Article 1 – Name

Section 1: 1 The organization shall be known as the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parish Ready Start Early Childhood Network Advisory Council.

Article II – Mission, Vision, and Purpose

Section 2: 1 Mission:

Section 2: 2 Vision:

Section 2: 3 Purpose:

Article III – Fiscal Year or Calendar Year of the Ready Start Network Council

Section 3:1 **Fiscal Year/Calendar Year:** For the purpose of the Council year, financial reporting and budgeting, and election of Council members the RSN Council’s year will begin \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and end \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (RSN’s may find it beneficial to follow the fiscal year of their Fiscal or fiscal agent.

Article IV – Fiscal Agency and RSN Agreement

Section 4:1 **Governing:** The Fiscal agency will govern all oversight and fiduciary decisions of the RSN.

Section 4:2 **Financial Management:** The Fiscal Agency will receive and administer all funds that the RSN will use to carry out their work. The Fiscal Agency will send all required acknowledgments to donors of tax-deductible contributions and will be held responsible for submitting all required grant reports. The Fiscal agency will include all funds received for the RSN on its income tax returns. RSN will assist the Fiscal Agency by providing the information and reports that it requests.

Section 4:3 **Employment and Contractual Responsibilities:** The Fiscal Agency will be responsible for all income and payroll taxes, withholding and reporting of consultant contracts or employees as deemed necessary and appropriate.

Section 4:4 **Administrative Fees:** To defray the expenses associated with administering the RSN projects, the RSN agrees to pay the Fiscal Agency an administrative fee of \_\_\_\_\_% of all income received including, but not limited to, grant income and contributions.

Section 4:5 **Protection of tax-exempt status:** The RSN Council agrees not to use funds received from the Fiscal Agency in any way that would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the Fiscal Agency: The RSN Council agrees to comply with any written request by the Fiscal Agency that it cease activities which might jeopardize the Fiscal Agency’s tax status, and further agrees that the Fiscal Agency’s obligation to make funds available to it is suspended in the event that it fails to comply with any such request. Any changes in the purpose for which grant funds are spent must be approved in writing by the Fiscal Agency before implementation. The Fiscal Agency retains the right, if the RSN Council breaches this agreement, or if the RSN jeopardizes the Fiscal Agency’s legal or tax status, to withhold, withdraw, or demand immediate return of grant funds.

Section 4:6 **Impasse Agreement and Procedures:** The Fiscal agency will govern all oversight and fiduciary decisions of the RSN Council. To facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the governing body and the RSN Council, each agency’s governing body and policy council jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes between the governing board and RSN council in a timely manner that include impasse procedures. These procedures must:

(1) Demonstrate that the governing body considers proposed decisions from the policy council and that the policy council considers proposed decisions from the governing body;

(2) If there is a disagreement, require the governing body and the policy council to notify the other in writing why it does not accept a decision; and,

(3) Describe a decision-making process and a timeline to resolve disputes and reach decisions that are not arbitrary, capricious, or illegal.

(b) If the agency’s decision-making process does not result in a resolution and an impasse continues, the governing body and RSN Council must select a mutually agreeable third-party mediator and participate in a formal process of mediation that Fiscals to a resolution of the dispute.

Article V – Ready Start Network

Section 5:1 **Role/Number:** The business and affairs of the RSN Council shall be governed by a (Council or Board) of Directors which shall be composed of no more than (20) persons and no less than (9) persons.

Section 5:2 **Timing of Election/Vacancies:** New members may be elected at the last meeting of the year or at any time during the year upon the recommendation and approval of the majority of the Council members meeting quorum requirements.

Vacancies occurring in the middle of the year may be filled for the balance of the term by election of the remaining members of the Council.

Section 5:3 **Composition:** The RSN Council shall be composed of persons representing the diversity of the community, taking into account race, gender, economic status, age and other factors. Representation may include individuals from some of the following:

* Parish School Board Representative
* Licensed Child Care Representative
* City Government Representative
* Head Start Representative
* Community Representative
* Parent Representation

Section 5:4 **Term**: (three-year term of office option) Each Council member shall hold office for a term of three years. Council members will be divided into three approximately equal groups, one third of the members to serve for an initial term of one year, one-third to serve for an initial term of two years and one-third for an initial term of three years. No person shall serve more than two consecutive full terms on the Council. Persons serving an initial term of less than three years may serve for two additional full three-year terms. After serving the maximum time allowed, a person may again serve after being off the Council for one year.

Term: (2-year term of office option) Each Council member shall hold office for a term of two years. Council members will be divided into two equal groups, one-half of the members to serve for an initial term of one year, one-half to serve for an initial term of two years. No person shall serve more than two consecutive full terms on the Council. Persons serving an initial term of less than two years, may serve for two additional full two-year terms. After serving the maximum time allowed, a person may again serve after being off the Council for one year.

(Verbiage for longer standing members of the board)  
All council members will be subject to a term of 2 years with exception to the following areas: School Superintendent, Early Childhood Coordinator, Head Start Directors, and Childcare Center owners/directors.

Section 5:5 **Removal:** A Council member may be removed, without cause, as determined by a two-thirds vote of the Council present at any meeting at which there is a quorum. In addition, any member of the Council may be removed for a substantial cause by the majority vote of the Council present at any meeting at which there is a quorum. Substantial cause may include failure to participate in the activities of the Council as evidenced by the failure to attend at least three consecutive meetings.

Section 5:6 **Resignation:** A Council member may resign by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Chair of the Board, or to the full Council if the Chair is resigning.

Section 5:7 **Attendance Policy:** (Optional) Council members occasionally miss meetings due to circumstances beyond their control such as illness, work, travel schedules, jury duty, or holidays. These will generally be considered "excused" absences. In all cases, board members are expected to notify the Council chair of meetings they know they will miss. Failure to attend (3 or 2) (or less than 75% annual attendance) will call for automatic removal of a Council member. A follow up letter will be sent to the Council member by the board chair.

Article VI – Meeting Protocol

Section 6:1 **Meeting**: A meeting is a convening of a quorum of the Council to deliberate or act on a matter that the Council has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory over.

Section 6:2 **Number of Meetings:** Regular meetings of the RSN will be held at least \_\_\_\_ times a year and may be scheduled more often by the board chair as needed.

Section 6:3 **Notice of Meetings:** Meeting notices will go out no less than 7 days prior to meeting with a full agenda item and advance meeting materials for review.

Section 6:4 **Quorum**: A quorum consists of a simple majority of the full Council membership, 50% plus 1 member. Meetings may be cancelled if a quorum is not present, or meetings may be held for discussion only but no official action.

Section 6:5 **Voting:** Each Council member is entitled to one vote. Voting by proxy is not permitted.

Article VI Meeting Protocol for Open Meeting Law (use this Article VI if following Open Meeting Protocols, otherwise use the one above)

(If practicing Open Meeting Law, you may include this section under Meeting Protocol instead of the above)

Section 6:1 **Open Meeting Law:** The Ready Start Network Council will adhere to Louisiana Open Meeting Law and act in accordance with the provisions set forth by Louisiana’s Public Records Law in order to ensure integrity and to increase the public’s trust. (Not all RSN’s are a 501 c 3 and therefore this is not a requirement unless funding dictates this action. Most RSN’s fiscal/Fiscal agency are parish school boards who must comply by this set of rules. It may be wise to visit with your fiscal/Fiscal agent about meeting requirements.)

Section 6:2 **Meeting**: A meeting is a convening of a quorum of the Council to deliberate or act on a matter that the Council has supervision, control, jurisdiction, or advisory over.

Section 6:3 **Number of Meetings:** Regular meetings of the RSN will be held at least \_\_\_\_ times a year and may be scheduled more often by the board chair as needed.

Section 6:4 **Notice of Meetings:** An annual calendar of meetings will be established at the beginning of every year. At least 24 hours before any type of meeting including (regular, special, or rescheduled) the date, time, location, and agenda will be posted. Meetings must be posted on the website of the organization and notice must be placed at the place of the meeting or at the official office of the body hosting the meeting.

Section 6:5 **Meeting Agenda:** Items for the agenda must be sent to the Chairperson 1 week in advance of meetings. Agenda items shall not be changed less than 24 hours prior to the scheduled time of the meeting, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. To add an agenda item at the meeting requires unanimous approval of the members present.

Public comment may be allowed prior to action of any agenda item upon which a vote is taken.

Section 6:6 **Quorum**: A quorum consists of a simple majority of the full Council membership, 50% plus 1 member. Meetings may be cancelled if a quorum is not present, or meetings may be held for discussion only but no official action.

Section 6:7 **Special Meetings:** Notice of special meetings may be called in accordance with Open Meeting law.

Section 6:8 **Voting:** Voting by proxy is not permitted. All voting is conducted by voice vote.

\*See a full list of rules for Open Meeting Law attached.

Article VII - Officers of the Council

Section 7:1 **Election/Vacancies:** The officers shall consist of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The officers shall be elected by the Council. Any vacancy occurring in any office, for whatever reason, shall be filled by majority vote of the Council to the remainder of the term.

Section 7:2 **Term:** Officers shall serve a term of one (1) year and until their successors are elected or until they are removed for cause. No elected officer shall serve more than (2) consecutive terms in the same office.

Section 7:3 **Removal:** An officer may be removed, without cause, as determined by two thirds vote of the Council present at any meeting at which there is a quorum.

Section 7:4 **Resignation:** An officer may resign only by submitting a written resignation to the Chair (or Secretary, if the resigning officer is the Chair).

Section 7:5 **Authority and Duties of the Council officers:**

**Chair/President:** The Chair shall preside at and conduct all meetings of the Council. The Chair will make all agreements and recommendations as they have been approved by the Council to the fiscal agent. Additionally, the Chair will be responsible for creating the agenda and ensuring its distribution in a timely manner. The Chair will serve as the representative of the Council in meetings and discussions with other organizations and agencies and otherwise perform al of the duties which are ordinarily the function of the office, or which are assigned by the Council or Fiscal agency.

**Vice Chair:** The Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair if he/she is unable to do so or is absent; perform such other tasks as may be assigned by the Council and at the request of the Chair. Other duties might include chairing the nomination process for the Council, serving as the monitor for Open Meeting Law adherence, or similar duties that are not assigned.

**Secretary:** The secretary will keep accurate records and minutes of all meetings, make copies of the minutes available to the Council and distribute them in advance of each meeting. Other responsibilities might include all correspondence, meeting attendance, and keeping track of necessary documents for the fiscal/Fiscal agency.

Article VIII – Committees of the Council

Section 8:1 **Committees:** The Council may create committees with such powers as it deems wise or necessary. The Chair will appoint persons to chair and serve on those committees, including persons who do not serve on the Council. All such appointments will be approved by the Council.

Article IX – Conflict of Interest

Section 9:1 **Managing Conflicts of Interest:** Any Council member, officer, employee, or committee member having an interest in a contract, grant funding, or other transaction presented to the Council or a committee for recommendation or approval shall give prompt, full and frank disclosure of his or her interest to the Council prior to acting on such a transaction. If a Council member does not disclose what appears an obvious interest, the Council may determine, by majority vote, whether the interest shows that a conflict of interest exists or can reasonably be construed to exist.

If a conflict is deemed to exist, such person shall not vote on, nor use his or her personal influence on, nor participate in the discussions or deliberations with respect to such a transaction. Such person may not be counted in determining the existence of a quorum at any meeting where contract, transaction, or determination is under discussion for vote. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect the disclosure made, the vote thereon and, where applicable the abstention from voting and participation, and whether a quorum was present.

Conflict of Interest policies will be signed annually at the beginning of the fiscal year by all Council members and kept on file with the minutes of the first meeting.

Article X – Amendments to the Bylaws

**Section 10:1 Bylaws:** These bylaws may at any time be amended, supplemented, or repealed by the board of directors. A copy of proposed amendments shall be distributed to the full board 10 days prior to a regular Council meeting. Amendments shall be adopted with two-thirds majority vote of a Ready Start Network Advisory Council meeting where a quorum is present.

Adopted by the Council for Ready Start Network \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_20\_\_\_\_.

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Chair Date

I, the undersigned, being Secretary of the Council, hereby certify that the above is a true, complete and accurate copy of the Bylaws adopted by the Council.

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Secretary Date

I, as representative of the Fiscal Agency, do hereby accept the Fiscal Agency Agreement as reflected in Article IV.

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Fiscal Agency Representative Date