



# Hidalgo County Head Start Program Policy Council Agenda

**DATE:** November 19, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Discussion/Approval of Locally Designed Program  
Option Waiver \$1302.24

**RATIONALE/NEED:** HCHSP is requesting to operate a locally-designed program option to provide an alternative approach to providing program services. HCHSP will temporarily implement home-based Early Head Start services to 120 infants and toddlers.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Administration recommends approval.

**COST:** None

**RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDED:**

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**INITIATED BY:** Irma Peña, Head Start Executive Director 

**REVIEWED BY:** Irma Peña, Head Start Executive Director 

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:** 

Hidalgo County Head Start Program – Grantee 06CH012134

Waiver Request for Locally Designed Option §1302.24

Early Head Start Program

In accordance with Head Start Federal Performance Standard §1302.24 for locally-designed program option variations, the Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) is requesting a waiver to operate a locally-designed program option. HCHSP seeks authorization to operate a temporary home-based program option to provide services to 120 Early Head Start (EHS) children and families from January 2026 to May 2026. HCHSP has full confidence that we will provide the 120 EHS children and families with a full range of services consistent with §1302.20(b) and we will demonstrate in this waiver request how we will achieve the program goals for the requested time period.

Background: HCHSP had submitted a change in scope to OHS to provide EHS services for 240 infants and toddlers in a center-based program option that was approved by OHS on September 5, 2025, to begin services on January 6, 2026. HCHSP received notification from Pharr-San Juan-Alamo (PSJA) ISD, a local education agency that was to partner with HCHSP to provide EHS center-based services, that they were no longer going to partner with HCHSP for EHS services. PSJA-ISD stated that after reviewing their budget they would not be able to support this initiative, and they also stated they had reservations of the stability and viability of the federal funding for Head Start because of the government shutdown. PSJA-ISD was scheduled to provide 20 EHS teachers and a facility that would house 16 EHS classrooms.

Current Status: While this is a temporary setback, HCHSP has a strategic plan that will provide services to 120 EHS funded slots in a center-based option, and 120 EHS funded slots in home-

based option on a temporary basis if approved beginning January 6, 2026. The following table will illustrate the proposed changes as a result of the elimination of the PSJA-ISD collaboration. The proposed changes in the conversion table will highlight converting 4 HS classrooms to EHS classrooms at our San Juan HS center, and converting 3 HS classrooms to EHS classrooms at our Mission HS center. In addition, Donna ISD current HS/EHS partner is constructing a brand-new wing at Garza Elementary specifically designed for EHS services that will be ready for services starting school year 2026-27 that will be at no cost to the program. The HS children that are currently enrolled in those classrooms that will be converted will not be affected next school year as they will transition to kindergarten.

Local Design Option (Home Based Services - January 1 thru May 31, 2026)					
Location	# of HS Classrooms	Funded Enrolled	# of EHS Classrooms	Funded Enrolled	Notes
Alvarez Elem-McAllen ISD	6	120	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
Camarena Head Start-Mission CISD	8	160	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
Donna Head Start-Donna ISD	0	0	8	64	Home Based Services (January 1 thru May 31, 2026)
Garza Elem-Donna ISD	0	0	8	64	Home Based Services (January 1 thru May 31, 2026)
Guzman Elem-Donna ISD	16	320	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
Edinburg Head Start-Edinburg CISD	9	180	0	0	Added 3 HS Classrooms
Edinburg North Head Start-Edinburg CISD	6	120	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
Escandon Elem-McAllen ISD	5	100	0	0	No Change
Farias Elem-PSJA ISD	5	100	0	0	Reduced 1 HS Classroom
Guerra Elem-PSJA ISD	4	80	0	0	New HS Campus
Longoria Elem-PSJA ISD	4	80	0	0	Reduced 2 HS Classrooms
Mercedes Elem-Mercedes ISD	9	180	0	0	Added 2 HS Classrooms
Mission Head Start-Mission CISD	0	0	6	48	Home Based Services (January 1 thru May 31, 2026)
Monte Alto Elem-Monte Alto ISD	3	60	0	0	No Change
Palacios Elem-PSJA ISD	4	80	0	0	New HS Campus
Pearson Elem-Mission CISD	16	320	0	0	New HS Campus
Sam Houston Elem-McAllen ISD	5	100	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
San Carlos Head Start-Edinburg CISD	4	80	0	0	No Change
San Juan Head Start-PSJA ISD	0	0	8	64	Home Based Services (January 1 thru May 31, 2026)
Singleterry Elem-Donna ISD	10	200	0	0	Added 4 HS Classrooms
Thigpen-Zavala Elem-McAllen ISD	5	100	0	0	No Change
Wilson Elem-McAllen ISD	5	100	0	0	Added 1 HS Classroom
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>2480</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>240</b>	

HCHSP will continue to follow the approved HS and EHS calendar submitted in the change in scope. During the summer break, HCHSP will convert affected HS classrooms to meet EHS classroom specifications and requirements to include acquiring TX Childcare Licensing.

§1302.22 (a) Home-Based Option Setting: HCHSP will provide the full range of services consistent with §1302.20(b) through visits with the child's parents, primarily in the child's home and through group socialization opportunities in HS classrooms and facilities.

§1302.22 (b) Home-Based Option Caseload: The EHS teacher who has an Infant/Toddler CDA will be assigned as a home visitor and will have a maximum of 12 families for an individual EHS teacher/home visitor.

§1302.22 (c) Home-Based Option Service Duration: As this is a request for a temporary waiver, therefore all children receiving home-based services will transition to center-based services beginning school year 2026-27.

§1302.22 (c)(1,i): All HCHSP home-based children will receive one home visit per week per family that lasts at least one hour and a half for the duration of the temporary home-based program.

§1302.22 (c)(1,ii): HCHSP will provide two group socializations per month during the duration of the temporary home-based services.

§1302.22 (c)(3,i): HCHSP staff will make up planned home visits or scheduled group socialization activities that were canceled by the program, and to the extent possible attempt to make up planned home visits cancelled by the family to meet §1302.22 (c)(1).

§1302.22 (c) (3,ii): HCHSP will not replace home visits or scheduled group socialization activities for medical or social service appointments for the purposes of meeting the minimum requirements.

§1302.22 (c) Home-Based Option Safety Requirements: HCHSP will conduct socialization activities in HCHSP facilities that are licensed by TX Childcare Licensing.

Home-Base Program Implementation:

§1302.35 Education in Home-Based Program: HCHSP will provide home visits and group socialization activities that promote secure parent-child relationships and help parents provide high-quality early learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts. HCHSP will implement a research-based curriculum “Love and Learn®” that was developed by Frog Street® specifically for home-based programs. HCHSP will capitalize on the learning opportunities in the home environment. The Love and Learn® curriculum will effectively guide the EHS teacher/home visitor to empower parents so they can provide high-quality learning experiences to enhance their child’s growth and development. Home visits and socialization activities will be mentally and linguistically appropriate that will support children’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school. All home visits will be planned jointly by the parents and the EHS teacher/home visitor. All of our EHS teachers/home visitors are bilingual and can effectively communicate with the parent, directly or through an interpreter if needed. Individualized lesson plans and learning experiences will be developed from the information from ongoing assessments and will support and align goals described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcome Framework: Ages Birth to Five*. The EHS teachers/home visitors will schedule home visits to ensure that visits are conducted with parents and not conducted when only babysitters or other temporary caregivers are present. The EHS teachers/home visitors will coordinate with Family Services Workers and other HCHSP support staff to include nurses, mental health counselors and family services coordinators, disability coordinators, and educational coaches to effectively deliver services to the

extent possible as described in subparts; D-Health and mental health program services, E-family and community engagement, F-Services to children with disabilities, and G-Transition services. All of the Early Head Start services are described in the change in scope will be implemented in the home-based program option with the exception of elements contained in §1302.31 through §1302.34.