



NMCAA Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday February 12, 2026
10a.m.-12p.m.

Present: Andi Shafer, Ashley Beemer, Autumn Minzey, Kaula Collier, Kelsey Jaszsz, Kayla Cook.

• **Call to Order & Welcome- Kayla Cook, Policy Council Vice Chair**

- Call to order, introductions and roll call (establish quorum)
- Approval of previous meeting minutes
 - Request, motion Andi Schaefer, Kaylu Collier, motion carried.

• **Agency Connection- Kerry Baughman, NMCAA Executive Director**

• **PARENT SUGGESTIONS**

- **Attendance concerns:** Andi raised issues about conflicting attendance reports among families and home visitors.
 - **School closures and safety:** Andi also questioned expectations for home visitors traveling during major school closures and unsafe weather conditions.
 - **Weather-related cancellations:** Corey noted that visits can be cancelled and rescheduled within the five-day workweek. Staff must document whether appointments cancelled due to weather and rescheduled accordingly.
 - **Use of FaceTime:** FaceTime may be used for communication; however, it does not count as an official Head Start visit.
 - **Missed visit follow-up:** Clarification was requested regarding what qualifies as a “talked to” contact. After two missed visits, follow-up discussions will vary based on the family’s circumstances.
 - **Staff attendance concerns:** Members discussed how to address inconsistent staff attendance and the need for clear policies—without placing blame.
 - **Family engagement:** Corey emphasized the importance of home visitors creating dedicated time to meet with parents, reviewing reasons for absences, and ensuring appropriate follow-up with both staff and families.
 - **Accountability and data accuracy:** The group discussed ensuring accurate data collection that reflects the needs and responsibilities of both families and staff, reinforcing shared accountability.
- **Data Story (Patterns, Trends & What They Tell Us)**
(Data-driven decision-making: pattern noted, contributing factors/implications, course corrections, Policy Council input)
- Attendance averaged **74% prior to COVID**, with a program goal to increase to **75%**.
 - Pre-COVID enrollment was full; however, attendance tracking became less accurate. A new tracking method now provides more reliable data.
 - Staff are reviewing attendance for each family and submitting information to Corey for an accurate spreadsheet entry, though earlier submissions did not include context or “stories.”
 - Following updated Head Start standards, the team is examining missed visits and underlying causes, including barriers faced by families struggling to keep appointments. Attendance has improved from **68% to 79%**.

Family Partnership Agreement Review

- Two versions of the agreement exist: one for expectant families and one for families with children.
- The updated agreements now include clearer expectations, including preferred days and times for visits. Corey reviewed these updates with the group.



- Families with 30 days of no visits may be placed on the waiting list unless extenuating circumstances apply.
- Communication remains essential, and while most visits must occur in the home, alternate locations may be used when appropriate.
- Playgroups are offered Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and home visitors can meet families at other times as needed.
- Families are required to complete 46 visits per year; some flexibility is built in for occasional missed visits. Supervisors may complete home visits if there are lapses.
- The group stressed that families should not feel anxious about exceptions, as reasonable accommodations are available.

Family Feedback & Engagement

- Members requested opportunities for anonymous feedback monthly to allow families to guide visit focus or raise concerns. Surveys are currently annual but may shift to quarterly.
 - Home visitors are encouraged to partner closely with families on child goals and conduct quick check-ins to monitor progress. HVs should verify observations with parents before finalizing reports.
 - Additional on-site documentation is encouraged so home visitors can capture details they may otherwise forget to include in reports.
 - Completing the ASQ with families was identified as a valuable practice.
- **Approval Items (Shared Decision-Making)**
 - Carryover Request- FY 2025- Tabled until March

- **Program Information Summary Report (Updates on Program Systems + Comprehensive Services)**

Program Systems

- Fiscal Integrity: Budget to actual spending review (monthly)
 - Close out 2025; we do have until March to finalize, waiting to get summary from the business office.
 - There was a full spend out for all budgets.
 - We met our non-federal match for 2025.
- Enrollment update (monthly)
 - 84% for home based, 80 HS, 84 EHS.
 - Full enrollment initiative. Maintaining 97% attendance.
- Change in Scope
 - Looking at program structure.
 - Looking at the future, meet community needs.
 - Slots may change in different areas.
 - Working with consultants
 - It's all in program information summary. General overview of the employee survey.
 - Consultant will send out another survey shortly.
 - There will be a March meeting to go over the new survey.
 - Looking to get Change in Scope approved in March.
 - Slots may be reduced or changed, staff changes, structure in programming.
 - If there is not someone available in a certain county, we would pull another worker in for home based.

Comprehensive Services

- Recruitment: Share the Gift of Learning- Lynette Olson, Recruitment Specialist
 - Packet, letter to families
 - Coupons on letter
 - Share them with a family member and friend who would be eligible.
 - Take it somewhere to hand out.
 - Parents help spread the word.
 - If you have not received it yet, you will be.
 - New flyer will be out; we also have a smaller flyer to hand out.



- If you are interested in handing any out, Lynette will give you some to hand out.
- Lynette shared our new ad that is on 9&10 News.

- **Governance Understanding & Training Touchpoint**

- Income and Eligibility Training- Alicia Temple, ERSEA and Health Manager
 - Enrollment, Eligibility, Training, etc.
 - Eligible – get this from somewhere else. Include GSRP – no income , IEP, foster care are top priority. Strong Beginnings is higher. There is a point system. 100-130, more if they deduct house payment, taxes, utilities (30% of your income on these)
 - Alisha reviewed the points system for priority criteria.
 - This has not changed since last year.
 - Dignity and respect
 - Showing the five aspects of our cornerstone of culture. (type this up)
 - HS/EHS purpose and programs.
 - Purpose-required from the HS Standards.
 - Policies – False Information
 - Staff, verifying staff, parents.
 - Eligibility statement signed by staff
 - Staff cannot complete applications for family members.
 - Staff who are dishonest –
 - Parents must sign application.
 - Never have experiences anyone falsifying
 - EHS HV, EHS Center Based, EHS Childcare partners, HSH Based, HS Childcare partners, HS Classrooms. GSRP classrooms as well. Strong Beginnings classroom will start in September with one classroom.

- **Member Voice**

- Open discussion was held regarding potential topics for future meetings.
- Members asked whether Head Start offers a Montessori program; it does not.
- Questions were raised about how classrooms operate and the supports available.
- Members asked whether classrooms can accommodate children with autism. Staff confirmed that they can, and encouraged families to schedule a classroom visit. Coaches may also come into classrooms, collaborate with ISD partners, and work alongside staff and teachers to support students.

- **Personnel Approval**

- Motion to approve Personnel (put personnel here)
 - a. Motion, Kayla K second by Ashley

- **Adjournment at 12:02pm**

Meeting Objectives

1. Better understanding of NMCAA and Head Start locally and nationally
2. Increased knowledge on income and eligibility processes

Next Meeting March 12, 2026

Chair – Melanie Chaney; Vice Chair – Kayla Cook; Secretary – Amie Hose; Treasurer – Brigitte Young; Parliamentarian- Open; State Delegates –Bethany Parent, Rosalyn Alfsen; Alternates-Brigitte Young, Open

Policy Council members, review program data, learn how systems and services support children and families, and share ideas to help improve the program.