



702 3RD AVENUE SOUTH

VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA 55792-2797

ARROWHEAD HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES

August 12, 2026

PRESENT:

Alicia Varani	VA Toddler Center/Chairperson
Armony Hutchinson	Eveleth-Gilbert
Brandi Reamer	EHS Hibbing & West Range
Stacey Roepke	CHIC & Northern Tier
Carla Current	EHS Program Manager
Barb Fedora	Program Manager
Amanda Gwash	Program Manager
Connie Derickson	Program Manager
Kristine Norberg	Health Manager
Jerry Crittenden	Community Relations Manager
Nicole Larsen	Family Support Specialist
Gabe Johnson	Head Start Director
Tracy Sandnas	Head Start Finance Supervisor
Rebekah Lossing	Program Support Specialist

SITES NOT REPRESENTED OR EXCUSED:

Babbitt-Open
Chisholm-Open
East Range & Quad 1-Absent
EHS Lake & Hermantown-Excused
EHS East Range-Quad 1-Absent
Hermantown-Absent
Hibbing I-Open
Hibbing II-Rachael Johnson-Resigned 8/12/26
Hibbing III-Open
Hibbing IV-Open
Proctor-Absent
PSHB-Absent
Rob Hietala AEOA BOD Rep-Excused
Two Harbors-Absent
Virginia Infant Center-Absent
Virginia I-Open
Virginia II-Absent

The Policy Council meeting was held on August 12th, 2026, in the conference room of the Station 44 Building in Eveleth and via Teams.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER:** Alicia Varani, Chairperson, called the Arrowhead Head Start Policy Council Meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. on Wednesday, August 12th, 2026.
- II. **ROLL CALL:** Roll call was taken showing 4 members present. A quorum was not established. Policy Council Bylaws state in 2.1(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 Armony Hutchinson. Motion carried unanimously.**
- III. **CORRECTION/APPROVAL OF August 12, 2026, POLICY COUNCIL MINUTES:** **Armony Hutchinson moved to accept August 12, 2026, minutes, supported by Stacey Roepke. Motion carried unanimously.**
- IV. **CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:** We had a resignation from Rachael Johnson, who is our PC representative to the board. We will be adding this to the agenda until the next meeting. **Armony Hutchinson moved to accept the Corrections/Additions to Agenda, supported by Stacey Roepke. Motion carried unanimously.**
- V. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.
- VI. **REPORTS:**
 - A. **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Gabe Johnson reported on the federal side.

The Head Start Performance Standards are going through federal review. Programs have not seen a draft of the new standards yet. We have been informed that the notice of proposed rulemaking is called "Modernizing the Head Start Program by Reducing Requirements and Enhancing Alignment with Local and State Systems." Programs are anticipating major changes to their standards.

On the state side, Minnesota Head Start Association (MHSA) is updating their learning communities that help support the different areas of oversight. Health, Enrollment, Coaching, and Director tracks are a few of these areas.

In our Head Start Program, construction has been completed in the infant and toddler rooms at the Virginia HRA. We have passed all the inspections, including: a local building inspection, fire marshal inspection, health inspection, and DCYF licenser inspection. Programming begins August 3rd.

Head Start center-based programming and home visiting resumes in September. Early Head Start programming continues to run year-round. We are currently taking applications for programming for the upcoming year. **Armony Hutchinson moved to accept the Director's Report, supported by Stacey Roepke. Motion carried unanimously.**

B. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Tracy Sandnas 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. This grant was closed out after all expenditures for the year.

FY 2026 MN HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$702,898.00 for the period from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$11,504.28; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$11,504.28. The balance is \$691,393.72.

FY 2026 FEDERAL HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$2,462,968.00 for the period from April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$566,628.70; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$831,510.12. YTD encumbrances were \$4,017.98. A balance of \$1,627,439.90 remains.

FY 2026 FEDERAL EARLY HEAD START GRANT: This grant for \$1,930,823.00 for the period from April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027. The Current Period Actual Expenditures are \$492,986.73; the YTD Actual Expenditures are \$649,843.38; YTD encumbrances were \$1,316.94. The balance of \$1,279,662.68 remains.

The March & April credit card report was presented. **Stacey Roepke moved to accept the Financial Reports, supported by Armony Hutchinson. Motion was carried unanimously.**

C. COMMUNITY RELATIONS REPORT: Jerry Crittenden reported on the enrollment report. Parents are trying to get transportation set up for the fall. Our enrollments

are down in some sites more than others. A discussion was held. **Stacey Roepke moved to accept the Community Relations Report, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.**

- D. AEOA BOARD MEETING REPORT JUNE 17, 2026:** Gabe reported the Hibbing project has been something the agency has been working on to get space in Hibbing. They are looking at possibly purchasing the Greenhaven school for potential programming. **Stacey Roepke moved to approve the AEOA Board Meeting Report, supported by Brandi Reamer. Motion carried unanimously.**

VII.

OLD BUSINESS:

- A. SCHOOL READINESS:** Carla Current reported on period 4. This is only for EHS. All the kids' scores are growing in all areas. The full report is available in each member's packet.
- B. SPA ALTERNATE ELECTION:** We are still looking for a SPA alternate. This has been tabled until the next meeting.
- C. PARENT FAMILY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** NA

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. NEW HIRES:

New Staff	First	Second	Motion Passed
EHS Toddler Center Teacher McKenzie Deutsch	Alicia Varani	Armony Hutchinson	Approved

B. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: please visit aeoa.org to read the full policies.

Policy	First	Second	Motion Passed
Separation from the Group	Armony Hutchinson	Stacey Roepke	Approved

- C. VIRGINIA INFANT AND TODDLER UPDATES:** Gabe covered this in his director's report. We will be having an open house at the center on August 25th. Gabe will send out a flyer.
- D. EDIAM RECERTIFICATION:** Gabe needs approval to get recertified. **Armony Hutchinson moved to accept the Ediam Recertification, supported by Stacey Roepke. Motion was carried unanimously.**

E. **POLICY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE (NEXT MTG October 14, 2026, at Station 44).** We will send out menu choices ahead of time. Policy Council members have decided on a Halloween and practical magic theme.

IX. **PARENT & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:** Hibbing Head Start is having a fall carnival at the Washington School in Hibbing. This event will take place on October 15th 2026.

X. **MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION:** None

XI. **ADJOURNMENT: Stacey Roepke moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Armony Hutchinson. Motion carried unanimously.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracy Sandnas, Finance Supervisor

Gabe Johnson, Director Arrowhead Head Start