

Manchester School Readiness Council By-Laws

Council Mission: To advocate for the advancement of young children's learning by promoting policies, programs, and partnerships among Manchester families, schools and the community.

1. Memberships

- 1.1 **Interest in Children.** The Council shall be a representative body with a diverse constituency having expertise and interest in young children and early childhood care and education in Manchester. The Council will strive to reflect the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of Manchester among its members.
- 1.2 **Member Requirements.** The membership of the Council shall be established by the Mayor, as the chief elected official of Manchester, and the Superintendent of schools in Manchester, and the members shall consist, at a minimum, of the following individuals:
 - a. Chief elected official of the Town, or the official's designee;
 - b. Superintendent of Schools of the Town, or a management level staff person as the superintendent's designee;
 - c. Parents;
 - d. Kindergarten teacher;
 - e. Representatives from local programs such as Head Start, family resource centers, nonprofit and for-profit child day care centers, group day care homes, pre-kindergarten and nursery schools, and family day care home providers, and the municipality;
 - f. Other representatives from the community who provide services or otherwise have an interest in children.

2. Appointments, Term of Membership

2.1 **Appointments, Filling of Vacancies.** All members of the School Readiness Council shall be appointed formally by the chief elected official and the Superintendent of Schools, based on a proposed slate of nominees presented by the School Readiness Council. The Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools shall appoint Manchester's School Readiness Council from this slate of nominees and any other individuals of their choosing. These two officials shall also fill any vacancies on the council from nominees presented to them for review and approval.

2.2 **Term Limits.** All appointees to the Council are named to three-year terms of office, the initial appointments staggered to provide continuity, thus one third of the Council will be considered for reappointment each year. Officers of the

Council will be appointed or elected as officers for two-year terms, and may serve not more than a total of three consecutive two-year terms.

3. Officers and Leadership

3.1 Council Officers. The School Readiness Council shall nominate Co-chairpersons to be presented to the Mayor for his or her review and appointment. The Co-chairpersons shall be members of the Council. At least one Co-chairperson must be a representative of the Town of Manchester or the Board of Education. Chairpersons cannot both be from the Town of Manchester or the Board of Education.

3.2 Co-Chairpersons. The Mayor will designate the Co-chairpersons of the Council. The duties of the Co-chairpersons shall be to preside at meetings of the Council serving as the primary spokespersons.

3.3 Secretary. The Council shall elect a Secretary from among its members. The Secretary shall be responsible to keep Minutes of the proceedings of the Council, give or cause to be given, all notices of any meetings, and shall designate the location of the organization's records, all in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

3.4 Officer Term Limits. Officers of the Council will be appointed or elected for two-year terms, and may serve not more than a total of three consecutive two-year terms. Co-chairpersons will have staggered terms.

3.5 The School Readiness Liaison. Serves as a liaison between The Council, the Town of Manchester, the Board of Education and other funding sources.

4. Work Groups

Work Groups. Work groups are established as needed and should be reflective of the Early Childhood Community Plan.

4.1 Executive Work Group This is a standing work group and shall be comprised of the Past Co-chairpersons, Co-chairpersons, and Secretary of the Council and the School Readiness Liaison. The Governance work group shall have overall responsibility for and authority to act on the Council's behalf between regularly scheduled meetings and in cases where immediate action is necessary.

4.2 Work Group Membership. All Work Groups may have, as participants and members, both Council and non-council members. Each Work Group will have a chair selected by its members; however, the chair of such Work Groups

shall be an appointed member in good standing of the School Readiness Council.

5. Council Operating Policies and Procedures

- 5.1 Council Role. The Manchester School Readiness Council is a group of individuals and organizations concerned about the education and the general well being of young children and families in Manchester. The Council's role is as an advisory body to the Town of Manchester and the Board of Education on policy issues, including: authorizing efforts to seek funds for its activities and early childhood services; allocating resources under its purview; fulfilling School Readiness requirements and responsibilities; and maintaining the adequacy and quality of early childhood education services in the community.
- 5.2. Council Member Expectations. A duly appointed member of the Council will fulfill the obligations as set forth in "Roles and Responsibilities" as established, and from time to time amended, by the Council. Such description will describe expectations for each member, including attendance and participation in work groups and other Council activities.
- 5.3 Decision-making. Decisions of the Council will be reached by majority rule. Majority rule is a decision rule that selects alternatives which have a majority, that is, more than half the votes
- 5.4 Quorum. For purposes of conducting business, a quorum shall be one-third of the current membership of the Council.
- 5.5 Meetings. The Council will convene at least five times annually, and its Work Groups will conduct business in between meetings, take appropriate action, and make recommendations to the Council as needed.
- 5.6 Changes in By-laws. The Council will notify members of any proposed changes in the by-laws, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the vote planned for consideration of such changes.

6. School Readiness General Policy and Program Operations

- 6.1 Sub-grantee Fee Policy. Sub-grantees shall establish written fee policies and disseminate these policies to families and staff, at least in their respective handbooks. Such policies shall at a minimum, shall address:
- a. How family contribution is determined;
 - b. How fees are assessed and collected;

- c. How income, family size, DSS cash assistance status and any other eligibility factors are determined and verified;
- d. How confidentiality of family information is maintained; and
- e. Procedures addressing other issues, including but not be limited to, fee forgiveness, failure to pay, any process for the temporary reduction in assessed fees and the process for appealing a fee determination.
- f. Criteria to deal with payment issues for school readiness families with child care expenses for children other than the school readiness child.

6.2 Monthly Service Delivery Report. Sub-grantees shall submit accurate data on fees collected each month using the Monthly Service Delivery Report and shall review that data for consistency with established

6.3 Alternative Care Plan Policy. Full-Day/Full-Year or Extended Day sub-grantees that operate for 50 weeks or close for days other than traditional holidays shall submit an Alternative Care Plan Policy to the School Readiness Council. The plan must include the requirements that:

- a. Parents will be informed of the alternative care policy when they enroll and the available alternative care programs;
- b. Parents will be given at least a two-week prior written notice of the closing; parents will sign a form for their child's file that indicates if they need the alternative care; and the manner in which alternate arrangements of care will be reimbursed.

6.4 Individualized Education Program. The School Readiness Council shall adhere to the requirements set forth by the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood General Policy B-06 regarding school readiness spaces for children with Individualized Education Programs, including the following policies:

- a. The School Readiness council shall support and maintain ongoing communication between the public school special education personnel and the School Readiness providers.
- b. The SRC shall obtain parent permission in order to access a child's IEP information.
- c. All children with an IEP be provided with a program that ensures continuity and consistency in the least restrictive environment. The parent(s), the School Readiness Program, and the public school/LEA (lead education agency) will collaborate to plan a program best suited to meet the goals in the IEP in the least restrictive environment. If the delivery of special education services is at location other than the School Readiness program, with the parents' permission, a defined process for ongoing communication between the two programs should be coordinated to ensure consistency of services in the least restrictive environment.
- d. All children with an IEP who are receiving special education and related services and are participating in any type of School Readiness space are entitled to all the

School Readiness services as defined by the School Readiness legislation set forth in the Connecticut Administered State-Funded Program General Policy B-06.

- e. School Readiness reimbursement may not be used to supplant the cost of the child's special education and related services, and special education funds may not be used to pay for a School Readiness space.
 - f. School Readiness Liaison shall follow the recommendations of the IEP to determine if the current School Readiness sub-grantee(s) space-type is appropriate for the child.
- 6.5 Residency. Manchester School Readiness programs shall enroll Manchester residents in their grant funded Pre-K programs.

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