



702 3RD AVENUE SOUTH

VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA 55792-2797

ARROWHEAD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES

November 5, 2025

PRESENT:

Alecia Varani	EHS East Range-Quad 1
Brandi Reamer	EHS West Range
Rob Hietala	AEOA Board Representative
Stacey Roepke	Hibbing II
Sara Flack	Chisholm
Carla Current	EHS Home Base Program Manager
Connie Derickson	Program Manager
Jerry Crittenden	Community Relations Manager
Nicole Larsen	Family Support Specialist
Meghan Winsor	Disabilities and Mental Health Manager
Barb Fedora	Program Manager
Chris DeGroote	Head Start Assistant Director
Gabe Johnson	Head Start Director
Tracy Sandnas	Head Start Finance Supervisor

SITES NOT REPRESENTED OR EXCUSED:

Babbitt-Open
Eveleth-Gilbert-Absent
CHIC EHS & Chisholm-Absent
EHS Hibbing & Northern Tier-Open
Hermantown-Absent
Hibbing I-Absent
Hibbing III-Absent
Hibbing IV-Open
EHS Lake & Hermantown-Absent
Policy Council Rep to the Board-Excused
Proctor-Absent
PSHB-Absent
Two Harbors-Absent
Virginia I-Absent
Virginia II-Excused

The Policy Council meeting was held on November 5, 2025, at the conference room of the Station 44 Building in Eveleth and via Teams.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Stacey Roepke, Chairperson, called the Arrowhead Head Start Policy Council Meeting to order at 9:46 a.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2025.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken showing 5 members present. A quorum was not established. Policy Council bylaws state in 4.7(g), *When a quorum is not established for a scheduled meeting, a Policy Council member may make a motion to conduct an official meeting with those members present so important business can be done. The motion must receive a second and passed unanimously by those in attendance. If approved, the meeting shall be deemed official. Decisions and rulings shall stand. If the motion lacks a second or is not passed unanimously, then an official meeting will not take place and no decisions will be made.* **Stacey Roepke moved to conduct an official meeting, supported by Alicia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.**
- III. **CORRECTION/APPROVAL OF August 13, 2025, POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES:** **Alecia Varani moved to accept August 13, 2025, minutes, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.**
- IV. **CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** Nutrition Policy Updates were removed from the agenda. **Sara Flack moved to accept the corrected agenda, supported by Alicia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.**
- V. **CORRESPONDENCE:** We received correspondence for addressing chronic absenteeism in Head Start Programs and the 2026 Monitoring Process for Head Start recipients. These were provided in their entirety in the Policy Council packet.
- VI. **REPORTS:**
DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Gabe Johnson reported on how the federal shutdown is affecting Head Start programs and ours specifically. It was reported that reviews are currently on hold during the shutdown and that we have lost contact with our Program and Fiscal Specialists. A discussion about SNAP benefits ensued and information about agency food resources was discussed that was provided to our program to give to families. Three of our staff attended a Train the Trainer event for Conscious Discipline after receiving a \$5,000 per person grant. Construction has delayed the infant and toddler center start up. Our program has received Medica grant money for \$20,000 to improve dental outcomes and the Nutrition Supplemental Grant has been awarded.

Our program participated in Strategic Planning on Oct. 15th and 16th. Planning for new administration priorities was included in the planning. A discussion ensued about Head Start new priorities. **Sara Flack moved to accept the Director's Report, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.**

A. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Gabe Johnson presented the financial statements.

FY 2025 MN HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$702,898.00 for the period from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$96,603.50; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$96,603.50. The balance is \$606,294.50

FY 2025 FEDERAL HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$2,544,527.00 for the period from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$456,933.84; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$1,226,720.52. A balance of \$1,317,806.48 remains.

FY 2025 FEDERAL EARLY HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$1,821,881.00 for the period from April 1, 2025, through March 31, 2026. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$421,607.31; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$829,849.61; The balance of \$986,781.39 remains.

The July & August credit card report was presented. **Brandi Reamer moved to accept the Financial Reports, supported by Sara Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT: Jerry Crittenden reported on enrollment and shared the current enrollment report. We are not fully enrolled in EHS due to the infant toddler center construction in progress. Head Start is just under enrolled for October but will be fully enrolled in November. A discussion was held. **Sarah Flack moved to accept the Community Relations Report, supported by Alecia Varani. Motion carried unanimously.**

D. AEOA BOARD MEETING REPORT AUGUST 20, 2025, AND OCTOBER 15, 2025: Gabe reported that we have a new AEOA Executive Director, Mark Page. Mark has been getting out in the field to learn about our departments. Rob Hietala reported that this is the first Director that isn't home grown. He previously worked at the Children's Museum in Philadelphia. He brings a new perspective to the agency. SNAP affects a lot of departments, not just Head Start. Board of Directors elections were held. 5 new members have joined the board in the last 6 months. AEOA is still working on a

building purchase in Hibbing. **Alecia Varani moved to approve the AEOA Board Meeting Report, supported by Sarah Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. GRANT AWARDS: Gabe reported on the DEED, Multi-Purpose, Medica, and Nutrition Supplement grants. The Playground grant is still sitting in the queue waiting to be approved.

B. PARENT FAMILY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. NEW HIRES:

New Staff	First	Second	Motion Passed
Hibbing 1 Teacher Amanda Mitchell	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved
Hibbing 2 Teacher Whitney Mahlberg	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved
Hibbing 2 Classroom Assistant Kaydince Thoennes	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved
Hibbing 4 Teacher Jessica Dorriot	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved
EHS Program Manager Carla Current	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved
Business Analyst & Compliance Monitor Kelly Garrity	Sarah Flack	Alicia Varani	Approved

B. CACFP APPLICATION APPROVAL: Gabe presented the application for approval. **Alecia Varani moved to accept the CACFP APPLICATION, supported by Sarah Flack. Motion carried unanimously.**

C. POLICY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE (NEXT MTG WEDNESDAY, November 12, 2025). This meeting will be our Policy Council Orientation meeting for all our new members. The meeting will be all virtual.

IX. PARENT & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS: Stacey Roepke reported that Keewatin did a movie theatre and Halloween party.

X. MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION: Gabe asked members to pick a theme for our December elections meeting. Members decided the theme will be Hawaiian. Please feel free to wear your favorite tropical attire to the next meeting.

XI. **ADJOURNMENT: Sarah Flack moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

XII. RECOGNITION LUNCHEON.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sandnas, Finance Supervisor

Gabe Johnson, Director Arrowhead Head Start