

**Minutes**  
**Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start**  
**Policy Council**  
**April 9, 2026**

Members Present

Casey Brown	Tina Layman
Anna Uptain	Carla Testerman
Misty Busler	Tina Patterson
Tamra Williamson	Kelly Ritenour
Misti Eubanks	Kayla Murrell

Members Not Present

Katie Hearn	Melissa Logan
Nestor Sanchez	Emily Johnson
Tammy Spears	

Employes Present

Kristie Woolard	Ginny Ritchea
Emily Kelley	Curt Amos
Melody Cantrell	

Guests Present

Rene Tabor	Logan Johnson
Haley Moore	

Douglas-Cherokee Head Start/Early Head Start held a Policy Council Meeting on April 9, 2026, at Shoney's, located at 120 Sharon Dr. Dandridge, TN 37725.

Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/ERSEA/Family Community Partnership Manager, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM and announced that we needed to elect a meeting moderator because the chair and vice chair could not attend the meeting. Carla Testerman, Hamblen County, volunteered to be the moderator.

Kristie asked for approval for Carla Testerman to be the Policy Council moderator for the meeting. Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, made the motion for approval and Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Emily Kelley, Assistant Director, provided the Literacy reading with the book, *The Hike* by Alison Farrell.

Carla asked for approval of the Policy Council minutes from March 2026. Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, made the motion for approval and Kelly Ritetnour, Sevier County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Logan Johnson, DCEA Senior Nutrition Program, presented the DCEA Program Spotlight. She shared information about the Senior Nutrition program for adults 60 years and older. She provided a program brochure. For more information call: 423-318-6935.

Ginny Ritchea, HR Manager, presented the personnel report. The report was uploaded to the website. Carla asked for a motion to approve the personnel report and approve all hiring decisions. Casey Brown, Blount County, made the motion for approval and Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Melody Cantrell, Finance Manager, discussed the budget overview. The report was uploaded to the website. Carla asked for a motion to approve the budget report. Kelly Ritenour, Sevier County, made the motion for approval and Tamra Williamson, Cocke County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Tamra Williamson, Chant/Children's Special Services, Care Coordination with the Cocke County Health Department, presented the Community Spotlight. Tamra explained that the Chant program combines social services and medical services through referrals for prenatal, post-partum, and children. For more information call Tamra at 423-623-8733.

#### Training/Reports

- Kindergarten Transition: Emily Kelley, Assistant Director
  - There are classroom activities that include reading about kindergarten.
  - Family Advocates work to plan kindergarten transition meetings for parents with the local school system and provide important information about registration.
  - Our program provides pencil boxes with supplies for all children going to kindergarten.
- FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education): Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/ERSEA/Family Community Partnership Manager
  - Handouts were provided.
  - Kristie explained the parents' rights.
  - Information about IEP and IDEA was given.
- Recruitment for next program year: Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/ERSEA/Family Community Partnership Manager
  - We are currently taking applications for the 26/27 program year.

#### Old Business

- None

#### New Business

- Selection Criteria: Curt Amos, Program Director
  - Copies of the new proposed and the old criteria were uploaded to the website.
  - Updates to the selection criteria include removing points for duplicated categories.
  - All changes were introduced.

Carla asked for a motion to start using the proposed selection criteria and to adjust the selection criteria if needed. Casey Brown, Blount County, made the motion for approval and Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Approval of Executive Committee, Kristie Woolard, Parent Involvement/ERSEA/Family Community Partnership Manager
  - All current Policy Council elected officers are automatically on the Executive Committee.
  - Another member must be elected to complete the Policy Council Executive Committee.
  - The Executive Committee members meet on an “as needed” basis to approve program changes though the summer months.
  - Misty Busler from Cocke County volunteered to be elected to the Executive Committee.

Carla asked for a motion to elect Misty Busler for the Executive Committee. Kelly Ritenour, Sevier County, made the motion for approval and Tina Patterson, Jefferson County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

- Curt Amos, Program Director, presented the Director’s Report
  - The Health and Mental Health Social Services Committee met on April 7.
  - The grant was returned for revisions and has been resubmitted.
  - The council was reminded of the plan to add Special Service Assistants to every classroom.
  - Next year Boyd’s Creek, Bean Station, Southdowne, and Cross Creek classrooms will no longer be extended duration classrooms. These classrooms will be changed to non-duration classrooms. Central Point, a Maryville classroom, and Maynardville will become extended duration classrooms.
  - A menu committee will be selected to update the current menu. The goal is to make our menu more kid friendly.
  - The Policy Council Committee was informed about a licensing violation at Maryville Head Start and Mt. Vernon Head Start.
  - The CACFP grant is due in August. We will need Policy Council approval to submit this grant to get reimbursement for meal costs.

Carla asked for approval of the Director’s Report and submission of the CACFP Grant. Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, made the motion for approval and Casey Brown, Blount County, seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Kristie presented the MVP awards for the classrooms with the most volunteer hours for February.

- Blount           Maryville 5
- Cocke           Newport 2
- Grainger       Rutledge
- Hamblen       Learning Center 4/Early Head Start 5
- Jefferson       White Pine
- Monroe         Madisonville
- Sevier          Oak Cluster
- Union          Cross Creek

Carla asked for approval to adjourn the meeting. Misty Busler, Cocke County, made the motion and Misti Eubanks, Grainger County, seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM.