subscription will be paid in March. The March Policy Council financial statement should reflect that expense.
Sarah reviewed the 2027 Budget. A few changes to note in this budget compared to the 2026 budget: salaries and health insurance premiums have increased. Because of this increase, the Agency can only contribute 1% to employee retirement accounts instead of 3%. Overestimated the local travel line item, advertising costs, utilities, and cybersecurity costs have increased. There were some VECF funds still available; plugged in those funds instead of using general funds to cover these increases.

Motion:
Motion made to approve the Head Start 2027 Budget.

Motion moved by Scott Sowder and motion seconded by Samantha Mahoney. All in favor. Motion carried.

V. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services Report and Monthly enrollment and attendance report - Roni Fitch

- PC and Board Report Feb 2026 doc.doc
- Enrollment Dashboard Jan 2026.xlsx

Roni is working on staff wellness plans and will be utilizing the Discovery Source materials for dealing with stress.
Personnel - should have a Lead Teacher on board very soon at the Fairlawn location; just waiting on background checks to come back. Several classrooms will need to make up days/time because of all the snow days this month. Some sites will be adding 15 to 30 minutes to the day beginning in March. Head Start performance standards state 1,020 program hours, per year, must be provided to students.

VI. Specialists Reports – Included in your packet for review

- ERSEA Feb 25 PC report.docx
- February 2026 Nutr Hlth Policy Council report.doc
- PC Report 2 26.docx
- February 2026.docx

The application QR code is included on the ERSEA report for anyone to share with friends and family encouraging them to apply for 2026/2027 school year.

VII. New Business –

A. T/TA Budget and Narrative Vote – Roni Fitch

- TTA Narrative 2026-2027 Feb 8.doc
- TTA Budget 2026-2027.docx

Roni took the five-year goals to create the Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) budget. The program is provided $35,586 for the budget and this amount has not increased in many years. The budget includes training costs staff are required to have to meet VA licensing and performance standards. If there are any funds left; then staff may be able to attend some professional development trainings.

Motion:
Motion made to approve the 2026/2027 Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) Budget

Motion moved by Scott Sowder and motion seconded by Samantha Mahoney. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Transportation Waiver Vote– Roni Fitch

Roni is seeking approval for the transportation waiver statement to be submitted in the annual grant application. The statement will ask permission to waive the transportation requirement of a 5-point harness for our 4-year-old Head Start students that are in the braided classrooms in the public school. The public schools will provide transportation to these students based on their requirements.

Motion:
Motion made to include the transportation waiver statement in the annual grant submission.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Annie Shaba. All in favor. Motion carried.

C. Approve Policy Council By-laws – Leah Hill

Policy Council ByLaws 2023 w Board approval.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve the 2026 revisions in the Policy Council by-laws.

Motion moved by Scott Sowder and motion seconded by Samantha Mahoney. All in favor. Motion carried.

D. Pulaski and ELC March Parent Engagement Event: Parent Fund Approval – Leah Hill

Pulaski and the ELC would like to do a combined spring fling parent engagement event at Edwards Hall @ NRCC in March. The request has been made for $382 of Pulaski Parent Funds and $68 of ELC funds to pay for supplies for the event.

Motion:
Motion made to approve $382 of Pulaski parent fund and $68 of ELC parent fund for March parent engagement event.

Motion moved by Samantha Mahoney and motion seconded by Annie Shaba. All in favor. Motion carried.

VIII. Announcements

Jennifer announced the Floyd sensory gym is coming together with an anticipated opening in May.

IX. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting was adjourned at 6:54pm.

A. Mark your calendars: March Policy Council: Wednesday, March 18th at 5:45pm @ Christiansburg Head Start

March Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
3/18/2026 5:45 PMEDT
@ 135 Church St., Christiansburg, VA 24073

Attendance

Present:
Members: Jennifer Brown, Roni Fitch, Leah Hill, Sarah Huff, Sarah Popczun, Stephanie Smith, Paige Walters, Vonetta Williams

Absent:
Members: Alisha Persinger, Nick Popczun, Annie Shaba, Scott Sowder

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:58pm.

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: February 2026

February Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Motion made to approve February 2026 Policy Council minutes as is.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Paige Walters. All in favor. Motion carried.

III. NRCA Board Updates and January 2026 Minutes: Policy Council/Board Liaison: Jennifer Brown

January 2026 board Minutes.pdf

No updates to note from last Board meeting.

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

February Dashboard.pdf

Head Start FY26 Income Statement - February.pdf

HS FY26 Policy Council - February.pdf

Parent Fund Accts - 3.12.26.pdf

Sarah reviewed the financial dashboard. Overall, the program is under budget slightly. Staff will be attending trainings in Spring, which will increase that line item. Went over in vehicle insurance, premiums were higher than budgeted for.
In-kind charts are looking better and in good standing for this time of year.
Credit card expenditures were passed around for member's review. Recent expenditures include staff background checks and job advertisements.

V. Director of Early Childhood/Family Services Report and Monthly enrollment and attendance report - Roni Fitch

PC and Board Report March 2026 doc.doc

Enrollment Dashboard February 2026.xlsx

The program received a letter from the Office of Head Start stating we are out of the full enrollment initiative. The food pyramid has now been changed and updated. The classrooms continue to have external CLASS observations. The program plans to have a summer program at Blacksburg Head Start. Hours will be 8:30am-1:00pm, M-Th. This is made possible through the church's financial contribution.
Roni is looking for guidance and direction from the Health and Mental Health Advisory Committee on how the program could support staff during stressful, crisis events. This is on their agenda for the April meeting. Roni is scheduled to meet with NRVCS to see if our contract could be expanded to include this benefit.

VI. Specialists Reports – Included in your packet for review

ERSEA March 26 PC report.docx

PC Report 3 26.docx

Nutrition and Health.pdf

VII. New Business –

A. Period 2 Child Outcomes report

2025-2029 Child Assessment Outcomes.xlsx

Policy Council was provided a copy of the Period 2 Child Outcomes.

Christiansburg Head Start is requesting $900 from their parent fund for some upcoming parent engagement events and their end of the year celebrations.

Motion:

Motion made to approve this spending from Christiansburg parent fund.

Motion moved by Paige Walters and motion seconded by Stephanie Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

Blacksburg Head Start is requesting $500 from their parent fund for upcoming parent engagement events and End of Year Celebration.

Motion:
Motion made to approve this spending from Blacksburg Head Start parent funds.

Motion moved by Jennifer Brown and motion seconded by Paige Walters. All in favor. Motion carried.

Beeks is requesting $67.75 from parent fund for end of year celebration.

Motion:
Motion made to approve this spending from Beeks parent fund.

Motion moved by Paige Walters and motion seconded by Stephanie Smith. All in favor. Motion carried.

VIII. Announcements

Barnyard Sensory gym in Floyd will hold soft opening and preview day on May 6th.

A. April Policy Council: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 at 5:30pm @ Christiansburg Head Start

IX. Adjournment of the Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

April Policy Council Minutes

NRCA Head Start Policy Council
4/22/2026 5:30 PMEDT
@ NRCA Christiansburg Head Start: 135 Church St., Christiansburg, 24073

Attendance

Present:
Members: Roni Fitch, Leah Hill, Sarah Huff, Nick Popczun, Sarah Popczun, Annie Shaba, Stephanie Smith, Scott Sowder (remote)

Absent:
Members: Jennifer Brown, Alisha Persinger, Paige Walters, Vonetta Williams

I. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:48pm.

II. Minutes from Last Meeting: March 2026

March Policy Council Minutes.docx

Motion:
Approve March 2026 minutes as is.

Motion moved by Stephanie Smith and motion seconded by Scott Sowder. All in favor. Motion carried

III. NRCA Board Updates and February 2026 Minutes: Policy Council/Board Liaison: Jennifer Brown

Board Minutes February 24, 2026.pdf

Board Minutes March 2026 signed.pdf

IV. Finance Report – Sarah Huff

March Dashboard.pdf

Head Start FY26 Income Statement - March.pdf

HS FY26 Policy Council - March.pdf

Parent Fund Accts - 4.17.26.pdf

Sarah reviewed the Financial Dashboard, overall, a little under budget for whole program.

The agency will be switching payroll systems because of the unexpected fees and increases.
In-kind totals are looking better, but would like to be a little higher with only two months left of program year. Credit card expenditures were passed around for member review. Sarah shared with the group she is expecting a baby.

V. Period 2 Child Outcomes - Dr. Kristy Castanon

2025-2029 Child Assessment Outcomes.xlsx

Kristy shared a few concerns/regressions during Period 2 because of the several snow days and holiday breaks. She did note the relate domain had good scores all throughout the different groups since there has been such a strong emphasis on the Big Five Practices. The DLL group takes a longer time to acclimate back to classrooms after long breaks. Three-year olds tend to show a smaller increase in domains than four-year olds. These reports really show how important regular attendance is to see long-term gains. For next year, the Ed team will be looking at ways to train the teachers how to modify small groups and lessons for three-year-olds compared to four-year-olds. The STREAMin3 curriculum does offer an infant/toddler guide and this may be a helpful tool in providing alternative activities for some of those younger threes or students who are having developmental difficulty.

VI. Director's Report and Enrollment Dashboard - Roni Fitch

PC and Board Report April 2026 doc.doc

Enrollment Dashboard March 2026 (9).xlsx

The Office of Head Start has appointed a new director: Lizbeth Casco White.
Roni had to resubmit the transportation waiver because there is a new process now. She is looking forward to doing the wellness program with staff and Site Adminstrator's will help facilitate the activities during staff meetings. Pulaski has a music program the students seem to be really enjoying. She used some dollars to purchase ukuleles for the children to learn how to play. She also used some funding to purchase parent supports around food pryamid, lead exposure, potty training and constipation that the Family Wellness Coaches will begin to share with families when they meet. Mental Health First Aide services will be added into MH contract with NRVCS. This will be available to staff when a crisis or trauma occurs at the schools.

VII. Spring MBI reports - Roni Fitch

MBI Report Master Report 25-26.xlsx

VIII. Specialists Reports

- ERSEA April 26 PC report.docx
- ISS PC Report 4 26.docx
- April_policycouncil26.docx
- Nutrition and Health Report .pdf

IX. New Business

A. Qualifications of teaching staff and family support staff discussion-Roni Fitch

Asked the members what they would like to see in teachers and family support staff as we begin to hire staff for open positions- comments included: showing up, providing consistency, experience - sharing and bringing new ideas into classroom, collaborative communication, sharing what's going on with child's day, and being able to communicate effectively during difficult topics and conversations.
The question was brought up about working with parents to get children to transition to full day, taking naps if they are not coming full days? Roni shared that we cannot force a child to lay on their cot; but we must be willing to work with parents and come up with a plan that may involve them helping during rest time or offering a variety of items to get children to "rest" on their cots. We want to provide and set-up an environment for good conversation and strong communication.

B. Floyd Parent Funds Request- Leah Hill

Motion:
Motion made to approve $225 dollars from parent fund for end of year celebrations.

Motion moved by Stephanie Smith and motion seconded by Annie Shaba. All in favor. Motion carried.

C. Pulaski Parent Funds Request - Leah Hill

Motion:
Motion made to approve $149.64 from ELC parent fund for end of year celebration.

Motion moved by Stephanie Smith and motion seconded by Sarah Popczun. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion:
Motion made to approve $300 for Pulaski end of year celebrations from parent fund.

Motion moved by Annie Shaba and motion seconded by Nick Popczun. All in favor. Motion carried.

D. McHarg Parent Funds Request - Leah Hill

Motion:
Motion made to approve $250 for McHarg end of year celebrations from parent funds.

Motion moved by Stephanie Smith and motion seconded by Scott Sowder. All in favor. Motion carried.

X. Announcements

XI. Meeting Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 6:58pm.

A. May Policy Council: TBD

Will plan to hold a policy council meeting during the summer to complete self-assessment with members.