

# National Honor Society Handbook

16th Edition



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
**PRINCIPALS**

Reston, VA

*The National Honor Society is a program of  
The National Association of Secondary School Principals*

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*\*As a special note of appreciation, we commend Patricia Scanlan, retired Program Specialist for NHS & NJHS at the national office, for her many contributions to this text and, more importantly, for her many years of dedicated service to the Honor Societies and NASSP. Over the years, Pat responded to thousands of inquiries from advisers, principals, students, and parents, dutifully explaining the official positions of the national office and sensitively and professionally counseling callers regarding their concerns. Through her input, Pat helped shape the policy positions of the Honor Societies, which will serve as lasting tributes to her hard work and commitment.*



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## FOREWORD

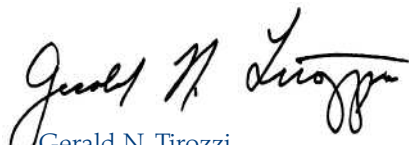
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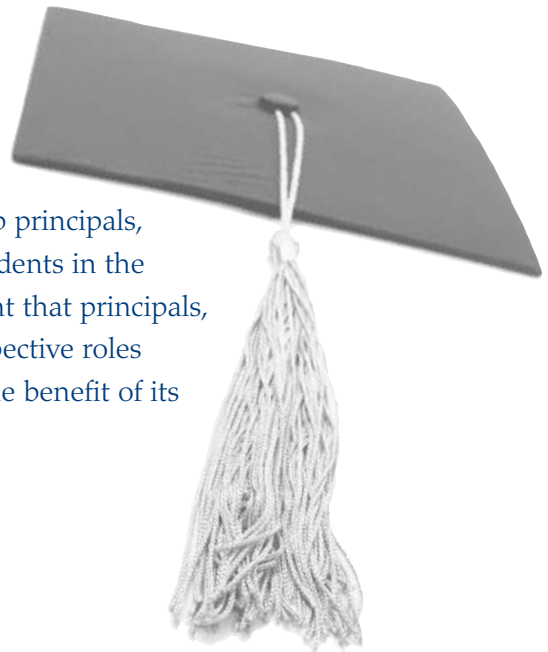
**W**hen the National Honor Society was founded in 1921, the hope of NASSP was to create an organization that would recognize and encourage academic achievement while also developing other characteristics essential to citizens in a democracy. These ideals of scholarship, character, service, and leadership remain as relevant today as they were in 1921.

Now, more than 80 years later, the National Honor Society has become a prestigious organization, ranking high among administrators, faculty members, students, parents, and residents of the school community. Its reputation for excellence is the result of years of commitment on the part of everyone involved.

Through NHS chapter service activities, members maintain and extend the qualities that won them selection. Membership is thus both an honor and a commitment.

The procedures, requirements, regulations, and suggestions outlined in this handbook are meant to help principals, chapter advisers, and faculty members as they guide students in the development of desirable personal qualities. To the extent that principals, advisers, teachers, and student members fulfill their respective roles enthusiastically, the Society will continue to thrive for the benefit of its members and of our democratic society.

  
Gerald N. Tirozzi  
Executive Director, NASSP



## INTRODUCTION

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**T**he National Honor Society is the leader among organizations and societies that promote appropriate recognition for students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Thousands of schools are chartered and their chapters are following the national constitution.

National Honor Society membership is often regarded as a valid indicator that the student will succeed in life and particularly in studies at the postsecondary level. The Honor Society member has already exhibited academic achievement, leadership, honorable and admirable character, and service that demonstrates the member is willing to use his or her talents and skills for the improvement of society.

This handbook is the essential and official guide for all NHS advisers. It offers the reader historical information about NHS and the national constitution, as revised in 2005. The constitution is followed by supporting and supplementary commentary that explains policy and procedure guidelines for all chapters. The remainder of the book is designed to provide resources and answer commonly asked questions, including legal aspects of maintaining a chapter. Various chapter management tools and appendices contain ideas that will assist the adviser with leadership of the school's chapter. The new format, first introduced in 1997, will make it easier for the national office to send updated pages (via mail or Internet) so chapters will have complete, up-to-date copies of the handbook at all times. Notices of updates will appear in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine or on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) for all advisers.

NASSP believes that NHS has made a positive difference in the lives of individuals and in the spirit of the community and school. NASSP also commends the principals and advisers in our member schools for their commitment to recognize outstanding student achievement.



Rocco Marano  
National Secretary, NHS  
Director of Student Activities, NASSP



# 1. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

“ If a society with many chapters commends itself to the schools of a certain district because each is helped by the other, a nationwide society ought to be a stronger organization and receive the support of all of the schools that believe in such a society. Will not one common badge for the entire country be more valuable than many different local badges? In other words, if the fundamental principle of the honor society is sound, it should be national in its application; a national honor society of secondary schools is a logical outgrowth of the wisdom and experience of the past fifteen or twenty years. ”

**E**dward Ryneerson, founder of the National Honor Society, made the above remarks in support of the proposal of J.G. Masters, principal of Central High School in Omaha, Nebraska, to form a national honor society. At the time, Ryneerson was principal of Fifth Avenue High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was awarded charter number one of the National Honor Society.

Masters made his proposal in 1919 at the annual convention of the newly formed National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). He and many others attending this convention were concerned about the growing movement to emphasize athletics and strictly academic activities and other activities that only recognized academic achievement. This emphasis was often regarded as detrimental to programs designed to stimulate leadership and character.

To be sure, members of local and regional honor societies were required to meet predetermined standards of citizenship,



Photo courtesy of the NASSP archives

**Edward Ryneerson,  
1862-1932**

***Principal***

**Fifth Avenue High School,  
Pittsburgh, PA**

**Founder and first president of  
the National Honor Society**

leadership, and scholarship. Others included service as a criterion for membership. But until 1921, when NASSP passed the resolution to form the National Honor Society, there was no national organization whose objectives were to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in the nation's secondary school.

The determination of standards for the new Honor Society was no easy task, according to Ryneerson, who presented the report of the Committee on Constitution and Organization, which had been appointed at the 1920 NASSP convention. This group presented its findings in 1921, when NASSP met in Atlantic City, NJ:

In drawing up the constitution, the committee was faced with the necessity of providing an organization broad enough to meet all the varying needs of these numerous societies. Scholarship alone seemed too narrow: where tried, the society had, in the words of Dr. Powell, "got the stigma of being high browish." On the other hand, there was great danger of according too little recognition to scholarship. After considerable discus-

sion, the committee fixed upon character, leadership, scholarship, and service as the fundamental virtues most worthy of encouragement.

The resolution to form the National Honor Society was passed in the hope that unification of effort might lead to improved national standards:

The organization of the National Honor Society in high schools, as recommended by the committee on that subject, would have a strong tendency to improve scholarship and to place the regular and faithful performance of academic work in its proper place in the estimation of the student body.

# HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The resolution also mentioned the need to “counteract a prevalent tendency among secondary schools to place undue emphasis upon individual performance in the various athletic events by giving excessive and expensive awards.”

The formation of secret societies was also to be condemned, even made illegal in all the states, according to the resolution. “The chief business of high schools is to make the greatest possible contribution to the realization of the American ideal of democracy,” the resolution stated. “Whatever interferes with this function is an obstruction to education and inimical to the public welfare.” The resolution continues, indicating that all organizations should not only satisfy a social need but also “be devoted to the purposes of worth to the individual and of profit to the school.” Thus, the National Honor Society was regarded from its inception as a concrete way to promote high academic standards, a means of ensuring the continuation of democracy, and an instrument for the betterment of the individual and the school.

The Society has flourished, with more than 15,000 chapters being chartered. These chapters are found in every state and in schools in many territories and countries overseas. The National Junior Honor Society, founded in 1929, has also experienced similar encouraging development with more than 5,000 chapters.

Variety characterizes the activities of the many chapters. The original committee set up the National Honor Society to permit a high degree of freedom for local chapters. Each chapter, although required to adopt the national constitution, is encouraged to provide for local needs through bylaws designed in conformance with the national constitution. Chapters have always been urged to exercise initiative, resourcefulness, and ingenuity in promoting Society standards.

The Board of Directors of NASSP serves as the governing board of the National Honor Society. The National Council and its secretary are responsible for the operational control of the Society. The NASSP Director of Student Activities serves as NHS secretary.

The national office of the National Honor Society is part of the office of NASSP, based in Chicago until 1943 when it relocated to Washington, DC. In 1973, the Association moved to 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191. The staff of the NASSP Department of Student Activities is responsible for the daily operation of the National Honor Society, to which all National Honor Society correspondence should be addressed.



**Fifth Avenue High School, Pittsburgh, PA**

This staff handles chartering of National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) chapters as well as inquiries regarding the constitution of the Society. The national office staff also works closely with the National Council of the National Honor Society regarding the rules and regulations governing the Society, the planning and implementation of the national conference, and the selection of the recipients of the National Honor Society scholarship awards.

The national office also sponsors the National Association of Student Councils (NASC), leadership training for adults and students through the LEAD Conferences, numerous scholarship and awards programs, and a variety of other services. The primary vehicle for communication between the national office and its affiliated schools is the award-winning publication, *Leadership for Student Activities*, published monthly during the school year and sent to all affiliated chapter advisers.

For more than 80 years, the National Honor Society has been the leading organization for recognizing and involving outstanding students in secondary schools across the nation.

## Highlights in Honor Society History

- 1776 Phi Beta Kappa is organized. Today PBK is America's oldest academic honor society for college undergraduates in the liberal arts.
- 1916 NASSP is formed.
- 1921 NHS is formed by NASSP.
- 1923 First edition of the NHS handbook published by NASSP.
- 1929 Formation of NJHS by the NASSP.
- 1934 Creation of the first student activities publication from NASSP, *Student Leader*.
- 1946 Ten winners are announced for the first National Honor Society scholarships.
- 1959 NASSP sponsors the first National Student Leadership Camp, Camp Cheley, CO.
- 1973 NASSP opens its new headquarters in Reston, VA.
- 1993 First National Conference for NHS, Pittsburgh, PA.
- 1996 NHS celebrates its 75th anniversary in Minneapolis, MN, at the Fourth Annual National Conference.
- 2004 NJHS celebrates its 75th anniversary at the National Conference held in St. Louis, MO. 🍷



# 2. OFFICIAL NHS CONSTITUTION



## ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

**Section 1**—The name of this organization shall be the National Honor Society of Secondary Schools (NHS).

**Section 2**—The purposes of this organization shall be to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, and to develop character in the students of secondary schools.

**Section 3**—NHS shall be under the sponsorship and supervision of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537.

## ARTICLE II: NATIONAL COUNCIL

**Section 1**—The control of this organization shall be vested in the National Council.

**Section 2**—The National Council shall consist of 11 members appointed by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), one representative chosen from each of the NASSP administrative regions, two at-large principals or assistant principals (from any region), and the NJHS representative, from a middle level school. Regional representatives shall alternate terms between principals and advisers according to the schedule developed by the national office. The executive director of NASSP shall be an ex officio member of the

National Council and shall serve as treasurer of NHS. The Director of Student Activities at NASSP shall be an ex officio member and shall serve as secretary of the National Council.

**Section 3**—Members shall be appointed for a term of no more than three years.

**Section 4**—Six members shall constitute a quorum of the National Council.

(Structure amended December 2001.)

## ARTICLE III: STATE AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Section 1**—Local chapters may choose to organize state associations. The state principals' associations may form regional associations as defined by NASSP.

**Section 2**—Any state or regional association of NHS chapters shall conform to this constitution and shall work with the national office in furthering the purpose of this organization.

**Section 3**—All state and/or regional associations shall be affiliated with NHS.

**Section 4**—The state and/or regional affiliate shall not serve as an appeal board for local chapter nonselection or dismissal cases.

**Section 5**—Bylaws of the state or regional associations must be approved by the secretary of NHS (i.e., Director of Student Activities at NASSP) and must be consistent with this constitution.

# OFFICIAL NHS CONSTITUTION

## ARTICLE IV: LOCAL CHAPTERS

**Section 1**—Any secondary public school is eligible to apply for a charter for a local chapter. Nonpublic secondary schools accredited or approved by state departments of education or by accrediting agencies approved by the National Council are eligible to apply for a charter for a local chapter. Each school shall have its own chapter except in cases where a school's size precludes the formation of a full Faculty Council. In such cases, a chapter can be shared as long as all other constitutional requirements can be met. A middle level unit in the same building with a high school unit will be appropriate cause for two separate chapters (one each for NHS and NJHS).

**Section 2**—Each chapter shall pay a chartering fee determined by the National Council.

**Section 3**—Each school with a chapter shall pay an annual affiliation fee recommended by the National Council and approved by the NASSP Board of Directors.

**Section 4**—The annual individual member dues paid to a chapter or state affiliate, if any, shall not exceed \$20 inclusive-ly. The exact amount shall be determined by the executive committee of the chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the chapter membership.

**Section 5**—Duly chartered local chapters shall conform to this constitution as set forth by the National Council. Failure to do so may result in the loss of the charter.

## ARTICLE V: PRINCIPAL

**Section 1**—The principal shall reserve the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter.

**Section 2**—The principal shall annually appoint a member of the faculty as chapter adviser, who may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 3**—The principal shall annually appoint a Faculty Council composed of five members of the school's faculty who may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 4**—The principal shall receive appeals in cases of nonselection of candidates and the disciplining or dismissal of members.

## ARTICLE VI: CHAPTER ADVISER

**Section 1**—The chapter adviser shall be responsible for the direct, day-to-day supervision of the chapter and act as a liaison among faculty members, administration, students, and community.

**Section 2**—The chapter adviser shall maintain files on membership, chapter history, activities, and financial transactions. The chapter adviser shall send the annual report to the national office.

**Section 3**—The chapter adviser shall regularly review each member for compliance with Honor Society standards and obligations.

**Section 4**—The chapter adviser shall help the chapter officers understand and carry out their duties.

**Section 5**—The chapter adviser shall be an ex officio, nonvoting, sixth member of the Faculty Council.

**Section 6**—The chapter adviser shall be a member of the faculty, appointed annually by the principal, and may serve consecutive terms.

## ARTICLE VII: FACULTY COUNCIL

**Section 1**—The Faculty Council shall consist of five voting faculty members appointed annually by the principal. The chapter adviser shall be an ex officio, nonvoting, sixth member of the Faculty Council. No principal or assistant principal may be included on the Faculty Council.

**Section 2**—The term of the Faculty Council shall be one year. Members may be appointed to consecutive terms.

**Section 3**—The Faculty Council shall meet at least once a year to review the procedures of the chapter, select members, and to consider nonselection, dismissal, other disciplinary actions, and warning cases.

**Section 4**—The Faculty Council will develop and revise, when necessary, all chapter procedures for selection, disciplining, and dismissal of members, all of which must remain in compliance with the national guidelines.

## ARTICLE VIII: MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1**—Membership in local chapters is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection for membership is by a Faculty Council and is based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate these qualities.

**Section 2**—Membership shall be known as active, honorary, and graduate. Active members shall become graduate members at graduation. Graduate members shall have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

**Section 3**—The Faculty Council shall reserve the right to award honorary membership to school officials, principals, teachers, NHS advisers, adults, students with disabilities, or foreign exchange students in recognition of achievement and/or outstanding service rendered to the school in keeping with the purposes of NHS. Honorary members shall have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

**Section 4**—Candidates become members when inducted at a special ceremony.

**Section 5**—Members who are seniors in good standing are

# OFFICIAL NHS CONSTITUTION

eligible to be nominated by their chapters to compete in the National Honor Society Scholarship Program.

**Section 6**—An NHS member who transfers to another school and brings a letter from the former principal or chapter adviser to the new school adviser shall be accepted automatically as a member in the new school’s chapter. Transfer members must meet the new chapter’s standards within one semester in order to retain membership.

**Section 7**—Members who resign or are dismissed are never again eligible for membership or its benefits.

## ARTICLE IX: SELECTION OF MEMBERS

**Section 1**—To be eligible for membership, the candidate must be a member of those classes designated as eligible in the chapter bylaws (sophomore, junior, senior). Freshmen (ninth graders) are not eligible. Candidates must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester. (Some candidates may be ineligible for induction because of the semester ruling. For example, students of military parents, among others, are required to move with parents or guardians that have transferred in their work. The present school principal should seek a recommendation from the previous school principal pursuant to the candidate’s selection. On the basis of the recommendation of the previous principal, the Faculty Council may waive the semester regulation.)

**Section 2**—The national minimum standard for scholarship shall be a cumulative scholastic average of at least 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale), or the equivalent standard of excellence. Candidates shall then be evaluated on the basis of service, leadership, and character.

**Section 3**—The selection of each member to the chapter shall be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council.

**Section 4**—A description of the selection procedure shall be published in an official school publication that is widely available in a timely fashion to all students and parents of the school. The selection procedure shall be determined by the Faculty Council and shall be consistent with the rules and regulations of NHS.

**Section 5**—The National Council and NASSP shall not review the judgment of the Faculty Council regarding selection of individual members to local chapters.

## ARTICLE X: DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

**Section 1**—The Faculty Council, in compliance with the rules and regulations of NHS, shall determine the procedure for dismissal. A written description of the dismissal procedure shall be available to interested parties.

**Section 2**—Members who fall below the standards that were

the basis for their selection shall be promptly warned in writing by the chapter adviser and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency. In the case of flagrant violation of school rules or the law, a member does not necessarily have to be warned.

**Section 3**—The Faculty Council shall determine when an individual has exceeded a reasonable number of warnings.

**Section 4**—In all cases of pending dismissal, a member shall have a right to a hearing before the Faculty Council. This is considered due process for all members.

**Section 5**—For purposes of dismissal, a majority vote by the Faculty Council is required.

**Section 6**—A member who has been dismissed may appeal the decision of the Faculty Council under the same rules for disciplinary appeals in the school district.

**Section 7**—The National Council and NASSP shall hear no appeals in dismissal cases.

## ARTICLE XI: CHAPTER OFFICERS

**Section 1**—The officers of the chapter, their duties, and the method of their election shall be determined by the members of the chapter, approved by the Faculty Council and the principal, and described in the chapter bylaws.

**Section 2**—New officers shall be installed at a special ceremony.

## ARTICLE XII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Section 1**—The executive committee shall consist of the officers of the chapter and the chapter adviser.

**Section 2**—The executive committee shall have general supervision of the affairs of the chapter between its business meetings, make recommendations to the chapter, and determine and perform such other duties as are specified in the chapter bylaws. All actions and recommendations of the executive committee shall be subject to the review of the chapter membership.

**Section 3**—The executive committee shall have the responsibility for ensuring that chapter activities and procedures follow school policy and regulations. (Note: Selection, discipline, and dismissal procedures remain the sole domain of the Faculty Council, per Article VII, Section 3.)

## ARTICLE XIII: MEETINGS

**Section 1**—Each chapter shall have regular meetings during the school year on days designated by the executive committee and in accordance with school policy and regulations.

**Section 2**—The regularity of the meetings (i.e., weekly, monthly, bimonthly) shall be designated in the chapter bylaws.

# OFFICIAL NHS CONSTITUTION

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**Section 3**—The chapter president or other designated student leader may call special meetings approved by the executive committee.

**Section 4**—Chapters shall conduct meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order* (revised edition) in all points not expressly provided for in this constitution or the chapter bylaws.

## ARTICLE XIV: ACTIVITIES

**Section 1**—Each chapter shall determine one or more service projects for each year.

**Section 2**—All members shall regularly participate in these projects.

**Section 3**—These projects shall have the following characteristics: fulfill a need within the school or community; have the support of the administration and the faculty; be appropriate and educationally defensible; be well planned, organized, and executed.

**Section 4**—Each member shall have the responsibility for choosing and participating in a service project that reflects his or her particular talents and interests. This is in addition to the chapter projects to which all members contribute.

**Section 5**—Each chapter shall publicize its projects in a positive manner.

## ARTICLE XV: OFFICIAL INSIGNIA

**Section 1**—This organization shall have an official emblem selected by the National Council. The emblem shall be uniform.

**Section 2**—The distribution of the emblem and the rules for its use shall be under the exclusive control of the National Council.

**Section 3**—Each active, graduate, or honorary member in good standing with the chapter shall be entitled to wear this emblem.

**Section 4**—Any member who resigns or is dismissed shall return the emblem to the chapter adviser.

**Section 5**—All insignia must be procured from the national

secretary of the National Honor Society, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA, 20191. All insignia are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and may not be copied by anyone.

**Section 6**—The motto of the National Honor Society shall be “Noblesse oblige.”

**Section 7**—The official colors of the National Honor Society shall be blue and gold.

**Section 8**—A graduate member may purchase a replacement for a lost emblem by verifying membership to the national office.

## ARTICLE XVI: LOCAL CHAPTER BYLAWS


**Section 1**—Each chapter shall write bylaws to amplify sections of this constitution and to clarify operating procedures of the chapter. Bylaws do not need the approval of the National Council but must be consistent with this constitution.

**Section 2**—The chapter bylaws shall contain information concerning the election, the duties of officers, the schedule of meetings, member obligations, dues, and the like.

## ARTICLE XVII: AMENDMENTS

This constitution may be amended at any meeting of the National Council or by mail by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the National Council.

NHS National Constitution, 2005 edition. This version of the national constitution supersedes all previous editions. Notification of updates, based on amendments approved by the National Council, will appear in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and in the Adviser Zone on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

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# 3. CHAPTER ORGANIZATION



## 3.1 Establishing a Chapter

### 3.1.1 Chartering a Chapter and Fees

Schools wishing to set up a chapter of the National Honor Society will be required to pay a chartering fee determined by the National Council. For this fee a school is entitled to begin operations of its chapter and receive a paper charter suitable for framing along with a handbook and orientation materials for the chapter adviser. The chartering fee also includes payment of the school's affiliation with the national office for the remainder of the current membership year (July 1–June 30).

Upon completion of the chartering process, schools are required to maintain the annual affiliation. A special school affiliation/ID number is assigned to all duly affiliated chapters. This number is designed for use with all official correspondence with the national office and is required when placing any orders for insignia. Annual renewal notices are sent automatically to the school as reminders of this affiliation requirement.

If, during the history of the chapter, the membership information regarding the school's affiliation is changed (i.e., change of address or zip code, change of principal or adviser), the school is asked to notify the NASSP membership office in writing, using school stationery, regarding these changes. It is vital that the records found at the national office be kept up-to-date in order to ensure that all members receive the full benefit of their affiliation with the national organization.

Chapters wishing to obtain a replacement for the paper charter originally provided during the chartering process should contact the NASSP sales office. For this and all other orders, advisers must include the school affiliation/ID number provided to all chapters and advisers with their affiliation (as found on the adviser membership card sent to all advisers, on the mailing label of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, and all other mailings from the national office, including the annual affiliation renewal notice).

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## New Adviser Checklist

- Do you know your school affiliation number? (Hint: It is found on the mailing label of every issue of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.)
- Can you and your principal find your copies of the national handbook? (Ask yourself this in a month after you've put the handbook back on the shelf or in the file cabinet!)
- Do you have a written set of bylaws for your chapter?
- Do you have your selection process in writing?
- Do you have your chapter's discipline and dismissal procedures in writing?
- Do you know the names and room numbers of the members of your five-person Faculty Council?
- Do you have the names and contact information for all of your chapter officers?
- Do you know when your induction ceremony(-ies) will be? Is there a written ceremony that you should follow?
- Are you a member of your statewide NHS and NJHS organization?
- Do you have the toll-free phone number and e-mail address of the NHS and NJHS national office available?

### 3.1.2 Getting Started

There are three essential contacts that each adviser should consider establishing when undertaking the formation of or assuming responsibility for an Honor Society chapter on campus:

#### 3.1.2.1 Principal

- Responsible for payment of national chartering fee or annual affiliation fee.
- Appoints the chapter adviser and the Faculty Council (five members).
- Receives national handbook (and other resources as needed).
- Consulted for general schedule considerations. Will the induction ceremony take place in the spring, fall, or both? (From here, the schedule for the selection process can be derived working backwards from the induction ceremony date on the school calendar.)
- Sets priorities for your style of recognition. What type of recognition will the chapter provide to members both at induction and at graduation (e.g., pins, certificates, honor cords, etc.)?
- Coordinates funding for the chapter. How will chapter activities, including recognition, be financed? School budget allocation? Chapter dues (maximum allowed is \$10 per member per year)? Fundraising activities? Are there any policies or limitations that exist in regards to fundraising?
- Reviews the principal's authority regarding Honor Society activities per the guidelines found in the national constitution (Article V, Section 1); the handbook; and all school, school district, or state guidelines or policies that effect the running of the Honor Society.

#### 3.1.2.2 Faculty Council: Information needed

- Contact information/phone tree/room assignment, etc.
- Schedule of meetings (minimum of one per year)
- Duties, including some or all of the following:
  - Selection procedures for membership
  - Discipline and dismissal of members
  - Bylaws development approval
  - Other duties/activities
- Professionalism: Maintaining a strong reputation for your chapter and its procedures.

#### 3.1.2.3 Chapter Members and Officers: Governance, activities, and other considerations

- Who are your chapter officers and what are their duties (identified in the chapter bylaws)?
- What are the member obligations and what types of fulfillment records are kept for those obligations?
- What is the committee structure for your chapter and their annual responsibilities?
- What are the chapter goals for the year (which also must be evaluated at some point)?
- What are the major chapter activities for the year? Is there a master calendar?

### 3.1.3 Obligations of the Chapter to the National Office

Three main obligations can be identified for each Honor Society chapter each year.

#### 3.1.3.1 Annual Affiliation

A renewal notice (invoice) will be mailed in the spring (usually in early April) to the school principal seeking renewal of the chapter's affiliation. Notices of this mailing will appear

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in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine in the months preceding arrival of the renewal notice. The notice will request three things:

- Verification of the correct school name and address.
- Verification of the name of the designated chapter adviser, with e-mail contact information. Principals will be able to change the official adviser name if necessary on this form. While many chapters operate with more than one adviser, the national affiliation requires the submission of a single adviser name as the official contact for all chapter mailings during the year.
- Payment of the annual affiliation fee. This fee is subject to change from one year to the next.

All chapters are requested to submit their completed renewal form and payment by June 30 each year. Submission by this time will ensure that the chapter's status is updated and the adviser name entered in time for the back-to-school mailings that include a newsletter, the annual catalog of insignia and publications, and the first issue of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.

Note: The national office has been informed of other organizations sending out notices requesting payment of "honor society membership" fees. These notices appear to be invoices requesting payment. To protect your chapter funds, please note that all official invoices for your chapter's annual affiliation with NHS, including reminder notices, will bear the official logo of the organization and include a Reston, VA, return address. Please see that your principal and school bookkeeper are informed of these details. If you ever question the authenticity of an invoice you or your school receives, please do not hesitate to contact the national office for confirmation.

### 3.1.3.2 Annual Report Form Submission

Each spring, in the April issue of *Leadership for Student Activities*, the two-page annual report form is printed for all chapters to use. The form is also posted in the Adviser Zone on the national Web site. Chapters are requested to complete and submit this form by June 30 each year.

The form requests the names of the new inductees from the school year just ending, and often asks a couple of brief survey-type questions about the chapter. In addition, chapters are asked to identify their major projects and activities for the year on this form.

### 3.1.3.3 Stay Up-to-Date

To see that your chapter stays informed about developments in the Honor Societies, we encourage you to:

- Read the NHS and NJHS news and question & answer

pages of each month's issue of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.

- Check the national Web site monthly (a duty that can be assigned to a chapter officer) for any late-breaking news.
- Annually review and evaluate your chapter activities and policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with all national, state, and local guidelines. Include the principal in these sessions in order to incorporate any new school system policies.
- Maintain strong and effective communication links with all chapter members, officers, Faculty Council members, and other relevant parties.
- Develop and implement effective annual goals for the chapter that support the purposes of the Honor Society as expressed in Article I of the national constitution.

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## Ten Basic Necessities for All Honor Society Chapters

- 1. Affiliation.** Every chapter must affiliate with the national office on a yearly basis. Article IV, Sections 2 and 3, of the constitution refer to this connection to the national office. Once the chapter is chartered, the yearly affiliation fee entitles the chapter to all of the benefits of membership including a subscription to *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and receipt of yearly monographs and scholarship information, among other advantages.
- 2. Selection process.** Once organized, each chapter must develop a selection process (Article IX). This process includes using a 5-member Faculty Council, appointed by the principal, which selects all new members and monitors and disciplines existing chapter members.
- 3. Publish.** It is important for all members of the school community to understand the nature of the honor of being selected. To accomplish this, all chapters should publish their procedures (both selection and dismissal) in school publications distributed to students, faculty members, and parents (Article IX, Section 4). The open description of these procedures helps to maintain a healthy view of the chapter and counters any perceptions of it being a secretive or elitist organization.
- 4. Review.** It is recommended that all chapters, under the direction of the adviser, regularly review their guidelines to see that they conform to the national constitution (Article IV, Section 5). It would be beneficial to include the principal in this review as well as the Faculty Council to see that there is a common understanding of all guidelines and the criteria for membership. It is recommended that this review be carried out yearly, but definitely any time a new principal, new adviser, or new members of the Faculty Council are appointed.
- 5. Induction.** Once the selection of new members has been completed, every chapter should have an induction ceremony (Article VIII, Section 4). Though these ceremonies may include the national insignia, motto, and colors, there is no required procedure. Local traditions and history play an important part in any school ceremony and can be included in your own special induction ceremony. (Please refer to the chapter on induction ceremonies for more detailed information.)
- 6. Meetings.** In order to conduct business of the chapter and to plan a variety of activities, regular meetings of the chapter are to be held. Article XIII provides a good outline of the basics: hold the meetings regularly, describe the meeting times in your bylaws, be prepared for special meetings when needed, and run your meetings in an orderly fashion. As you train chapter members and officers during the year, focus on good meeting skills as one of the leadership qualities you wish to add to your members' characteristics.
- 7. Bylaws.** Chapter bylaws, according to Article XVI, are designed to "amplify sections of this constitution and to clarify operating procedures of the chapter." Many chapters draw on models that already exist in their school student councils or other organizations when formulating their local guidelines. It is not necessary to rewrite the national constitution into your local bylaws, but it is appropriate to make reference to it as the general guideline for all chapter functions.
- 8. Chapter service.** Service projects have evolved as a chapter requirement directly from one of the purposes of the national organization, "to stimulate a desire to render service." In recent years, many chapters have opened up their projects to participants from the student body, using chapter members as organizers and supervisors of the project. In this way, the desire to render service is built into the lives of all students in the school.
- 9. Individual service.** In addition to the chapter service project, Article XIV, Section 4, outlines each member's responsibility to engage in a service project developed from his or her own particular talents and interests. The adviser can provide direction to chapter members regarding the variety of projects available in the community and follow up with careful monitoring of student participation to see that sufficient hours of service are being provided.
- 10. Annual report.** The national office asks each adviser to complete an annual report on the chapter and its activities (Article VI, Section 2). This report should be submitted by no later than early summer to the national office. As NHS and NJHS continue to grow and more opportunities for development are offered from the national office, the statistics gathered from the annual reports become increasingly significant.

It is important that every chapter begin with these fundamental requirements for having a chapter of NHS or NJHS in their school. As an active part of the overall student activities program found at your school, your chapter can do much to make a positive, significant difference in your entire community. Look to future publications from the national office and monthly issues of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine to provide guidance and new ideas for helping to make your local chapter the best it can be.



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## 3.1.4 Chapter Name

Many chapters create a special name for their chapter to be used in lieu of the school name when referring to their chapter. Chapter names are often established in honor of a famous chapter member, adviser, or principal who has influenced the development of the chapter in some important manner. If a special name is selected, it is further recommended that the reasons behind the selection of this special name be incorporated into the annual induction ceremony. This is a way to establish and preserve an important segment of chapter history.

To avoid creating an impression that NHS is an organization like a social fraternity or sorority commonly found on college campuses, the use of Greek names is discouraged. This prohibition dates back to the early days of the Honor Society when such social organizations were more common on secondary school campuses.

Chapters wishing to have their chapter name placed on their charter must order a replacement charter, complete with the chapter name information, from the NASSP Sales office.

## 3.1.5 Dues for Members

In their bylaws, chapters determine and specify the amount of local chapter dues, if any, for their members. Dues are not to exceed \$20 per year per member. Membership should not be denied because of a student's inability to pay.

In recent years, some schools and school systems have imposed "pay-to-participate" fees for students becoming members of NHS. The national office recognizes that such fees are being imposed to offset ongoing expenses associated with maintaining a chapter or activity programs on campus. It is essential that candidates and their parents be informed of the distinction between official chapter dues (established within the parameters noted previously) and other fees imposed upon the chapter.

No student should be denied membership due to an inability to pay these extra fees. Consequently, we encourage local chapters to either seek exemptions for Honor Society membership, or at a minimum, exemption for students who have legitimate inability to pay (e.g., those who appear on the school's official list for free or reduced-price meals). Advisers or principals needing assistance in such matters can contact the policy staff of the national office for additional information.

## 3.2 Governing Documents

All chapters must adopt and follow the national constitution. This obligation is outlined in the chartering agreement signed by every school with a chapter. The following discussion is

designed to assist chapters in implementing the provisions of the constitution when operating a chapter of the National Honor Society.

### 3.2.1 The National Constitution

The constitution of the National Honor Society is the primary source for policy information for all chapters. It has been approved by and can be amended only by motion from the National Council with final approval by the NASSP Board of Directors. The constitution has changed over the years. Though the basic tenets of the organization have remained constant, the Society has evolved to reflect new thinking since 1921. The version appearing in this edition of the handbook contains a variety of amendments that have been approved since the last edition in 1992. (The complete text of the national constitution is found in chapter 2.)

### 3.2.2 Chapter Bylaws

All NHS chapters function under a single national constitution and local chapters must adopt bylaws to the constitution to establish local procedures, as noted in Article XVI, Sections 1 and 2. They are a written set of rules for a group, defining the limits of authority for the organization and giving a sense of order and purpose. The bylaws should specify guidelines on such topics as the schedule of meetings; member obligations regarding meeting attendance, participation in projects, etc.; information on chapter officers (which ones are required, what their duties are, how they are to be elected); dues requirements; a description of projects for the year; and scholarship nomination procedures. Chapters may add any other information and procedures pertinent to the chapter. In addition, chapter bylaws should be stated in simple, direct, and easy-to-understand terms and should include only essential items. (See sample bylaws in Appendix C.)

The chapter should regularly review the bylaws and change them to meet the local needs of a particular year. Though the bylaws are not approved by the National Council, they must be consistent with the constitution and the policies established by the National Council.

#### 3.2.2.1 Changing the Bylaws

Once the bylaws have been accepted by a vote of the chapter and approved by the Faculty Council and the administration, they become the law of the organization. If this principle is adhered to, it will only occasionally be necessary to change the bylaws, due in large part to their specificity and detail.

Every set of bylaws should include a description of the

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procedures for amending the articles. It is good practice to have the entire chapter and the Faculty Council review proposed changes before they are put to a vote or adopted.

Occasionally, the bylaws may have to be revised or completely rewritten. Unfortunately, some chapters are criticized for spending too much time on amending their bylaws instead of dealing with chapter concerns. However, there are times when an outdated set of bylaws is a hindrance to the chapter. To this end, a bylaws revision committee may be specifically appointed to complete the detailed work involved with this task. The work of the committee is reported to the membership when the review is complete.

After a change has been proposed and a written draft has been prepared, the members of the chapter should be informed and given copies so that they can review and discuss the issues before they come to a final vote. Proposed amendments or revisions usually require a two-thirds vote of the chapter for adoption. [Note: Sections dealing with revisions to the procedures for selection, discipline, and dismissal of members can be changed only by the Faculty Council, though input from the chapter members is allowed and encouraged.]

Some good reasons for amending bylaws are:

- Statements no longer suit the chapter or school situation
- Bylaws are arranged so poorly that essential information is hard to find
- Bylaws contain elements that have caused long-standing disagreement
- Bylaws violate individual rights

- Bylaws prevent the chapter from adapting to change.

### 3.2.3 Other Chapter Records

Each chapter should have the following on file and available for review:

- National handbook that includes the national constitution
- Local selection procedure description, including all forms used in the selection process and lists of member obligations once selected
- Policies and procedures related to discipline and dismissal of members
- Chapter bylaws
- Chapter membership lists (both present and past).

In addition, it is recommended that chapter files also contain the following:

- Copy of the chapter's charter
- History of the chapter (founding date, explanation of the chapter name, names of advisers and the years they served, etc.)
- Induction ceremony scripts
- Service project records detailing projects undertaken for school or community by the chapter in past years
- Copy of *The Leadership Store*, the official catalog for all insignia items
- Copies of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine for reference.

## Chapter Management Tool: The Chapter Files

To facilitate the development of the chapter filing system, please consider using the following list of topics for your files:

- Adviser job description and duties
- Affiliation with the national office
- Attendance policies and charts
- Calendar
- Chapter bylaws and goals
- Charter
- Discipline policies
- Dismissal procedures
- Faculty Council job description and duties
- Fundraising projects
- Induction ceremonies and scripts
- *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine
- Meeting agendas
- Member responsibilities and obligations
- Mentoring guidelines
- NASSP Student Activities offices
- National conference
- National constitution
- National office, contacts, information, and mailings
- NHS network and other chapters nearby
- Officer job descriptions
- Projects (character development, citizenship development, leadership promotion, scholarship promotion, and chapter and individual service)
- Selection procedures
- State NHS association.

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## Chapter Management Tools: Adviser and Member Notebooks

To help you keep track of essential information and keep it readily available, and to help teach your student members the value of organization, here are two suggested outlines for an adviser notebook and a member notebook to help organize your chapter.

In the adviser notebook, you should include the following topics:

- Budget
- Bylaws
- Calendar of chapter activities
- Catalog and order form
- Committees and their duties
- Community contacts and resources
- Faculty and staff roster
- Faculty Council members and responsibilities
- Forms (SAIF, FEF, etc.)
- Induction ceremony
- *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine
- Local disciplinary procedures and records
- Local school policies

- Local selection procedures
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Member obligations
- Membership roster
- National handbook and national constitution
- Officers and their duties
- Projects.

In the member notebook, you should include the following topics:

- Bylaws
- Calendar of chapter activities
- Forms (service hour submission forms, project report forms, etc.)
- Key school and community contacts
- Local student handbook
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Member obligations
- Membership roster
- Officers and committees and their duties
- Policies regarding selection, discipline, and dismissal.

### 3.3 Personnel

#### 3.3.1 National Council

The National Council and the NASSP Board of Directors are responsible for the operational control of the National Honor Society at the national level. The council is made up of representatives of each of the administrative regions currently used by NASSP (see Appendix O). A special NJHS representative and several at-large principal representatives have been added since 1997. The National Council and NASSP cannot review the judgment of the Faculty Council regarding selection or dismissal of individual members to local chapters.

The National Council meets annually at the NASSP national headquarters at 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191, to which correspondence should be addressed.

#### 3.3.2 Principal

At the local level, the principal has the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter. This authority extends to selection and dismissal of members. The principal cannot serve as chapter adviser and is not a member of the voting Faculty Council. The principal receives appeals in cases of nonselection of candidates and the discipline or dismissal of members.

The principal appoints and works closely with the chapter adviser and the Faculty Council to develop and follow fair selection and dismissal procedures consistent with the constitution. The principal cooperates with the adviser to achieve a smooth-running, productive chapter. In short, the principal must recognize the importance of the National Honor Society, be thoroughly familiar with the handbook, and remain aware of the activities and procedures of the school's chapter.

#### 3.3.3 Chapter Adviser

The chapter adviser shall be a member of the faculty of the school where the chapter is located. It is recommended that the chapter adviser should be a faculty member who has faith in the abilities of young people and who is willing to spend time with them to develop their potential. The adviser is expected to be familiar with the handbook and has a working knowledge of Honor Society policies as well as those of the school and the school district. In carrying out the duties outlined in the constitution of NHS, the adviser promotes chapter activities, stimulates positive actions by members, and provides information on local and national policies regulating chapter activities. A checklist for new advisers is provided at the beginning of this chapter.

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In addition, the adviser approves chapter activities, maintains chapter records, and attends all meetings and functions. The chapter adviser is an ex officio, nonvoting, sixth member of the Faculty Council. Neither principals nor assistant principals may serve as chapter advisers.

New advisers should always contact the Membership Department of the national office to ensure that all mailings are directed to and membership references are listed under the correct adviser's name.

### 3.3.4 Faculty Council

The Faculty Council consists of five voting faculty members, appointed annually by the principal. If the principal delegates the power to make this appointment to the adviser, the list of Faculty Council members should be approved by the principal prior to the first meeting of the council.

The adviser works with the Faculty Council in selecting, disciplining, or dismissing members. No principal or assistant principal may be on the Faculty Council. Members of the Faculty Council should be from the professional staff on campus (generally those with professional education degrees or certification) and not from among the support staff on campus (custodians, secretaries, etc.). Parents and students cannot serve as members of the Faculty Council for the chapter.

The adviser and the Faculty Council cooperate in developing and periodically reviewing all local selection and dismissal procedures and guidelines. Chapter members can be given the opportunity to comment on these procedures and the members' recommendations should be considered in procedure formulation and review.

It is important that all members of the Faculty Council recognize that they are working on behalf of the total faculty of the school. All judgments reached by members of the Faculty Council should, therefore, be both sound and professional in nature. It is important for Faculty Council members to be fully knowledgeable of the guidelines for their chapter and to follow carefully all stated guidelines and procedures in all aspects of the chapter's activity.

#### 3.3.4.1 Role of the Principal Regarding Meetings of the Faculty Council

The school principal has the right to approve all activities and decisions of the local chapter as stated in Article V, Section 1, of the national constitution. Furthermore, the principal appoints the faculty adviser (Article V, Section 2) and members of the Faculty Council (Article VII, Section 1), although this latter responsibility can be delegated to an assistant principal or adviser as needed.

### Can our chapter and school enforce the anonymity of the Faculty Council?

This concern usually arises when parents of nonselected students wish to inquire from each of the Faculty Council members why the student was not selected. The national office does not encourage such inquiries and supports local chapter efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the Faculty Council, leaving the chapter adviser and the principal as the individuals chiefly responsible for responding to parental concerns.

Some schools may wish to retain the names of the Faculty Council in complete secrecy. The motivation for this is understandable—no one wishes the candidates to attempt to influence Faculty Council members in order to achieve membership. However, complete secrecy does create a significant problem for chapters when it comes to dismissal. According to the national constitution (and presumed by the national office to be due process for all members), any student being considered for dismissal has a right to a pre-dismissal hearing with the Faculty Council. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the student to present his or her case to the council prior to their

decision regarding dismissal. It is expected that such meetings would take place face-to-face and traditional protocol would request introductions be made, and if not, most students would recognize the members of the faculty anyway. Unless a chapter consciously decides never to dismiss a student (a questionable position if assumed to be policy), eventually the names of the Faculty Council members will be revealed. Of course, in the situation where a court or officials of the school system have requested the names of the Faculty Council, the principal may, at his or her discretion, provide the names.

The national office will support any principal or adviser who retains the confidentiality of the Faculty Council in order to avoid unnecessary questioning of their judgment. Efforts should be taken, however, to fully explain the selection process and respond to inquiries in a professional manner. Requests or demands that members of the Faculty Council should be presented for interrogation on how each member evaluated the nonselected student, should be firmly but politely refused.

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It is clearly expressed in Article VII, Section 1, that “no principal or assistant principal may be included on the Faculty Council,” indicating that the administrator does not serve as a member of the group that selects, disciplines, or dismisses members. This prohibition extends to the principal sitting in on the meetings of the Faculty Council because:

- Nowhere in the description of the duties of the principal or in the explanation of the membership of the Faculty Council is there reference to having the principal as a member of that body.
- Because the principal serves as the primary authority for appeals of nonselection or dismissal (as per Article V, Section 3), a conflict of interest could arise if the principal was also part of the initial decision in these cases. By sitting in on the decision-making process, the principal compromises his or her objectivity in hearing an appeal, the result of which would necessitate passing the appeal on to the next higher level of the school system for consideration (supervisors, superintendents, school boards, etc.). This delay would be both time-consuming and frustrating for the appealee.
- The principal has entrusted the adviser and members of the Faculty Council with the authority over selection and dismissal. To impose direct supervision of their function could be perceived internally as a lack of trust in their professional capabilities and externally as undue influence in the process. Either of these perceptions could be damaging to the overall position of the chapter in the school and community.

In this case, how can a principal provide direction and instruction to the Faculty Council if he or she cannot attend the meetings? It is suggested that the principal provide such guidance at least once a year in a private meeting with the adviser and members of the Faculty Council. Through such meetings, possibly involving a review of the previous year’s events, the professional standards of the local chapter can be reinforced in a manner that supports the integrity of the members of the Faculty Council.

### 3.3.4.2 Role of the Chapter Adviser in the Meetings of the Faculty Council

Because the principal cannot serve as a member or even an observer of the Faculty Council’s deliberations, the chapter adviser takes on the responsibility of representing the administrative offices of the school. In this role, the adviser serves in two capacities: the supervisor who ensures that proper procedures are being followed and the advocate who protects the interests of the student(s).

As supervisor, the adviser first makes sure that both the national and local guidelines for procedure are being followed. A total familiarity of the local procedures and the national handbook are required, or at least having written versions of both available for quick reference. In addition, a vital role of the chapter adviser is to see that the Faculty Council avoids gossip, hearsay, and rumors when considering the case of a student. To do this, the adviser serves as a facilitator of the discussions, keeping the council focused on objective data used to review each case.

This latter quality is also the first step in serving as advocate for each student whose name or case is brought before the Faculty Council. Usually, the first implication of this role is in the collection of data or facts to be considered. A thorough accounting of all information being used is one of the primary responsibilities of the adviser. Whether for selection or disciplinary consideration, the chapter adviser serves to guarantee that each student receives a fair review. Though a member of the school’s faculty, the adviser must assume the role of the student’s defender to guarantee that the Faculty Council only considers relevant and valid information about the case. The chapter adviser plays a diplomatic role in the meetings of the Faculty Council. For this reason, principals must carefully select those individuals who are to be chapter advisers.

### 3.3.4.3 Substitutes for Faculty Council Members

The national constitution stipulates voting by five members of the Faculty Council. Because individuals on the council may be out when a meeting is called (e.g., sick or undertaking other professional responsibilities), the national office suggests that chapters consider identifying one or more official substitutes for the Faculty Council. With approval by the principal, these individuals could receive the same orientation to chapter guidelines as the official five members, but would be available for service in the event one of the five is not present. It is important to clarify the role of these individuals for the meeting in question, noting that after the meeting, they will revert to substitute status. However, if any appeals emerge based on the decisions reached when the substitute was voting, then the substitute should be brought back in for any reconsiderations of the case.

## 3.4 Membership

Membership in the National Honor Society is both an honor and a responsibility. Students selected for membership are expected to continue to demonstrate the qualities of scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Membership is divided into three categories: active, graduate, and honorary.

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## Chapter Management Tools: Faculty Council Contacts Form

For your adviser notebook, create a new form each year that helps you keep track of the current members on the Faculty Council. Include the following fields of information:

- Date (current school year, e.g., 2005–06)
- Faculty Council member name
- Subject taught
- Room assignment
- Home phone number.

As the adviser, you should add your name and contact information, a space for a substitute or alternate's information, and emergency contact information for the principal (work and cell phone numbers). Make copies of this form for all council members.

Additional resources regarding the Faculty Council can be found in the Adviser Zone on the NHS Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

### 3.4.1 Active Membership

A candidate for membership must first be selected by the Faculty Council and then inducted in a special ceremony to become an active member of the chapter. Active members have a voice and vote in chapter affairs. Active members are expected to maintain the standards of the Honor Society by which they were selected. They also assume certain obligations, as detailed in the information provided by the chapter, which must be fulfilled according to the chapter guidelines.

#### 3.4.1.1 Transferring an Active Membership

Article VIII, Section 6, clearly indicates that a student's membership transfers automatically when a member moves from one school to the next. Differing standards and procedures among chapters sometimes cause difficulty for students who transfer. Although the constitution states that transfer members must be automatically accepted into the NHS chapter of the new school, the transferee may be unable to meet the new chapter's standards within one semester. For example, if a junior transferred to a school that accepted only seniors into the National Honor Society, the junior, of course, could not meet the requirements of the new chapter within one semester. In such or similar cases, the transfer student may have his NHS membership declared temporarily inactive, until he or she is able to meet the new chapter's standards. In other cases where the cumulative GPA standard of the new school is higher than that of the old school, then the transferee is granted membership and given a reasonable amount of time (e.g., a semester) to raise the GPA to the new standard. In all transfer cases, the local Faculty Council is charged with making a sound, professional judgment regarding the membership status of the individual.

It is the obligation of the student member, when transferring to a new school, to notify, in a timely fashion, the adviser of the new school's chapter of his or her membership. Chapter advisers can require proof of membership in the former

chapter. Such proof can be in the form of a membership card, certificate, official designation on the school transcript, or independent verification sent from the former adviser to the adviser at the new school.

#### 3.4.1.2 Preparing NJHS Students

Membership in NJHS does not automatically confer status of NHS membership upon a student arriving in high school, nor does it automatically make a student a candidate for consideration. While NJHS membership may serve to introduce middle level students to the general concepts of the criteria, strengthen their talents, and familiarize them with the selection process, there is no formal connection between membership in the two Honor Societies.

Where an NJHS chapter does exist in a middle level school that feeds the high school, it is suggested that the two chapter advisers establish professional communications, to the point of sharing selection procedures and chapter guidelines with each other. Furthermore, the NHS chapter can consider meeting with the members of the NJHS chapter prior to the end of the middle level experience (e.g., at the last NJHS chapter meeting in the spring) to orient those members to high school, and how and when students are considered for membership in the high school chapter of NHS. Not only would such collaboration help smooth the transition for NJHS members into their high school experience, but it will help them establish academic and activities goals for eventually obtaining membership in the NHS chapter.

#### 3.4.1.3 Homeschooled Students

As a rule, students who are homeschooled full time and therefore not enrolled at a school where an NHS chapter is present are not eligible for consideration as members. Homeschooled students who are enrolled part time at a member school, based on local and state policies, may be eligible for consideration. Advisers should consult with their building principal in all such

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cases. If selection of part time homeschooled students takes place, it is important for chapter advisers to indicate the nature of all chapter obligations to assure continued membership by this and all chapter members.

### 3.4.1.4 Dual Enrollment, Postsecondary Option, and Alternative Placement Students

In recent years, school reform efforts have created several new opportunities for students. Among these are dual enrollment with other secondary-level schools or postsecondary institutions, options to complete high school while simultaneously receiving college credit through postsecondary options, and alternative programs for students who, for whatever reason, do not respond well to the traditional school setting. Questions arise for NHS chapters regarding whether or not students enrolled in such programs are eligible for membership consideration, and if selected, what level of expectation exists for the fulfillment of chapter obligations.

For all such programs, two essential questions exist: Where is the student enrolled and who has ultimate authority over the student? In many cases, students and their parents sign off on a letter of agreement regarding their nontraditional status. Advisers should consult such agreements for answers to the questions of enrollment and authority. If the student is technically enrolled in your school and your principal has authority over him or her, that student may be eligible for membership and, if selected, can be counseled regarding all member obligations. Chapters are not expected to make exceptions for such students, but may be expected per local or state policies, to develop reasonable accommodations, particularly if selected as members of the chapter.

The school that grants the high school diploma is another factor to consider. If the student is enrolled part time at your school but receives the diploma from the alternative education program, for example, one could argue that membership eligibility should only exist on the alternative education campus. If that campus does not maintain a chapter, there is no formal obligation for your chapter to consider him or her for membership.

Due to the great variety of plans currently in place, it is virtually impossible for a fully-definitive section of this handbook to be created. However, if any of these nontraditional opportunities exist in your school system, it is suggested that the chapter adviser and principal, perhaps joined by a representative of the school system's administrative staff, formulate policy statements for inclusion in the local student handbook regarding eligibility and authority where the Honor Society candidacy and membership are concerned.

### 3.4.1.5 Students with Special Needs

Students who have received accommodations for their disability, based on their having been identified with one or more physical, emotional, learning, or other disabling conditions, raise some unique questions where selection to NHS or NJHS is concerned. For these cases, several relevant points should be considered.

First and foremost, any student who is judged by the Faculty Council to meet the selection criteria (scholarship, leadership, service, and character) for membership should be selected. If the local selection process is written to exclude students in an accommodated curriculum or if extra guidelines are included (e.g., "In addition to the required cumulative GPA, students must take at least two years of a foreign language to be considered as candidates"; "students must be enrolled in the pre-college curriculum," etc.), local schools should first review these policies with local, state, and federal guidelines to assure that such selection policies are legal and acceptable and supportable as being nondiscriminatory. Advisers should confer first with the building principal, and, if necessary, with the school system legal counsel to authorize these elements of their selection process.

The Faculty Council may also specify a prerequisite number of academic courses or weight grades in recognition of the varying degrees of difficulty of courses of study. As per the guidelines for schools with "innovative grading practices," these eligibility requirements should appear in the written description of the selection process along with a statement from the Faculty Council providing a professional rationale for their inclusion.

Should it be fairly and appropriately judged that the potential member does not meet all of the selection criteria, the Faculty Council may consider bestowing honorary membership upon a student with a registered disability. Honorary membership can be bestowed upon students with disabilities or foreign exchange students in recognition of achievement or outstanding service rendered to the school in keeping with the purposes of the Honor Society. Other students at the school who are outside of these two categories are not eligible for honorary membership.

Put simply, honorary membership grants to the recipient all of the privileges of membership without the obligations associated with active member status. To summarize, when local schools are asked to consider students from special, school-based populations for membership, the Faculty Council should consider one of three options: selection as an active member, nonselection based on failure to meet the selection criteria, or selection as an honorary member of the chapter.

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### 3.4.2 Graduate Membership

Active members become graduate members upon graduation. Graduate members have no voice or vote in chapter activities. Similarly, because graduate members are no longer within the jurisdiction of the chapter's Faculty Council, they cannot be dismissed once graduated.

### 3.4.3 Honorary Membership

As identified in the constitution, honorary membership may be granted to individuals who have extended outstanding service to the school or community in keeping with the purposes of the National Honor Society. Faculty Councils are urged to use discretion in conferring honorary memberships.

The Faculty Council may also honor an outstanding student who has a disabling condition that prevents the student from fully meeting the requirements for membership. Other students (those without disabling conditions) who attend the school are not eligible for honorary membership, with the exception of foreign exchange students who are unable to meet the requirements in full (particularly those of attendance), but who, in the opinion of the Faculty Council, deserve the honor.

The usual membership card or certificate may be given to honorary members with the word "honorary" typed on it. Honorary members are permitted to wear the official insignia. Simply put, honorary membership bestows upon an individual all of the privileges of membership without imposing any of the obligations of membership.

The names of honorary and transfer members should appear on the chapter's official membership list, which is kept on file by the school or school district.

### 3.4.4 Obligations of Membership

The national constitution defines several obligations for members. First, all members are to maintain the standards by which the member was selected (i.e., continued performance at or above the required GPA, involvement in service and leadership projects, etc.). In addition, the constitution expects members to attend meetings and to perform both individual and chapter service projects during the year.

Chapters can choose to add to these obligations as long as the obligations are generally identified for candidates prior to selection and that appropriate notification is given to all members, once inducted, about their obligations. To avoid conflicts, it is advisable to have significant student input in the creation of these obligations, to carefully consult the school calendar to avoid conflicts, and to be sensitive to personal needs based on preexisting familial or cultural/religious obligations.

The primary question that should be asked concerning these additional obligations is, Do they support the purposes of the organization as outlined in the constitution? If they do, and support for the events can be demonstrated among a majority of the chapter members, these extra obligations are supportable. As every adviser knows, NHS members are already very involved in many school activities or they would not have been chosen in the first place. Alternatives to mandatory obligations could be offering students a choice, for example, to attend any two out of five events; to make such activities voluntary; or to give members extra "points" or "credit" for participating that could be used toward fulfilling other membership obligations.

Local chapters are encouraged to survey the membership and also find out what other schools in the area are doing before developing a final plan.

Publication of member obligations is a responsibility of the chapter. It is recommended that in addition to the publishing of the chapter bylaws for each member, that chapters include a list of member obligations in the general chapter description that appears in the student handbook, faculty handbook, parent newsletters, or any other official publication of the school or school system. Helping potential candidates and their parents understand what will be expected of them if they are selected may assist an individual candidate in determining if he or she has sufficient time to put into this honor.

It is also beneficial for parents to understand the commitment of time and energy that is necessary once their student becomes a member of the chapter. Many chapters will outline all member obligations and include such a list either in the candidate's packet of information or in a new member packet, and then request (or require) that the student and the parent or guardian sign the form affirming their understanding of the nature of all member obligations. Having such a document on file will assist in supporting the school's position should a student be called up for disciplinary action when it is apparent that he or she is not meeting some or all of the member obligations.



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### **The Five Constitutional Obligations of a Duly Inducted Member**

1. Dues (Article IV, Section 4)—Members may be asked to pay annual chapter dues. The constitution limits this amount to \$20 per student per year. For this amount and any other obligatory expenses bestowed upon members, the school should be able to provide alternative sources of funding for those students who may be incapable of paying. The authentic inability of a member or his or her family to pay such financial obligations should not be the reason for discipline or dismissal of any member. Chapters are not required to charge dues, but once established, members can be required to meet this obligation in a timely manner.
2. Maintaining standards (Article VIII, Section 1)—Once selected, all members are expected to maintain the standards by which they were selected. The implication here is that members are well informed concerning what those selection standards were as published in the description of the local selection process.
3. Meetings (Article XIII, Section 1)—Chapters hold meetings and may require members to attend. The schedule of these meetings should be well publicized. In addition, chapter officers should work closely with the adviser to see that the agenda for all meetings is well thought out and planned for.
4. Chapter service projects (Article XIV, Sections 1 and 2)—All chapters are required to sponsor a chapter service project and all members are required to participate, assuming that the project meets the criteria as outlined in the constitution.
5. Individual service projects (Article XIV, Section 4)—In addition to the chapter service project, members are to engage in additional service according to their own talents and interests. The quantity of this service and the degree to which the chapter monitors this activity should be defined in the chapter bylaws.

Additional obligations (Article XVI, Section 2)—If additional obligations exist for members of the chapter, such obligations should be spelled out in the chapter bylaws for all members to see. It is recommended that a set of these bylaws be presented to each member yearly as a reminder of these and all member obligations.

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## Chapter Management Tool: Creating a Member Handbook

Creating a handbook for individual members of the chapter is an excellent method for keeping members informed, organized, and attuned to chapter activities and their responsibilities therein. Too many times, members respond to questions about their participation in chapter activities with, “Nobody told me,” or “I didn’t know.” Although it is the member’s responsibility to know and understand the obligations of his or her membership in the chapter, taking the time to prepare a relevant and effective handbook for members is a good idea.

In considering a member handbook for the first time, use a variety of sources for its content. Because this will be a handbook for members, the current members (or the officers who represent them) would be primary sources for ideas. The national office often refers to the adage that, “People tend to support what they create,” and using students at this stage of the process supports that concept.

In addition to student input, the Faculty Council members and the principal of the school would be two obvious choices for ideas. Consider also having a representative of the parent community (PTA president, booster club member, etc.) take a look at the handbook prior to printing. Getting input from a variety of sources should enhance the overall quality and usefulness of your new handbook. Of course, even with lots of input, the stated purpose of your handbook and the budget you have for developing such would dictate how much of the input you can use. Input is helpful for creating an initial draft for consideration, finalizing a draft, and for reviewing the handbook after a year’s implementation. One important reason for including a representative of the school’s administration at some stage in the handbook’s development is to make certain that all of the information found within the handbook conforms to existing school policy.

So, what should be included? Here’s a brief list of topics to consider:

- Congratulatory letters from the chapter president, the adviser, and the principal. This helps personalize your handbook to each administration and helps build a strong working relationship between the chapter and school leadership and the membership.
- Master calendar for the chapter and its planned activities and major school events (i.e., homecoming, winter vacation, etc.).
- Obligations of membership that lists the responsibilities and obligations required of all members of the chapter per your local bylaws. Some chapters include a statement of ethics for all members and relevant portions of the school’s code of student conduct in this section.
- Contact information including the adviser, chapter officers, and the principal. This information can merely be a listing of the individuals by name or it can include their phone numbers and duties of office. Another name to consider including on this list is the current head of the parent organization for your school.
- Roster of members that includes the current members of the chapter and what grades are they in. Obviously, this would need updating annually to reflect the new inductees. With permission of the individual members, a membership roster can contain contact information as well (phone numbers, e-mails, etc.).
- Meeting schedule that identifies the day and dates of your regularly scheduled chapter meetings. It is a good idea to remind students on this page what the chapter’s meeting attendance policy is and what the consequences are for not adhering to that policy.
- Generic agenda and relevant excerpts from *Robert’s Rules of Order* (or other guides for meeting management).
- Project-planning guide to help all members understand what to do if presented with a new project-planning responsibility.
- Committees, if your chapter uses them. If the chapter operates with standing committees, each with its own set of duties or responsibilities, include a review of these and a list of the committee chairpersons, which is particularly helpful for new members.

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- Motivational material to be used as inspirational reminders of the four criteria that were used for member selection. You'll be surprised how often students will claim that they've used this to help them and how willing they are to suggest new information to include in such a section.
- Chapter bylaws, sometimes referred to as the local constitution, help members understand those policies that govern their chapter.
- Standards and the process for selection—especially when members are allowed to assist in communicating the nature of the criteria and the process for selecting members—help members understand how significant their selection actually is.

There are some additional pieces of information that can be considered for inclusion. A copy of the national constitution helps maintain the link with the national organization. (Chapters are granted permission to make such copies from the national handbook or from the Web sites for use in their chapter activities. Use the version found on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) or [www.njhs.us](http://www.njhs.us), which is the most recent edition.) Also, if your school belongs to the state association of NHS, including some relevant information about that membership would be in order. Major projects can be explained in a separate entry of the handbook to make certain all members understand the purpose and process for the event. Finally, many schools have local policies regarding participation in cocurricular activities that are often augmented with a great array of forms. Though your member handbook does not have to repeat information that may be found in your school's student handbook, some reference to relevant school policies could be appropriate.

Once you've organized and disseminated your handbook, here are four more suggestions for helping to systematize the process for your chapter:

1. Plan to review the content each year with your chapter officers. What works? What doesn't work? What else needs to be added? You may find your handbook assuming greater volume than your copy machine can handle, so from time to time, implement the KISS principle: Keep it short and simple.
2. Maintain a file of all master documents, either in your paper files so that replacement pages can be readily accessed, or in your electronic files for easy editing.
3. Assign the handbook's maintenance and updating as a duty of office for one of your chapter officers. If your chapter gets a new transfer member in the middle of the year, make certain that this officer knows to provide a copy of your member handbook to this person.
4. Share the information with others. Give a copy to your counselors and a member of the administration (they will have provided some input at an earlier point). Counselors value up-to-date information about activities on campus. Administrators like to see that members are being kept informed about school policies. Your completed handbook will also serve as a model to other activity groups on campus, an important role for any Honor Society chapter to take.

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## Chapter Management Tool: Officer Installation Ceremony

The following text describes a sample installation ceremony for chapter officers.

Installing officer: "The installation of any group of officers is an important and serious occasion. You have indicated your faith and trust in these, your elected officers, to serve for the coming year. Their service and accomplishments depend largely on your cooperation. Following is as important as leading. In any organization, there comes a time when some must lead for a while and others must follow.

"The National Honor Society is founded upon the principles of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. In all your undertakings, may you always keep in mind these guiding principles:

*A candle's but a simple thing;  
It starts with just a bit of string.  
Yet dipped and dipped with patient hand,  
It gathers wax upon the strand  
Until, complete and snowy white,  
It gives at last a lovely light.  
[Installing officer lights candle on table.]  
Life seems so like that bit of string;  
Each deed we do a simple thing,  
Yet day by day if on life's strand  
We work with patient heart and hand.  
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright,  
And gives at last a lovely light."*

"Will each retiring officer step forward as your name is called and receive a lighted candle, symbol of the flaming torch of freedom and knowledge, and reminding us to bear forward the searching light of truth and to lead others to follow the light.

[Lights a candle for each retiring officer and gives it to him or her as the officer's name is called.]

"Outgoing officers, you have made the candles which you will pass on to your successors. You have worked with patient care, made dark ways bright. We thank you for all your efforts. They have added to the history of this organization. We now ask you to pass your lighted candle to your successor.

[Old officers retire.]

"New officers, in accepting these offices you have indicated your willingness to give the best in time and effort to carry out the principles of the National Honor Society. Yours is a grave responsibility as well as a privilege. The world today, as never before, needs faithful and efficient leaders, and your school is looking to you to lead its students. With this in view, do you pledge your best efforts to these offices you now accept? If so, new officers please respond, 'We do.'

*Hold high the torch,  
You did not light its glow.  
'Twas given you from other hands you know.  
'Tis only yours to keep it burning bright,  
For there are other feet that you must guide  
And other forms go marching by your side.  
Some day in turn they'll lift it high and say,  
'I watched another carry it this way.'*

"May your light blaze forth for a successful year and, at the expiration of your term of office, may it be passed on with the satisfaction that much was accomplished for the welfare of our school and our organization. Congratulations!"

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## 3.5 Chapter Officers

Each chapter has the responsibility to designate, through the bylaws, which officer positions are appropriate for the smooth functioning of the chapter. Chapters often designate the following positions: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, parliamentarian, historian, and reporter or public relations officer.

Election procedures for chapter officers are to be determined by the membership and approved by the Faculty Council. For all officer election systems, democratic principles of operation should be used, with an emphasis on fairness in conducting all procedures. If resources are needed for assistance in completing chapter officer elections, advisers should consult with the school's student council or other organizations on campus for examples of effective procedures.

New officers should be installed in a special ceremony at a chapter meeting, at a special dinner meeting, or at an annual banquet. The installation ceremony can help reinforce the idea that good officers are crucial to a strong chapter. (See sidebar sample for officer installation ceremony.)

### 3.5.1 Officer Elections

The term "election" is not the term of choice where the selection of new members to an Honor Society chapter is concerned. However, election is used with chapters when exploring the process for identifying new chapter officers. Through the years, chapter advisers have raised a variety of important questions regarding how to organize and carry out their chapter officer elections. Offered below are some of the essential topics and suggestions. Answers are based on existing guidelines in the Honor Society constitutions and handbooks as well as the ongoing research of the staff at the national office. [Note: This subsection first appeared in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, November 2004.]

#### 3.5.1.1 Publication, Bylaws, and Duties

Because Article XVI of the national constitution mandates every chapter to have bylaws to amplify the provisions of the constitution, every chapter should have bylaws and include in them the various provisions regarding chapter elections that may exist. A separate set of bylaws or guidelines can be developed for chapter election purposes and should similarly be published. Regardless of where the election guidelines are published, the adage, "Write what you do and do what you write," applies. In other words, follow the established procedural guidelines.

An outline for your chapter bylaws, containing a section for the election and duties of officers can be found in

Appendix C. Similarly, a sample set of bylaws can be found in the Adviser Zone on the national Web site. What will not be found in either of these sections is a list of duties for your officers. These should be developed locally. It is worthwhile, at the end of each year, to have your officers look back over the set of published duties to determine whether or not those descriptions are accurate, and if not, make amendments to bring them up-to-date.

#### 3.5.1.2 Voting Procedures

With your processes and duties clearly expressed in local documentation, it is time to carry out the election of your officers. Prior to the nomination of candidates, it is always helpful to present a fresh copy of the election guidelines to all chapter members with an indication of the planned timeline for the entire election process. See that every member, including those who are absent, receives a copy and that some time is given for answering questions raised by the members.

A few topics should be addressed in this election orientation. First, who is eligible to run for office and who is eligible to vote? If you limit candidates to a certain grade level (e.g., rising seniors), be sure this is clearly stated. Similarly, some chapters wish to limit who can vote for the coming year's officers to those members who are returning. Because such a practice excludes some current members from voting, it is essential that a rationale exists to clarify for those who question the practice. Although this is a local decision, the national office discourages the use of such exclusionary rules in chapter elections because it does not parallel standard voting practices in which all citizens at the time of the election are allowed to vote.

Chapter presidents and advisers should be aware of the quorum rule, which indicates that no official business of the chapter—including voting—can take place unless a minimum of one more than 50% of the members are present. Local chapters can set a quorum at a higher or lower percentage, but it is important to take an accurate count of members attending and voting during the election process. Some chapters do not announce results until all members have submitted ballots, allowing those who missed the meeting to vote through the chapter adviser following the planned meeting.

When confronting tie votes in any election, look to your established procedures for advice, and if no such statement exists explaining how to handle a tie vote, consider developing one prior to the next election. Recounting and revoting are often the first steps in such circumstances, even allowing the tied candidates to make additional comments to the membership.

Whether your chapter allows campaigning in the form of signs, posters, speeches or other methods should be

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addressed in your chapter bylaws. Approval of or limits to the content of all campaign activities is suggested. One problem that many chapters have had to address in recent years is whether or not Web site campaigning is appropriate, whether at school or via home computers. In all such guidelines, it is recommended that the adviser compare the chapter guidelines with those in the school's student council or other student organizations. When in doubt, request input from the principal. Similarly, there may be school system guidelines on elections for student groups that would need to be adhered to by your chapter.

### 3.5.1.3 Scheduling Alternative

One suggestion that has emerged in recent years is in reference to the timing of your chapter elections. Chapters often find that in the second semester of an officer's last year at the school, officers have a tendency to slack off on their responsibilities. To counter this effect, a chapter can institute elections in December or January every year, whereby the new officers would serve a term that includes the second semester of one year through the first semester of the next. Although there may be many chapter activities affected by such a plan, this allows officers to maintain their efforts over the summer, avoids the problems of reduced effectiveness at the end of the school year, and removes an activity from the end of the school year, which is already packed with events.

### 3.5.2 On the Job

Once elected, new officers should be publicly installed. Chapters are encouraged to create a respectful ceremony for

the installation that serves as a reminder to all of the duties these individuals have assumed and the responsibility of the membership to support their new leadership.

The chapter should also consider providing a press release to local media regarding the newly elected officers. Nothing helps keep an officer mindful of his or her responsibilities more than public awareness of the position.

Patty Hendrickson, a well-known consultant and leadership trainer, offers four essential points that advisers should use when working with their new officers:

1. Encourage self-assessment and reflection
2. Help each officer create a keeper notebook
3. Provide blank business cards for use by the officers
4. Focus on a few key goals for the group.

Visit [www.PattyHendrickson.com](http://www.PattyHendrickson.com) for more suggestions.

### 3.5.2.1 Dealing With Problems

From time to time, officers do not perform their duties as assigned. It is important that, in the chapter officer guidelines, consequences are laid out for such situations. Officers can be warned, removed from office, or in extreme cases dismissed from the chapter. Though the latter function is reserved for the Faculty Council, any and all disciplinary processes should be spelled out in the chapter bylaws for all members. In the case of removal or dismissal, a policy should similarly be developed for filling vacancies whether by special election, appointment by the executive committee, the adviser or Faculty Council, or by simple succession. This replacement policy

## Resources on Chapter Officers

Chapter officer elections are just one process that helps create the student leadership necessary to carry out the work of the chapter. Once bylaws and guidelines have been established and published, advisers should be able to conduct such processes efficiently every year.

Additional resources on this topic have been published in past issues of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine in the Q&A section for advisers:

- February 1997—When one of our chapter officers consistently fails to fulfill the duties of office, how do we remove the member from that office in a fair and appropriate manner?
- February 1998—What process should be used for removing chapter officers from their positions?
- April 1998—The national handbook only gives general information about the duties of office for my chapter officers (executive committee). What can I do to develop a more complete list of officer duties for our chapter?
- February 2001—How should our chapter fill a vacancy when the officer moves, resigns, or is dismissed?
- February 2002—I'm preparing to hold my spring elections for officers of our chapter. What are some suggestions or guidelines I should be considering in preparation for these elections?

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should also be carefully outlined and applied fairly and consistently in all circumstances.

## 3.6 Executive Committee

The executive committee is composed of the chapter officers and the chapter adviser. The committee helps direct the business affairs of the chapter. This committee determines the dues structure, makes recommendations concerning the bylaws, time and place of meetings, meeting agendas, special projects, member obligations, nominating procedures for the NHS scholarship awards programs, and the like. All actions and recommendations by the executive committee are subject to review by the membership.

The executive committee should be especially aware of the chapter's relationship to other school organizations, the administration, the faculty, and the community. Care should be taken that activities of the chapter do not duplicate or interfere with those of other school organizations. Ideally, any project or activity developed by the chapter will compliment and serve the best interests of the total school program.

## 3.7 Committees for the Chapter

Many chapters use the committee system to develop and maintain their chapter throughout the year. Local chapters establish committees to further the purpose and organize the functions of their chapter. Traditionally, the chapter president appoints all committee chairpersons with prior approval of the chapter adviser or executive committee.

There is a traditional structure that identifies two types of committees: standing committees and special committees. Standing committees are those that the chapter can expect to use every year. An example of this might be the Induction Ceremony Committee charged with designing and implementing your annual new member function. A special committee, also known as an ad hoc committee, can be appointed to handle events that are unique to a year such as the 50th Anniversary Committee to handle the celebration of your chapter's milestones.

An alternative structure for committees can be derived from the purposes of the Honor Society. This would incorporate four or five committees described as follows:

- Scholarship, to provide mentoring and tutoring project supervision, honor roll postings, freshman motivation programs, etc.
- Leadership, to supervise officer training, creation of a member's handbook, bylaws review and revision, etc.
- Service, to fulfill the chapter's obligations to both school and community, organizing and implementing projects,

and assisting in keeping track of service hours of members

- Character, to develop and monitor a code of ethics and provide inspirational quotations for each meeting
- Citizenship, to promote voter registration, political issues affecting students and education, and supporting community activities.

Whatever structure you choose, committees are helpful tools to organize your chapter and to ensure involvement of all members in some aspect of the life of your chapter. You can allow your officers to chair these groups or choose to involve other leaders within the chapter to assume additional positions of responsibility. Records and files of committee project plans and evaluations and reports given at each chapter meeting will assist the ongoing success of your committees.

By building and using a strong committee structure for your chapter, you can achieve even more success. 🌟

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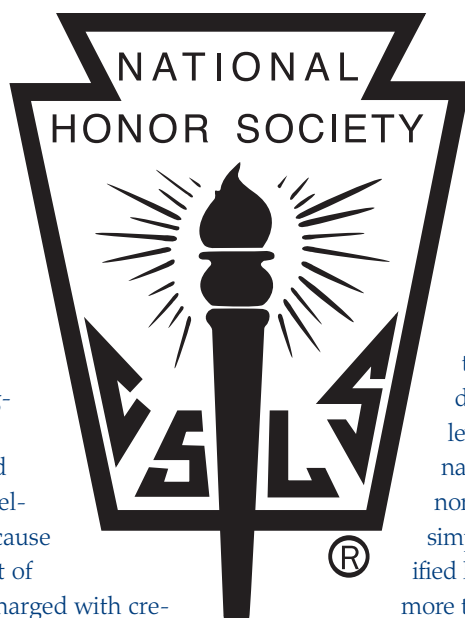


## 4. SELECTION PROCEDURES

For many students, selection as a member of the National Honor Society is the pinnacle of their achievements in school. This honor, recognized throughout the nation, is both the public recognition of accomplishment and the private commitment to continued excellence on the part of the new member. Because of the importance placed upon this aspect of secondary school life, local chapters are charged with creating a selection process that conforms to the national guidelines, is applied fairly and consistently to all candidates, and provides a meaningful recognition of deserving students.

Much care and attention has been given to the formulation of the guidelines that follow, all of which are based on existing provisions of the national constitution. Through the years, the recommended procedures from this handbook have undergone administrative and judicial scrutiny at every level. Never, to the best of the knowledge of the staff at the national office, has a court of record deemed any of these official procedures as being either unfair or illegal—two very important tests for any policy undergoing review. It is based on this fact that the National Council strongly encourages all chapters to closely adhere to the recommendations that follow.

Selection to NHS is a privilege, not a right. (See the *Legal Memorandum*, Fall 2003, located in Appendix D for a legal discussion of this statement.) Students do not apply for membership in the National Honor Society. Instead, they provide information to be used by the local selection committee to support their candidacy for membership. Membership is



granted only to those students selected by the Faculty Council in each school on the condition of their having met the standards for selection established at the local level and based on the provisions of the national constitution. This is not an election, nor is membership automatically conveyed simply because a student has achieved a specified level of academic performance. NHS is more than just an honor roll and the extent to which the local chapter emphasizes the other components of the selection process (leadership, service, and character) should be carefully included in the local selection process guidelines.

The selection process must be public information, available to parents, students, and faculty upon request, as noted in Article IX, Section 4. It should also be published appropriately in such publications as the student handbook, the school newspaper, parent newsletters, or some other publication that is widely available to students and parents and, in addition, is shared at orientation programs for new students. (See Appendix E.) Many chapters also include this information on their chapter or school Web sites. Proper dissemination of information about the chapter, particularly details concerning the selection process used at the school, will help prevent problems with students or parents who may wish to question the process. To ensure that your description of the selection process is fully understandable, it is recommended that the chapter form a committee of students, teachers, and parents to review the

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description for clarity.

All decisions concerning selection have a certain subjective element, but problems can be avoided if the Faculty Council develops and follows some objective criteria. The National Council urges chapters to follow the recommended procedures that follow. However, whatever procedure is followed, it must be fair, nondiscriminatory, consistently applied, and written for public dissemination.

## 4.1 Prerequisite Conditions for Selection

According to the constitution, only those students who have attended the school the equivalent of one semester may be considered for membership. This period is necessary for students to establish themselves academically and involve themselves in various service and leadership activities, and for the faculty to get to know them and the quality of their character. Even after a semester, however, it may be necessary to contact a transfer student's former school for additional information. The National Council does not support local eligibility requirements that exceed this one semester provision of the constitution.

Some candidates may be ineligible for induction because of the semester ruling. Many students, including students of military parents, are required to move with their family when parents or guardians have been transferred to new locations. The present school principal or adviser should seek a recommendation from the previous school principal pursuant to the candidate's selection. Based on the recommendation of the previous principal, counselor, or chapter adviser, the Faculty Council may waive the semester regulation.

Membership may be open to qualified sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The Faculty Council may decide to choose only one or a combination of these classes, according to local needs, conditions, or traditions.

Whatever classes are eligible in a given school, academic requirements must be the same for all candidates in all classes. For example, you may not have a different GPA requirement for sophomores than you have for juniors and seniors. The National Council considers different academic requirements for the various classes to be inappropriate.

Similarly, there can be no specific quota or percentage of members per class. All students who meet the criteria for selection should be inducted regardless of the number. If it is necessary to limit chapter size, the academic requirement for all candidates can be raised.

Regarding those classes that are eligible for membership, schools with a 9–12 grade structure may not include ninth

graders as members of the NHS chapter. However, when considering candidates for selection, it is appropriate to use grades earned and activities undertaken during the ninth-grade year. Also, schools with this 9–12 structure may not have a separate, ninth-grade-only chapter of NJHS on their high school campus, a restriction that has been in existence since September 1983.

Please refer to the section on membership in chapter 3 for a discussion of special classifications of students (home-schoolers, part-time enrollees, etc.) and how they can or should be incorporated into your local selection process.

## 4.2 Criteria for Membership

The Faculty Council of the chapter selects students who demonstrate outstanding performance in all four criteria of NHS—scholarship, leadership, service, and character. According to the principles outlined in Article IX, Section 2, the Faculty Council should first identify students with the prerequisite GPA and then evaluate the candidates' performance in the areas of leadership, service, and character.

Although the academic criterion is important and should be considered first, membership should never be considered on the basis of grades alone, even though a Faculty Council may consider scholarship as the most important of the four criteria. Schools that select members solely on the basis of scholarship are violating the constitution and placing their charters in jeopardy. The Faculty Council may wish to survey academically eligible students to determine interest in membership and to obtain information regarding service and leadership activities (see the sample "Student Activity Information Form" in Appendix F). Students so surveyed should understand that such surveys are not applications for membership, and that the review of information gathered does not guarantee selection.

In evaluating potential members for leadership, service, and character, the Faculty Council often begins with a review of the definitions of these criteria. These definitions should also appear in the public description of the selection process. A common understanding of the criteria for selection helps all involved to accept and understand the professional decisions made by the Faculty Council.

### 4.2.1 Scholarship

The scholarship requirement set by the National Council is based on a student's cumulative GPA. Cumulative GPA refers to the total academic performance as demonstrated by the grades received by the student while in attendance at the school where the chapter is found. For example, in a high

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school containing grades 9–12, even when students are selected during their junior year, grades from the ninth grade on should be used to compute the scholastic average. Obtaining grades from a student’s middle school would be inappropriate and only complicate the selection process as well as present a problem of verification for the Faculty Council. Wherever possible, chapters are encouraged to use the same standard for computing GPA that is currently used within the school because that is the system most easily recognized and understood by the students and their parents. Using a nontraditional cumulative GPA calculation or scholarship average requires both additional time for the adviser or Faculty Council to complete the calculations, and additional explanation to be added to the written description of the selection process.

- The minimum GPA allowable is 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale), or the equivalent standard of excellence. [Note: These three values are not necessarily equivalents, but are presented here to reflect the three standard grading systems in use.] The Faculty Council may raise the required cumulative GPA. The Faculty Council may also specify a prerequisite number of academic courses or weight grades in recognition of the varying degrees of difficulty of courses of study. In such cases, the Faculty Council should first confer with the administration or school system representatives to be assured that such additional guidelines do not conflict with existing local, state, or federal policies, and then must provide to the administration, students, and parents of the school the professional rationale for these additional guidelines or procedures.
- If a Faculty Council decides to weight grades in recognition of the varying degrees of difficulty of courses of study, this weighting should be accomplished prior to the determination of the cumulative GPA in order to identify all students who have met the scholastic criterion prior to consideration of their leadership, service, and character.
- Rules such as “no grade below B” are not acceptable.
- A failing grade is not an acceptable reason to automatically eliminate a student’s candidacy (unless such markings have caused the cumulative GPA to fall below the established standard).

Schools with innovative grading practices (individualized, nongraded, or pass–fail) share in the requirement to select the top students for membership. The Faculty Council in these schools have the responsibility to determine ways to identify those students who meet the scholarship requirement. In addition, school systems that allow middle level students to earn high school credit for courses taken at the middle level should

address whether or not such courses are included in the high school GPA. This information should be relayed to the middle level students and their parents, as well as the high school guidance office of this policy when signing up for such courses or calculating cumulative averages. The Faculty Council must provide a rationale for these determinations and include such in the written description of the selection process.

In all cases, only those students who have a cumulative GPA of 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or equivalent standard of excellence, or a higher cumulative average set by the Faculty Council meet the scholarship requirement for membership in the National Honor Society. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, and character.

## 4.2.2 Leadership

The leadership criterion is considered highly important for membership selection. A Faculty Council may wish to interpret leadership in terms of the number of offices a student has held in school or community organizations; however, it is important to recognize that leadership also exists outside elected positions including effective participation in positions of responsibility in other activities offered on campus such as athletic team captains, section leaders in band and chorus, committee chairs in student groups, etc. A Faculty Council may also define leadership in less objective terms. Leadership roles in both the school and community may be considered, provided they can be verified.

Chapters can consider the following descriptors as they develop their local definition and standard for leadership. This list is for consideration purposes only and should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion. The student who exercises leadership:

- Is resourceful in proposing new problems, applying principles, and making suggestions
- Demonstrates initiative in promoting school activities
- Exercises positive influence on peers in upholding school ideals and spirit
- Contributes ideas that improve the civic life of the school
- Is able to delegate responsibilities
- Exemplifies positive attitudes
- Inspires positive behavior in others
- Demonstrates academic initiative
- Successfully holds school offices or positions of responsibility
- Conducts business effectively and efficiently
- Demonstrates reliability and dependability
- Is a leader in the classroom, at work, or in other school or community activities

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## Some Additional Considerations for Scholarship

**“Revisiting” scholarship.** Once it has been determined that a student has met the scholarship criterion, that issue can be put aside and the remainder of the Faculty Council’s attention directed to the remaining three criteria. For the Faculty Council to bring up the “quality” of a student’s grades or evaluate the degree of difficulty of the courses after the GPA has been determined is inappropriate in that this would be considered “revisiting” the scholarship criterion. Similarly, teacher recommendation/evaluation forms (an optional concern for local chapters) that include a space for rating the student’s scholarship are inappropriate for the same reasons.

Schools that rate the level of the students’ GPAs for their point system (see subsection on point systems for further explanation of this process) in the selection process are similarly revisiting scholarship (e.g. 97–100 = 4 points; 94–96 = 3 points, etc.). In the case of a school using a point system, points should only be applied to those candidates who have already met the scholastic criteria and now need to be rated on the remaining three criteria. The possible consequence of this inappropriate use of points when revisiting scholarship is that the school may find itself first informing the student that he or she has the necessary GPA to be a member, and then, because the student’s GPA was not in the highest possible category (i.e., the student only got 3 points instead of 4) informing the student that he or she was not selected because “the GPA was not high enough to earn the required points for selection.” This contradiction would be both inappropriate and confusing to candidates and their parents and thus should be avoided.

**Using state or standardized tests.** The inclusion of a restriction that all candidates must have passing scores or scores of a defined level on state-based tests for competency or skill or standardized tests such as the SAT or ACT has been considered by some chapters. The National Council believes it more appropriate to have the cumulative GPA that is an indicator of ongoing assessment of student performance as the indicator of scholarship rather than performance judged from an instrument administered on a single day. Although such state-administered or private tests may offer some valuable assessment of student learning, it is recommended that low standardized or state test performance be a signal to the adviser that a member is facing some difficulties and not be viewed as a factor leading to nonselection.

**Changing the GPA requirement.** In cases where a school wishes to change the GPA requirement by raising or lowering the GPA (not beneath the 3.0 national minimum), there are a few key points to keep in mind:

- Changes in the selection procedure should be made by the Faculty Council. The origin of the changes may be the administration, the faculty adviser, or even from the body of current chapter members. In all cases, however, the Faculty Council must provide formal approval.
- As with all aspects of the selection procedure, the change(s) and all information related to the change should be published in a timely fashion and be available for easy dissemination to the public.
- When considering the timing for implementing proposed changes, it is strongly recommended that a local chapter consider announcing the change at least one year prior to formally establishing the new criteria. This timeline allows students to set new goals for their scholastic performance (the higher GPA) and sufficient time to achieve them. In addition, it allows the chapter to publish the new guidelines and to update the faculty and parents of all prospective members. However, the best recommendation from the national office is to implement such changes with a class entering the school, e.g., with the new freshman class entering 9–12 school. Although a 4-year transition will be needed to fully implement the change, this process would appear to be the fairest for those affected by the change.

Under all circumstances, advisers and members of the Faculty Council are reminded that continued membership in the chapter is based upon students maintaining the standards under which they were admitted as members. Consequently, a member admitted with a 3.0 GPA would be expected to maintain that average as a member, even if a new standard of 3.25 were approved for membership selected for later induction. In cases involving new scholastic standards, this may mean that a given group of chapter members operate under different standards for a period of years while the new criteria are being installed.

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- Is dependable in any responsibility accepted.

## 4.2.3 Service

Service is generally considered to be those actions undertaken by the student which are done with or on behalf of others without any direct financial or material compensation. In considering service, the contributions a candidate has made to school, classmates, and community as well as the student's attitude toward service can be reviewed. Chapters can consider the following descriptors as they develop their local definition and standard for service. This list is for consideration purposes only and should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion. The student who serves:

- Volunteers and provides dependable and well-organized assistance, is gladly available, and is willing to sacrifice to offer assistance
- Works well with others and is willing to take on difficult or inconspicuous responsibilities
- Cheerfully and enthusiastically renders any requested service to the school
- Is willing to represent the class or school in interclass and interscholastic competition
- Does committee and staff work without complaint
- Participates in some activity outside of school (e.g., Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, religious groups, volunteer services for the elderly, poor, or disadvantaged)
- Mentors persons in the community or students at other schools
- Shows courtesy by assisting visitors, teachers, and students.

All chapters are strongly encouraged to develop and use an objective standard for service based on either a specific number of projects or a specific quantity of hours that are determined, as noted by the Faculty Council after consultation with staff and students, to be a fair and reasonable quantity of service to require. All such service references by candidates should include verification by an adult supervisor of the activity under consideration. It is advantageous for both the Faculty Council and for students considering membership to have such an objective standard in place for the chapter.

## 4.2.4 Character

Character is probably the most difficult criterion to define. The Faculty Council should consider the positive as well as the negative aspects of character. All judgments in this and other selection criteria should be free of speculation and rumor.

National Honor Society is a member of the Character Counts!<sup>™</sup> Coalition ([www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)). Through this

activity, the Honor Society supports and recommends the use of a multifaceted definition of character known as the Six Pillars of Character. A person of character demonstrates the following six qualities: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Schools are encouraged to take this model, modify it to meet their local needs, and use it frequently in the work of their chapter.

Chapters can consider the following descriptors as they develop their local definition and standard for character. This list is for consideration purposes only and should not be thought of as a checklist for this criterion. The student of character:

- Takes criticism willingly and accepts recommendations graciously
- Consistently exemplifies desirable qualities of behavior (e.g., cheerfulness, friendliness, poise, stability)
- Cooperates by complying with school regulations concerning property, programs, office, halls, etc.
- Demonstrates the highest standards of honesty and reliability
- Regularly shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others
- Observes instructions and rules, is punctual, and faithful both inside and outside the classroom
- Manifests truthfulness in acknowledging obedience to rules, avoiding cheating in written work, and showing an unwillingness to profit by the mistakes of others
- Actively helps rid the school of bad influences or environment.

The National Council has approved the following recommendations for use when considering the character of candidates:

A candidate will be able to demonstrate an outstanding record of conduct and behavior with regard to school and community rules, guidelines, and policies or be able to demonstrate sufficient growth and improvement to compensate for previous inadequacies. The Faculty Council is encouraged to document, for purposes of their own decision making or if questioned by the principal, any substandard performance in the area of the character criterion. Such documentation might include such sources as:

- Administrative records of the school
- Counseling records from the guidance office
- Conduct or behavior grades or ratings (including comments) on report cards
- Professional records of individual faculty members (grade books, etc.)
- Comments, based on professional evaluation and action, of individual faculty members on candidate evaluation forms.

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It is left to the discretion of the local principal, faculty adviser, and/or Faculty Council as to how much of this information is to be shared with the candidate not selected for membership (or his or her parents).

Students who have been arrested and found guilty of civil offenses or who have a chronic record of breaking school rules should not be automatically excluded from consideration for membership. A proper regard for adolescent growth and behavior improvement is essential.

It should be noted that, under provisions of federal law, pregnancy—whether within or without wedlock—cannot be the basis for automatic denial of the right to participate in any public school activity. It may properly be considered, however, like any other circumstance, as a factor to be assessed in determining character as it applies to the National Honor Society. But pregnancy may be taken into account in determining character only if evidence of paternity is similarly regarded. (See Appendix D for further information on the legal aspects of selection.)

## 4.3 The Recommended Selection Process

The selection procedure should be developed by the local Faculty Council, approved by the principal, and must be published and available for review by students, faculty, and parents. (See Appendix E for a model description for the student handbook; see Appendix U for scheduling information.)

As the first step in the process, students' academic records are reviewed to determine students who are scholastically eligible for membership, i.e., students who meet the required cumulative GPA standard. The GPA used at the local level cannot fall below the national minimum standard outlined in the national constitution, and, once set, must be applied fairly and consistently to all candidates.

Students who are eligible scholastically (i.e., "candidates") should be notified and informed that for further consideration for selection to the chapter, they may complete the Student Activity Information Form (see Appendix F for sample form). This form should not be referred to as an application. This form outlines the candidate's accomplishments in the areas of Service and Leadership. Many chapters offer help sessions for candidates providing assistance in properly filling out their forms. Care should be taken to follow the established guidelines and time schedule for completing and submitting the forms. It is further recommended that both students and parents sign these forms when submitting them, indicating that the content is both complete and accurate.

If additional faculty input would be beneficial, all faculty

members can be invited to make comments on candidates, most often done on a faculty evaluation form. (See Appendix G for a sample form.) It is important to note that the actual selection of members must be made by the five appointed members of the Faculty Council. Consequently, point totals or averages of the faculty ratings are not to be considered as votes or the sole determinants of membership, but should instead be reported to the Faculty Council to add to their information when considering selections. Faculty members should consider this input in the most professional manner and consequently be able to substantiate claims, in particular those low ratings provided, with professional actions. All input from the faculty should be signed, but may remain confidential as per commentary in the handbook unless dictated to the contrary by local or state policies or laws.

The Student Activity Information Form should be reviewed by the Faculty Council, along with any other verifiable information about the candidates relevant to their candidacy. Some Faculty Councils may wish to interview candidates personally. The leadership, service, and character of all candidates should be reviewed carefully. Faculty Council members are encouraged to deliberate in order to guarantee that their decisions are based on accurate and complete understandings of all information presented for review. With the vote on each candidate, those candidates receiving a majority vote of the Faculty Council should be invited to be inducted into the chapter. All nonselected candidates (i.e., those who do not receive the majority vote of the Faculty Council) should be listed and have those criteria not met by the individual candidate next to their name to assist the adviser and principal in handling inquiries regarding nonselection.

Prior to notification of any candidates, the adviser should report to the principal the results of the Faculty Council's deliberations for approval. Lists of selected and non-selected students as well as reasons for nonselection may be incorporated in this report. This will ensure the support of the administration prior to any notification.

Chapters should consider formal written notification of all selected candidates and their parents to inform them about selection and the timing of the induction ceremony. Schools should also seriously consider the method by which students who are not selected are informed about their nonselection to see that this method is both timely and considerate of their well being.

To finalize the plans for induction, a plan should be devised for verification of membership and acceptance of the invitation for membership and attendance at the induction

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ceremony.

The discussion that follows explores specific points relevant to the local chapter's use of the recommended selection process.

## 4.4 Tools for Completing the Selection Process

### 4.4.1 The Candidate Information Packet

Each chapter undertakes its selection procedures uniquely. The following list suggests specific items to develop and include in your local candidate materials. Chapters are encouraged to create an attractive and informative packet because this reflects on the quality and reputation of your organization, and hence that of the national organization as well. The official Honor Society logo may be used on all such materials, per the logo usage guidelines that appear elsewhere in the national handbook.

#### 4.4.1.1 Student Activity Information Forms

In order to ascertain the degree to which a candidate meets the selection criteria, it is recommended that the Faculty Council use a Student Activity Information Form. (See Appendix F.) Such forms are generally used to obtain information directly from the student regarding leadership and service activities and to elaborate on the student's perspectives concerning the Honor Society and its values. These forms should not be considered under any circumstances as applications for membership.

It is recommended that local forms include a parental/guardian signature affirming that they have reviewed the data and verify its accuracy. Other adult signatures may also be requested to verify participation in leadership or service activities.

These forms are for use by the Faculty Council as working documents to be used during the selection process in support of the student's candidacy.

The national office does not support the use of the term "apply" where the process of entering into NHS candidacy is concerned. Members are selected (and not elected) by the faculty of the school, through decisions of the Faculty Council, to be a part of the chapter. Individuals do not apply for membership, but rather submit information, via the student activity information forms, for use by the Faculty Council in determining membership. Membership, therefore, is an honor bestowed upon an individual, and thus a privilege. It is neither a position for which one applies nor to which one is elected nor a right of any

individual.

#### 4.4.1.2 Local Selection Process

The packet should include description of the relevant criteria and process for selection.

#### 4.4.1.3 List of Member Obligations

A carefully composed list including such things as the chapter's annual meeting schedule, required dues (if any) and when they are to be paid, service project participation requirements (both chapter and individual), planned fundraising activities and expectations for participation, maintaining the standards that are used for selection, being role models both on and off campus, and reference to the possibility of discipline or dismissal if the member falls below the standards used for selection to membership. Such lists can be supplemented with a proposed calendar of chapter events for the year. It is strongly recommended that chapters have the candidate and the candidate's parent or guardian sign a copy of the obligation sheet acknowledging the content and agreeing to abide by these obligations if selected. Although this can be assumed when a candidate returns his or her information sheets, it is best to ensure that an understanding of these obligations exists prior to participating in the selection process.

#### 4.4.1.4 Cover letter

Correspondence to the candidate or parents of the candidate from the Adviser or principal (or even the current chapter president) indicating the schedule for selection and when and how notification will be made for those selected and not selected. It is always appropriate to personalize these letters and print them on either chapter or school stationery and see that they contain relevant contact information.

#### 4.4.1.5 Opt-Out Form

Some students (or their parents) realize that there simply won't be enough time to participate in the Honor Society even though they may have a strong chance of being selected. A chapter can include an "opt out" sheet in the packet on which the student and parent acknowledge that they were viable candidates for this round of selection, but respectfully decline the invitation to be considered. A signed and dated form, containing both student and parent signatures, can then be kept for future reference. Returning such forms should not preclude the student from being considered in the next round of selection as long as he or she still meets the prerequisite qualifications established by

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the chapter.

## 4.4.2 Faculty Evaluation Forms and Recommendations

Selection for membership to the chapter is always to be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council. However, the local council members may wish to obtain additional information to assist them in making their decision. Faculty evaluations may be used to supplement the student activity information forms (a sample of which is found in Appendix F) gathered from each candidate. Once the students who possess the prerequisite GPA have been identified, they can submit a student activity information form detailing their service, leadership, and character. The faculty evaluation may be used to support the strength of a student's candidacy in the areas of service, leadership, and character. In the event of a low rating on one of the evaluations, it is always important to verify the reasons for such a rating, avoiding the "speculation and rumor" concepts described elsewhere in this handbook.

Evaluations bring to the attention of the Faculty Council information that may not otherwise be represented on the information forms. Upon reviewing the evaluations and verifying their accuracy, the Faculty Council is still required to undertake a vote on each candidate, selecting each student who receives a majority vote. To avoid questionable entries on faculty evaluations, chapters should require that all evaluations be signed and that each evaluator be prepared to support any below-average rating with substantiating data based on sound professional judgment and action. Anonymous faculty evaluation forms may not be used. The chapter adviser serves as the link between the Faculty Council and the evaluators, and may conduct informal interviews with those teachers who provide the below-average ratings.

To assist in maintaining an image of a professional system, it is further recommended that an evaluation form be collected from all faculty members, even if some faculty provide no rating because they have never taught, coached, or advised any of the candidates.

In the case of written recommendations from faculty, chapters can indicate that candidates must obtain such recommendations from a specific number of faculty members. Alternatively, some chapters simply seek the signature of support from a prerequisite number of staff members to verify the character of a candidate. In either case, please review with the school's faculty what is expected of them and the timetable for submission of all materials in support of an individual student's candidacy. Recommendations are not a national requirement, but if they are being considered for the

local selection process, advisers should take into consideration the time needed by staff to complete and submit such forms as well as the time needed by the Faculty Council to review their content.

As with the student activity information forms, faculty evaluations and recommendations are considered by the national office as working documents to assist the Faculty Council in making sound decisions regarding membership. Such evaluations are expected to be used only by the Faculty Council, the adviser, and the principals and should be considered confidential unless local or state policies dictate to the contrary. (Refer to *Legal Memorandum* in Appendix D, and to the sample faculty evaluation form in Appendix G.)

## 4.4.3 Point Systems

The constitution of NHS makes no reference to point systems for selection of members. Furthermore, no formal approval or sanction for using such systems exists among current policies from the national office. This, however, does not preclude a local chapter from developing an effective selection procedure using points for service, leadership, and character as long as the result retains compliance with all national guidelines.

If a point system is used by the Faculty Council, a few precautions are in order:

- All tabulations should be checked and rechecked for accuracy.
- If points assigned originate from faculty evaluation forms, such forms should be signed by the faculty members in order to verify their accuracy. Anonymous evaluations cannot ensure fairness and should be excluded from the process.
- If points are added or averaged in order to determine a "cutoff point" for membership, two factors should be considered:
  - The cutoff should be determined prior to the reading of the candidates' forms.
  - The cutoff should not be used as an absolute determinant of membership, but instead serve merely as a guide. An absolute determinant would, under such circumstances, be viewed as a replacement for the Faculty Council vote and would not enable the Faculty Council to deliberate effectively over each candidate. In addition, all of the students above the cutoff can easily be accepted as members; however, for those who fall below the cutoff, because they already have successfully reached the scholastic cutoff (GPA), they deserve individual considera-



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tion and review of their credentials even though they may not have enough points. Thus, for those who fall below the cutoff, the Faculty Council should review their forms first in order to make a sound professional judgment regarding selection or nonselection.

- Point systems should not revisit the issue of scholarship. Once the student's GPA is shown to be sufficient for candidacy, the issue of scholarship should be put aside and only the remaining criteria of service, leadership, and character used for determining membership. A reevaluation of a student's GPA to determine whether the academic performance was "good enough," would merely be questioning the judgment of those fellow faculty members who have already given their professional judgments by rendering grades for each student.
- Points which give specific values to various activities on campus should have the support from and approval of the administration prior to implementation.

One of the worst responses an adviser can give to the question, "Why wasn't I selected for NHS?" is, "You didn't get enough points." The logical consequence of such a statement is to ask where the student came up short, so you might as well save time and indicate that the Faculty Council did not approve the candidacy and, if your local policies require disclosure of information related to the Faculty Council deliberations, then indicate that the individual student was weak in one or more of the criteria other than scholarship.

Developing and implementing a fair point system can provide a local Faculty Council with an effective system for selecting members to the chapter. It is important to heed the precautions listed in order to guarantee the appropriate use of this and any other selection process devised at the local level.

## 4.4.4 Essays

There is no reference to an essay requirement in the recommended selection procedure found in the national handbook. However, this does not preclude the Faculty Council from including an essay in the local selection process. Many chapters feel that the essay provides a student the opportunity to express the meaning of character and the value of the four criteria in a manner that cannot be accomplished through a simple information sheet format. Since the use of essays is not specifically referenced in the national guidelines, care should be taken when incorporating them into any local chapter selection process.

Chapters that use essays as part of their selection process should note the following:

- Essays require significantly more of your Faculty Council's time to read and evaluate effectively.
- "Grading" an essay provided by a candidate duplicates your consideration of scholarship (see previous section on revisiting scholarship). Students have already been graded on their writing skills through grades in English and other classes where writing is required. Those efforts are reflected in the cumulative GPA. Should you not select a student because of a "low grade" on the essay, you would be contradicting your initial indication that the candidate's grades were high enough for membership.
- For students already actively involved at school and often already busy writing essays for either class or college admission, creating the essay for NHS selection adds to an already packed schedule of events.
- Use of an essay portion of your process should be pre-approved by your Faculty Council and, more importantly, by your principal. The intended use of the essay within the selection process should be clearly delineated in the chapter's selection process guidelines made available to all students prior to consideration for membership. If attention is to be given by the Faculty Council to such components as spelling, grammar, and neatness, along with the quality of response to the assigned topic, such information should be provided to all candidates as well. Advisers are encouraged to make themselves available to candidates who need clarification regarding the essay assignment for the selection process.

Some chapters that still wish to hear directly from the students have progressed to requiring an essay of those students who are selected, excerpts of which are used in the induction ceremony to introduce the new members in their own words. Topics such as "What membership in NHS means to me," "The meaning of leadership (or service) to students at [name your school] today," or "The value of being a person of good

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Initiation, blackballing, hazing, or the like are expressly prohibited as part of the selection process of any NHS activity. Any chapter found in violation of this regulation risks losing its charter. This prohibition has been included in every NHS handbook and constitution since 1921. For this reason, and to be consistent with the language used in this handbook and the constitution, it is recommended that the phrase "induction ceremony" instead of "initiation" be used to refer to the formal presentation of new members to the school and community. Similarly, all projects and activities undertaken by the chapter must preserve the integrity and reputation of NHS, consequently any use of initiation activities or hazing is prohibited.

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## Can deadlines be a reason for nonselection?

Yes, when defined as a reflection of a student's level of responsibility that is one aspect of character which is one of the four key elements considered in the selection process. Every classroom teacher struggles with this issue when assigning deadlines for long-term assignments. One tires quickly of the myriad of excuses, but one also looks for the "teachable moment" to train one's students to avoid tardiness from becoming habitual. Some of the same logical steps used in the classroom can be applied when establishing deadlines for activities of the chapter; however, there are also a variety of important elements to consider anytime a chapter wishes to implement a formal deadline.

It is important to demonstrate that the deadlines were:

- **Published**—Clearly identified in writing for all candidates (where deadlines in the selection process are being considered). Other deadlines for chapter members regarding service hours submission, completion of forms, etc., must also be available in writing, preferably in the list of member obligations or in the chapter bylaws.
- It would be helpful when publishing the deadlines, to indicate why the deadline is necessary. For example, "We request that the forms be submitted by this date to provide the Faculty Council sufficient time to authenticate the information provided by candidates and to seek clarification in preparation for the selection meeting. Without such time, it makes it difficult for the Faculty Council to render an appropriate professional judgment regarding your candidacy. Your cooperation in meeting this deadline is an indication of your responsibility and your commitment to becoming an effective member of our chapter."
- **Reasonable** in nature and length based on school calendar considerations and student schedules (e.g., does the deadline fall in the middle of exams or testing?)—Generally, deadlines that require 24 or 48 hours turnaround time for information are not viewed as falling within the scope of "reasonable" in that they often do not take into account student absences or parent work schedules (when parental signatures or review are requested).
- **Conclusive**—The consequence of not meeting the deadline was clearly expressed and consistently applied (avoiding arbitrary enforcement of the rule).
- **Implemented**—The adviser looks to enforce the established deadline policy, one should also consider what provisions have been developed for students who are absent when forms are disseminated and students who have legitimate extenuating circumstances that arise.
- **Timely**—Safe, and assured return of forms to the right individual. If the directions indicate return the forms to Room 207 by 3:00 p.m., then someone needs to be in Room 207 until a little after 3:00 p.m. to collect the forms. Similarly, allow for minor variations in the official time used. Not everyone's watch is tuned to the U.S. Naval Observatory's atomic clock. It is always helpful to indicate to chapter members whom they can see ahead of time (adviser, Faculty Council member, chapter officer, etc.) if they anticipate having any problems meeting the established deadline.
- **Climate** of the school with regard to promptness and punctuality is an important component to consider—Is this a value that is regularly presented to students as an indicator of excellence? Is there consistent enforcement of late submission policies throughout the building? Or is it possible that NHS is the only group on campus that regularly enforces such provisions leading to the possibility that the student expected to be treated less severely based on experiences with other teachers or groups on campus? Even with a carefully worded guideline (e.g., "no late forms will be accepted"), in the opinion of the national office, this consideration of the overall school climate still needs to be considered.

## SELECTION PROCEDURES

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If a student turns in the form late, the preferred method for handling such cases is to have the student's information accepted and submitted to the Faculty Council with the annotation that it was turned in late (forms timed and dated) and let the Faculty Council determine by vote whether the reasons for late submission were excusable. An inclusive approach would be to admit the student (assuming that he or she meets all the criteria for selection) and then counsel with the student regarding the importance of turning things in on time (like college applications and scholarship nomination forms). This process works under the policy assumption that no adviser can disqualify a previously identified candidate without the vote of the Faculty Council. Advisers should avoid putting themselves in a position of automatically removing any candidate's name from the list prior to consideration by the Faculty Council.

In defining character, as noted previously in this section, the national office frequently references the definition supplied by Character Counts! (CC). CC indicates that character can be defined with six qualities: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Meeting deadlines is one portion of meeting the responsibility, which is merely one-sixth of the total definition of character. To imply that a student's total character is substandard for having not met less than one-sixth of the criterion can be viewed as an extreme consequence. It is true that a single incident of proven cheating, for example, can keep a student out of the Honor Society or lead to his or her removal, it is more difficult to provide the rationale for taking a single incident of late submission as the sole reason for nonselection or dismissal.

A final factor is to look at the application of your policy of deadlines. Are you, and have you been, consistent in the application of these reasonable deadlines? The last thing an adviser wants to hear is "You accepted my brother Johnny's form late last year, so why won't you accept mine?"

To conclude, deadlines are a part of the real world as much as are standards of excellence. The Honor Societies are viewed by many as the most prestigious organizations for student recognition in the nation. As you examine your policies regarding deadlines, we hope these suggestions will assist in creating a reasonable policy that can be applied fairly and consistently in all circumstances to help maintain the reputation of the national organization.

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character,” are appropriate for this type of occasion.

## 4.5 Notification of Inductees

Those students selected and their parents are generally notified promptly and personally by the principal, chapter adviser, Society president, or by engraved or printed letters. (See Appendix H.) The letter may also outline some of the duties, responsibilities, or obligations of membership in the National Honor Society.

As a courtesy, the chapter adviser or principal should also notify the officers and chapter members of the selection results at an appropriate time. This information should be held in confidence until the formal invitations to the induction ceremony are released.

Chapters should consider carefully the timing and method of notification and be sensitive to those who may have been candidates but were not selected for membership. It is recommended that special efforts be taken in conveying this disappointing news to nonselected candidates, and to arrange for appropriate counseling of these students when warranted.

Regardless of the method of notification or announcement, it is advisable to follow up the official notification with a letter of confirmation. The letter should also outline some of the duties, responsibilities, and obligations of membership in the National Honor Society. It is always advisable to see that parents of new members are also kept fully informed concerning selection to, induction of, and obligations of membership.

Although requiring attendance at the induction ceremony conforms to the provisions found in Article VIII, Section 4, of the constitution, chapter advisers should enforce this rule in a reasonable manner. The possibility exists that legitimate extenuating circumstances, whether known ahead of time or occurring at the last minute, may prevent a selected candidate from making an appearance at the ceremony. Advisers are encouraged to counsel with each student who fails to show up for the induction ceremony regarding the reason for not attending and to ascertain whether or not the individual still wishes to become a member and arrange an alternative induction for them in the future, noting that officially the student is still in the “selected candidate” status and not a member of the organization until the induction is completed. This would be an appropriate time to review all responsibilities and obligations that come with being a member of NHS in order to prevent such situations from occurring again when the consequences could be more severe.

## 4.6 “Reapplication” for Membership

Membership in the National Honor Society is a permanent

condition unless a student’s performance falls below the standards by which he or she was selected. To this end, chapters may not ask students to “reapply” on a yearly basis. This circumstance does not preclude a chapter’s Faculty Council from requesting that students verify that they are still meeting the criteria for selection by updating their student activity information forms or by submitting report cards for verifying their academic performance. However, this process must not be interpreted as a formal return to the selection process with the student’s continuing membership in doubt. An active member becomes a graduate member upon graduation from high school. Only if a student is dismissed or resigns is the student’s continuing membership in the Honor Society ever to be curtailed.

## 4.7 Nonselection

Not selecting a student who has already been identified as being academically eligible can present a difficult situation for the principal, chapter adviser, and Faculty Council. The situation is bound to arise, however, given the necessarily subjective nature of some of the requirements for membership. The NHS constitution requires that a description of the selection procedure be published in an official school publication widely available to all students and their parents (Article IX, Section 4). This description should be well-written and thorough in its portrayal of the selection process in order for the nonselected student to be assured that his case was handled in accordance with the established procedures. In cases of nonselection, special efforts should be made to explain the selection process to those students who are unhappy about the results of the selection process.

### 4.7.1 Appeals in Cases of Nonselection

Chapters are not generally obligated by the law or the NHS national constitution to share with parents and students information concerning specific students not selected for membership in the Honor Society. It is, however, a common or traditional expectation of school personnel to be able to explain how decisions regarding the growth and development of a student on campus were made and, furthermore, to provide effective direction to such students to assist them in reaching their goals despite the existence of a specific setback. This tradition may influence the procedures used in the local process for notifying and counseling with nonselected candidates. Some states and or school districts may have policies or laws that supersede this statement regarding the giving of reasons for nonselection. Chapters in New Jersey and Texas fall under such additional guidelines. Principals and advisers of all local

# SELECTION PROCEDURES

## Chapter Management Tool: Setting Up an Appeals Process

Chapters are encouraged, but not required, to develop language that speaks to an appeals process for students or parents in the event they disagree with the decision of the Faculty Council regarding selection.

Chapters can identify limited opportunity for appeals. The procedure guidelines can indicate that appeals must be registered with the chapter adviser or principal within a stated and reasonable amount of time. It is recommended that the minimum be one week and a reasonable maximum would be 30 days, or one month.

Indicate in the procedure that if no appeal has been registered within the defined period of time, all records pertaining to this round of selection will be destroyed as long as this action conforms to the school, school district, or state policies regarding records retention. In Texas, chapters must comply with the Texas education code's guidelines regarding records retention. New York State has a similar provision. State law supersedes NHS guidelines in these situations.

The nature of the appeals process can be defined locally. Options can include, but are not limited to:

- A review by the chapter adviser of the summary notes from the Faculty Council session
- Resubmission of the student's information to the Faculty Council for reconsideration
- Submission of the relevant information to the principal who consults with the Faculty Council or advisers regarding their decision-making processes.

Although commentary exists regarding that there are no regulations requiring the giving of a reason (with the noted exception of New Jersey where a chapter must identify the criterion or criteria that were the basis for nonselection, per instructions from that state's education commissioner), there is nothing that specifically precludes a chapter from presenting the appealee with specific information regarding non-selection. Indeed, it is the contention of the national office that if the recommended selection process has been followed and undertaken in all its aspects in a fully professional manner, then there should be nothing to hide from the appealee regarding their nonselection.

Outcomes of an appeal can include, but are not limited to:

- Rejection of the appeal, sustaining of the original judgment
- Request from the principal for the Faculty Council to reconsider the case
- A change in the decision, resulting in the selection of the student in question
- An overturning of the Faculty Council's decision by the administration
- Referring the appeal, following rejection, to the next step in the local school hierarchy (e.g., superintendent).

The national office recognizes the nature of these guidelines as being both new and possibly contrary to existing procedures on many campuses. The national office encourages advisers, Faculty Councils, and principals to review this information carefully as they address the issue of appeals at the local level.

Refer to Appendix H for sample letters that can be used in responding to candidates and their parents during the selection process.

chapters are encouraged to review local guidelines to verify their compliance with such standards.

Local chapters can create their own appeals process for handling cases of nonselection if they wish. If this is done, it is recommended that they incorporate a statute of limitations regarding when they will accept such appeals, for example, "Appeals must be registered with the chapter adviser within 10 school days of notification of nonselection." Generally, such appeals procedures simply indicate that upon request the Faculty Council will reconsider an individual student's case, and do not include personal appearances by the student or parents with the council members. The existence of an appeals procedure can convey a positive image of the

chapter indicating a willingness to respond to any and all questions about their activities.

Under normal circumstances, in the absence of any formal appeals process, because the chapter adviser is closest to the selection process, it is this individual who is best prepared to provide immediate feedback when questions arise regarding nonselection. Should students or parents still not be satisfied, the next level of discussion should take place with the principal. The principal should, of course, listen to the concerns of students not selected, or from the parents of such students. Following such discussions, if the principal believes that some kind of technical or procedural mistake has been made, the principal may ask the Faculty Council to recon-

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vene to review the situation. Technical or procedural errors might include the inadvertent omission of a student's name from the list of those qualified for induction, the erroneous averaging of grades, or the chapter's failure to follow prescribed procedures.

Usually, however, nonselected students wish to question the judgment of the Faculty Council. It is important to try to help them understand that all decisions of the kind involved in the selection process have some subjective aspects, but that the decisions were derived in a fair manner and based on sound professional judgment.

In some cases, where complainants may choose to request a review by a new or different Faculty Council, chapters are asked to respond. Technically, per national office interpretations of the constitution, such requests do not have to be accommodated. Admittedly, a committee composed of a different group of people might well have produced a different result, though it is equally as likely that they might have come to the same conclusion. The admission of varied group judgments is not an effective objection to the selection process itself, but merely an indication that specific decisions reached by the Faculty Council do not satisfy everyone. The

principal is charged initially with appointing five persons to serve on the Faculty Council with assistance from the chapter adviser, in whom he or she can place a high degree of trust. These members of the council must understand the importance of exercising their responsibilities in the most professional and objective manner possible. In the absence of specific evidence to the contrary, however, the principal must assume that the members of the council are exercising their judgment in a legitimate and professional manner and with the good faith expected of them and trust that their decisions were made with the best interests of the students in mind.

Parents and students must understand that no student has a right to be selected for membership in a chapter of the National Honor Society. Reconsideration of a Faculty Council's decision must be a rare occurrence if the Council is to be expected to take its assignment seriously. It is important to uphold the integrity of NHS standards and to recognize the potential danger of yielding to pressure tactics.

If a nonselected student or his or her parents wish to challenge or appeal the principal's decision, they should follow the local school system complaint procedures. The National Council and NASSP have no authority to review or overturn the judgment of the Faculty Council regarding selection of individual members to local chapters. 🖱️

# 5. INDUCTION OF MEMBERS



**I**nduction of new members into the National Honor Society is an important event for the student, the chapter, and the school. The ceremony, whether public or private, provides an excellent opportunity to dramatize the purposes of the chapter. Because membership in NHS represents high levels of achievement, the induction ceremony should also reflect high standards. Dr. Edward Rynearson, founder of NHS, eloquently described the induction ceremony:

These exercises [the induction ceremony] should always be public in order that no one will confuse the society with a secret fraternity and that the school and community as a whole may catch the inspiration of higher ideals held up by the speakers. Again the parents of these selected pupils will be drawn closer to the school filled with a deeper appreciation of the work of their children. Being present at the induction of their children into the honor society will be a highly prized privilege and reward to many parents who have watched their children carefully and prayerfully.

The program should be dignified and impressive throughout. The school at large will judge the society very largely by these public exercises. Here is a great opportunity to create an enthusiasm for scholarship among those who have not yet been awakened to the importance of a complete development of their higher powers. We shall never know how many real personalities have been lost who have all the native endowments of genius and leadership but who for lack of incentive or of proper environmental stimuli, have remained undeveloped and unknown.



## 5.1 Guidelines for Planning Induction Ceremonies

The induction ceremony is usually conducted by the officers and members of the local chapter or, in the case of the initial induction, by members of a nearby school. The National Council has received suggestions that one special induction ceremony be developed and used by all chapters. However, the National Council firmly believes that schools should create their own ceremonies and procedures. As a result, there could be as many different ceremonies as there are chapters.

Several basic themes are included in the following discussion. Additional information about induction ceremonies is available periodically in the NHS section of *Leadership for Student Activities*, on the NHS Web site, and in special mailings from the national office.

In many schools, the induction ceremony is held at a school assembly that includes the entire student body, the faculty, and the parents of inductees. This is encouraged by the National Council. However, in schools where space is a problem or attendance must be limited, an evening or afternoon ceremony for parents, students, and friends is appropriate. Other chapters invite the inductees and their parents to a regular chapter meeting for the ceremony. Some chapters induct new members during a regular PTA program, and others host a banquet for the occasion. Regardless of where the ceremony is held or who attends, each chapter is obligated to hold an induction ceremony. Prospective members are not full members until they have been properly inducted, preferably soon after selection. Should circumstances such as illness or personal emergency or other legitimate extenuating circumstance

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

prevent a candidate from attending the scheduled ceremony, an informal induction should be held for the candidate at a later date.

## 5.1.1 Considerations in Planning

- **Plan carefully all of the details of the ceremony,** from the notification of inductees to the clean up of the ceremony space. Use current chapter members in this entire process.
- **Present new inductees with a token of membership.** This can be the NHS membership card, the Society pin, an emblem or patch, or any other suitable item. A formal printed program can also be a keepsake for students and parents alike.
- **Register your new inductees.** Many chapters use a formal signing in of the new members in a registry book and use a new page for each induction ceremony. This serves as a formal record of your chapter. (See your The Leadership Store catalog for the official registry offered to all chapters.)
- **Candle lighting.** Many chapters use a candle lighting ceremony as an opportunity to focus on the four criteria for membership. The national office is frequently asked what the official colors of the candles are, but there is no formal standard. It is often recommended to use the NHS colors of blue and gold along with your school colors as a starting point. Many chapters will use a formal candelabra with four or five candles, lighting the others from the center candle knowledge or honor, when staging their ceremonies.
- **History.** A very appropriate segment of any induction ceremony is the telling of the chapter history. This would include for whom the chapter was named, how long the chapter has been in existence, the names of famous chapter members, etc. Current chapter members can provide a great service to a chapter without a formal history by doing research in the school library, old yearbooks, or even the historical society to find information to share in this portion of the program.
- **Speakers.** It is always appropriate to bring in a notable speaker to present remarks and challenges to the new inductees. Local dignitaries such as mayors or school board members can always be counted on for remarks.
- **Rehearsal.** Prior to any successful ceremony, it is vitally important to rehearse. Though there is always a temptation to “wing it,” rehearsal guarantees confidence in the presenters and the avoidance of any

unnecessary glitches or time-consuming mistakes.

- **Music/Performance.** Every school has some talented performers or musicians capable of adding to the quality of the induction ceremony. When given plenty of notice for preparation, performers can add a wonderful, creative tone to any induction ceremony. Dramatic readings by drama students, interpretive dances (space permitting), and solo or group musical performances are all appropriate. If taped music is to be used, be sure that the quality and volume are tested during rehearsals to verify the appropriateness of the items to be used.
- **Refreshments.** Food is a great unifier, bringing groups which would otherwise be strangers together to share refreshments. Most cultures use the sharing of food as a celebratory gesture. Parents and students alike can contribute and local food establishments are frequently willing to donate reception foods in return for recognition in your program. A reception following your ceremony provides everyone the chance to spread congratulatory remarks to all the deserving new members.
- **Records.** Keep records of your induction ceremonies each year. Write out the script and maintain files. Many schools repeat the same ceremony each year while others choose to provide a new service at each induction. Scrapbooks of the ceremony, completed each year, provide your chapter a textual and photographic record of the event, even when posted on the chapter Web site. Also, to help keep track of ceremonies from one year to the next, it is recommended that the date and location of the ceremony be included. This is particularly helpful when new members are sending copies of the program to relatives. In any case, the written program may serve as a most appropriate “gift” to a new adviser at a neighboring school who does not know where to begin in developing the new ceremony.

## 5.1.2 Selecting Your Location

The site selected for the event is very important. It is suggested that each chapter determine where to hold its ceremony and reception based on the “Five S’s” of site selection:

- **Size**—How many can be seated? Can every student in the school (or the number of expected participants) fit into the site?
- **Sound**—Can everyone hear? Is a PA system needed?
- **Sight**—Can everyone see the speakers and facilitators?



# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

When materials are displayed for view, can everyone see them?

- Supplies—Do you have the necessary supplies and other presentation materials ready? Are audio and visual aids available? (PA system, video screen, etc.)
- Schedules—What is your timeline for the day? Will the school require schedule modifications to accommodate student movement to and from the event if you're holding the event on campus during the school day? Will you be able to accomplish everything in the time allotted?

## 5.1.3 Tokens of Membership

New members of the NHS are usually given membership cards, pins, or other items as proof of their membership. Many chapters also present certificates or charms as other visible signs of membership. (See "Official Insignia" for details on availability and regulations governing the use and ownership of National Honor Society insignia as well as procedures for ordering such items.)

## 5.1.4 The Register

Although not required by the national office, many chapters maintain a register or book containing the signatures

and dates of membership of all chapter members. The signing of the register is usually part of the induction ceremony. Although the register provides each chapter with a complete record of local members, it in no way replaces the official membership list, which must be kept on file in the school.

## 5.1.5 Logo Usage

The official emblems of NHS and NJHS are trademarks that are fully protected by federal laws. Use of the marks (as they are known) at the local level is approved for all official and active chapters. The official guidelines for all logo usage can be found in chapter 6 and also in the Adviser Zone on the national Web site.

Chapters are encouraged to use the official emblems of the Society in all official chapter functions, perhaps most importantly on their printed programs for induction ceremonies. (See Appendix I.) All such use should retain the honor that the Society stands for and preserve the strong reputation of the organization by always displaying them with respect.

Specific questions about the use of the logos can be addressed to the national office by e-mail at [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us).

## Some Additional Thoughts on Planning

When preparing for your induction ceremony, the following list of files and papers to be used for the ceremony may be helpful to have on hand:

- Programs from past inductions
- Memos to inductees detailing their responsibilities (to be handed out at a preinduction information session)
- Details of the induction ceremony for all participants, including the custodians
- Order of the ceremony or a chronology of the event
- Map or diagram of the room in which the induction will take place, detailing decorations, lecterns, sound system, etc.
- Principal's speech and adviser's comments in case the administrator runs out of time to develop some new remarks
- Supplies list
- Sign-up sheets for ceremony committees (e.g., refreshments, marshals, parent volunteers, etc.)
- Master list of all of the documents needed for the occasion (a checklist for the ceremony organizers)

Thanks to Sue Coats, NHS adviser at Keystone School, San Antonio, TX, for sharing this information.

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

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## Rehearsal Tips and Induction Ceremony Skills

Running an induction ceremony requires a set of skills not necessarily possessed by every adviser or Honor Society member. Here are some questions to ponder as you start planning for your next induction ceremony:

- Do the induction ceremony participants know how to speak into and properly use a microphone? A few moments of instruction from your audio technician will be worthwhile. Practice with a “live” mike at your rehearsal.
- If lining up is required of your members or new inductees, has a sensible system been devised to quickly allow members to find their proper places? Even when using a tried-and-true method of lineup such as alphabetically by last name, it always helps to have a master list on hand for quick reference by staff or members.
- Do the key participants know how to sit properly onstage? It is recommended that girls wearing skirts or dresses cross their legs at the ankle and not at the knee. Young men can also be instructed about the least-intrusive, but still “macho” method of crossing their legs, although sitting with both feet on the floor would be preferred.
- If you’re using the traditional candle-lighting ceremony, can the officers strike a match and light a candle effectively? It never hurts to practice, particularly to make certain that the matches being used aren’t damp. Always confirm with the fire marshals that the candles are allowable by local fire codes!
- Does your emcee (the chapter president in most cases) know how to handle delays or mistakes during the ceremony? Use of the phrase “excuse me” is often the best response when a verbal error is made; knowing to consult with the adviser quickly when major delays or other problems emerge is also helpful.
- Can those with speaking roles in the ceremony enunciate clearly and project their voices to be heard? Even the best of microphones won’t overcome a mumblor or the softest of voices. Selection of readers can be by audition to facilitate choosing the best voices. Alternatively, enlist the support of your drama teacher or debate coach to provide training in maintaining a stage voice.
- Do your event organizers have the ability to think ahead as they move through the ceremony—checking to see that elements of the program are aligned properly?
- Does your emcee have the ability to both introduce and provide follow-up remarks for your speakers? Does he know how to turn over a lectern effectively and respectfully? Are they equipped with proper titles and biographies of those they are called upon to introduce?
- Does your event emcee understand how to call a ceremony to order? And, perhaps more importantly, does she understand how to respond to disorderly members of the audience, such as politely asking members of the audience to refrain from clapping or whistling or yelling until all the names on a list are read, etc.? Similarly, has an appropriate conclusion strategy and remarks been developed for bringing the ceremony to a timely and respectful close?
- Have your speakers/participants been prepared for engaging an audience with their presentation? Do they know the importance of good posture, eye contact, clear expression, and good appearance on the outcome of your event?
- Can your presenters of certificates or pins effectively shake hands while also handing over an item to a new member? Rehearsal is a key for the new members where this is concerned, to avoid the public embarrassment that can often arise at this point in the program.
- If you use a photographer, have the participants been briefed on when and how to pose for their photos? If doing a group photo somewhere on the day of the ceremony, do members know where to go, how to organize themselves and what type of expression to maintain? Pick a suitable location for your local newspaper’s photo so as to ‘put your best foot forward’ when the chapter photo shows up in the local media.

## INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

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- Name pronunciation, in these days of an increasingly diverse national population, is essential to the success of any induction ceremony. Whoever is given the responsibility of reading new member names should practice the pronunciations and verify with all new members that the pronunciation is correct. Rehearsals are an excellent tool to accomplish this.
- Does your facilitator know how to properly thank musicians, artists or other key individuals in a respectful and meaningful manner? To guarantee continued support for your program, a sincere word of public thanks goes a long way.
- Time management. Can the emcee monitor the passage of time to see that you will end the ceremony on time and is there “Plan B” in case you need to stretch segments of the ceremony to fill more time? This is particularly essential when conducting your ceremony as a portion of the school day—time is of the essence and no administrator likes it when the ceremony ends either very early or very late from the scheduled timing. Talk with your principal about possible options for either scenario, but assure him or her that based on the rehearsal, it is anticipated that the ceremony will conclude on time!

These are but a few pointers and reminders to share. One message implied in many of these thoughts is the importance of rehearsals. May the hints noted above help make your ceremony the best ever for your most-deserving membership!

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

## 5.2 The Induction Ceremony

The only stipulation the National Council has made regarding induction ceremonies is that they be “appropriate and impressive.” Although the format of each chapter’s induction program will vary with local traditions and procedures, each chapter should stress scholarship, service, leadership, and character. A complete script, studied and rehearsed in advance, is helpful to all participants. (See page 50.) A checklist of props, supplies, and other essential arrangements can augment the script. (See page 48.)

As noted previously, initiation, blackballing, hazing, or similar tactics are expressly prohibited as part of any National Honor Society activity. Any chapter found in violation of this regulation risks losing its charter. For this reason, the name “induction ceremony” is recommended instead of “initiation” to refer to the formal presentation of new members to the school and community.

The oldest and most common induction ceremony is the candle-lighting service. Many variations are in use; however, the basic form is very simple. On the stage or platform is one lighted candle representing the Society’s torch, the symbol of the eternal light of knowledge, flanked by four unlighted candles or lights representing scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Usually the principal, adviser, chapter president, or some other official explains the significance of the candle symbolizing knowledge. Other officers or members follow the same pattern until each candle has been lighted and described. The new members usually recite the pledge of membership and receive any symbols of membership immediately after the lighting of the last candle.

### 5.2.1 Pre-Ceremony Considerations

- Set up and decorations: Is the room ready for your ceremony?
- Rehearsal: Have your key program participants rehearsed their roles in the ceremony? (See page 44.)
- Invitations and programs: Have all parties been notified or invited and programs developed for use at the ceremony?

### 5.2.2 The Ceremony Agenda

- Pre-ceremony entertainment: Music (live or recorded), for five to ten minutes prior to the start of the program
- Processional/entrance: Often cued from the stage or with special music, the audience can be asked to stand while chapter participants and new inductees parade into the room
- Call to order by the presiding officer, chapter adviser, or principal
- Invocation and/or welcome message by the chapter president, adviser, principal, or other

- National anthem and/or Pledge of Allegiance. Print the words in your program to facilitate singing or recitation.
- Introduction of guest speaker
- Guest speaker
- Thank you to guest speaker and introduction to the next part of the ceremony, including a brief review of how these students were selected
- The criteria (often accompanied by the lighting of candles)
  - Scholarship
  - Leadership
  - Service
  - Character
- New member introduction, candle lighting, certificate or pin presentation, signatures in an official chapter registry (a roll call of new members; methods of recognition will vary)
- Honor Society pledge taken by all new inductees
- Special awards or recognition: Chapters often thank the Faculty Council, award honorary memberships, recognize outgoing officers, or install new officers
- Closing remarks (often done by the principal or the chapter adviser)
- Adjourn to post-induction reception
- Post-ceremony/recessional music or entertainment /reception

Here are some additional ideas for the induction ceremony program for your chapter:

- In the program, describe significant chapter service projects from the past year either orally or in print, congratulating the project chairpersons for their work
- Award scholarships to outstanding chapter members, whether senior members or students who have excelled in each of the criteria
- Recognize teachers on staff who are members of the Honor Society; alternatively, identify an outstanding non-member from the faculty for honorary membership
- Compose and perform a chapter song; alternatively have one of the chapter members sing the school’s alma mater, fight song, or other local melody
- Allow the chapter president, or other student chosen from the current membership of the chapter, to deliver an address on the meaning of the Honor Society
- Recognize additional honors or honors groups from your campus, in essence sharing your program with them (French Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society, etc.).
- Prepare and present biographies for each of the new inductees highlighting their significant accomplishment (as noted on their information sheets).

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

- Have each new inductee select a “marshal” to escort him or her to the stage, encouraging them to select parents, grandparents, guardians, or even members of the faculty for this honored role. Plan to confirm all marshals prior to the ceremony and have backup marshals for any no-shows.
- Invite chapter alumni from the community to play a part in the ceremony. Some chapters award an Outstanding NHS Alumni plaque to this individual.
- Be certain that your ceremony’s printed program contains the date as well as the name and address of the school to assist chapter members who wish to send copies to distant relatives. Consequently, be sure to print extra copies for this purpose and for your chapter scrapbook and archives.
- For the Pledge of Allegiance (or national anthem) use the school’s JROTC or a local Boy or Girl Scout troop as an honor guard. VFW chapters and local military bases can also provide this service.
- At some point in the program, be sure to thank the parents and teachers for their contributions to the successes of the members of the chapter. To facilitate this, provide the parents with a flower (corsage or boutonniere) at the ceremony.
- For the outgoing senior members, identify the college and career plans that each has identified. This is particularly useful for spring induction ceremonies.
- To facilitate the taking of the Honor Society pledge, have it printed in the program for both new members and the audience to see.
- Include in the printed program a note of thanks to any community partners (businesses, service organizations, etc.) who have contributed either to this ceremony or to the chapter during the past year.
- If you have a dress code for participants (whether on stage or in the audience), see that it is clearly communicated in writing in time for them to purchase new attire if needed. Also, because many chapters use robes and stoles as part of the ceremony, see that these items fit well before the day of your ceremony, especially as a safety concern for those involved in lighting candles.

## 5.2.3 Induction Pledges, Theme, and Music

### 5.2.3.1 Pledges

The National Council prescribes no definite pledge for use by the chapters. Use of a pledge is a decision left to the local chapter. The national office has received calls from students and parents questioning the inclusion of a pledge in the induction ceremony or the signing of a pledge sheet as a prerequisite for membership. Though generally acceptable, it should be noted that several

prominent religious groups prohibit their members from taking any such pledges.

Local chapters should always take into consideration the religious convictions and cultural traditions of the school population when considering the use of a pledge. Efforts should be made to clearly identify that the taking of the pledge is not a requirement. Statements explaining that pledges are optional can be included in both the student handbook and in the general information regarding the chapter on your campus so as to prevent students from perceiving that this is a prerequisite of membership. This concern falls into the category of protecting a student’s constitutional rights and thus is a responsibility of the chapter as part of its efforts to preserve and protect our democratic society. (See samples on page 49.)

### 5.2.3.2 Common Induction Themes

**Past, present, and future.** The importance of past accomplishments and a focus on the role of today’s youth in tomorrow’s world is stressed with remarks about scholarship, leadership, service, and character. The Jeffersonian /Baconian model promoting memory to preserve the past, reason to guide the present, and imagination to form the future is an effective model to use with this theme.

**Patriotism.** There are many variations, but the most common idea is that today’s students are the nation’s greatest resource. Skits and speeches are suitable.

**Inspiration.** This ceremony usually focuses on the life of a leader or scholar who is held in high esteem by the members. The ceremony is most effective when the person selected can participate in the program as a guest speaker or as the recipient of an award. Programs can also center around the life of a graduate member of the chapter.

**History.** The history of education or the history of leadership, service, or character can be imparted in this ceremony.

**Other common themes.** A focus on the school or community or a relation to the mission, annual theme, or philosophy of the school also make good themes.

### 5.2.3.3 Music

Schools frequently request information on possible musical pieces to play during the induction ceremonies on campus. The following list was compiled by Mr. Robert Gurley, NJHS adviser at A. Leal, Jr. Middle School in San Antonio, Texas.

- “Fanfare for the Common Man,” Aaron Copland
- “Pomp and Circumstance, No. 1–4,” Edward Elgar
- “Olympic Fanfare and Theme,” John Williams
- March from “Midway,” John Williams

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

## Supplies for Inductions

All items listed below can be found in the national sales catalog, *The Leadership Store*, sent to all chapters in the fall and also viewable online at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

### For New Members

- Membership cards
- Membership certificates
- Certificate folders
- Membership pins

### For the Ceremony

- Gavel for president or presiding officer
- Stoles for key program participants
- Banner for the chapter
- Registry for all new members to sign (with pen)
- Candles and matches (not currently available from the catalog; confer with local fire marshals prior to using open flames at your ceremony)
- Banquet kit for the post-ceremony reception

### For Parents

- Bumper sticker
- Auto decals
- Brochure about the Honor Society (available in English and Spanish)

- March from "Superman," John Williams
  - "Liberty Fanfare," John Williams
  - March from "Raiders of the Lost Ark," John Williams
  - March from "1941," John Williams
  - Main theme from "Star Wars," John Williams
  - Hornpipe from "Water Music," G. F. Handel
  - Overture from "Music of the Royal Fireworks," G. F. Handel
  - Great Gate of Kiev from "Pictures at an Exhibition," M. I. Mussorgsky
  - "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," J. S. Bach
  - Largo from "Xerxes," G. F. Handel
  - Rondeau from "Fanfare for the King's Supper," J. J. Mouret
  - "Trumpet Tune and Air," Henry Purcell
  - "The Prince of Denmark's March," Jeremiah Clarke
  - Grand March from "Aida," Giuseppe Verdi
  - Overture to "Die Meistersinger," Richard Wagner
  - March from "Tannhauser," Richard Wagner
  - "Ride of the Valkyries," Richard Wagner
- Other selections include music from movies such as:
- "The Ten Commandments"

- "The Last Starfighter"
- "Superman"
- "Star Wars"
- "Ben Hur"
- "2001: A Space Odyssey"
- "The Lion in Winter"

A good exercise to undertake with chapter officers or the entire membership is to inquire about what songs or music they would like to include. Chapter advisers should exercise caution when accepting contemporary music suggestions to be certain the lyrics are fully appropriate for the ceremony. A CD of music options is available in *The Leadership Store* catalog.

## 5.2.4 Ordering Supplies for Your Induction Ceremony

Every year, the sales office receives calls from desperate advisers who have waited until the last minute to place their Honor Society orders. Although the staff are more than happy to handle such calls, the following suggestions are offered as you plan your supply orders for the coming year.

- Order early. Allow between three and four weeks for delivery. Services are available to handle rush orders (for an additional fee), but it is best to plan in advance for the placing of all orders from the national sales office. Orders can be placed by phone, fax, or e-mail. Sales staff are available from 8:30 to 4:30 Eastern time, Monday through Friday, with limited extended hours during the peak sales season, March through May, to handle orders from Western chapters. Overseas chapters are encouraged to use e-mail by writing to [sales@principals.org](mailto:sales@principals.org) for convenience.
- Always use the official and current catalog and order form. When in doubt, contact the sales office to make certain you have the correct form and current pricing for all items. Printable versions of the current catalog and order form are always available at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us), just click the Catalog tab. New catalogs are available by September each fall. Once the new edition arrives, archive or throw away old catalogs to avoid costly mistakes regarding availability or pricing of individual items.
- Please carefully follow the ordering instructions found in the catalog. These instructions are designed to facilitate the fastest possible handling of the 30,000+ orders we receive each year.
- It is always helpful if you have on hand your adviser ID number and school ID number (found on the mailing labels of all mailings from the national office) anytime

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

you place an order with the national sales office. Keep it handy or with your catalog in your files.

- Allow a minimum of three weeks (longer in the spring) from time of order to delivery.
- A toll-free phone direct to the sales office has been created for our members: **866-647-7253**.

If you get the voice mail system, please leave your name, school name, city and state and a phone number (complete with area code) where you can be reached at school. Our goal is to respond to the inquiry within 24 hours, pending your availability at school.

Problems with your order? Please follow the guidance found in the ordering instructions of the catalog to assist you in handling a problem with your order or processing the return of any goods. When in doubt, consult with a member of our trained and competent sales staff.

## 5.2.5 Receptions

Many chapters follow their induction ceremony with a reception for the new members and their parents along with special guests. Often, a separate reception committee is established within the chapter to work alongside the induction ceremony committee in making the whole event a spectacular success. Here are some suggestions for planning the ultimate reception for your chapter:

- Schedule and timing matters: Be sure all participants are informed of the timing of the reception, along with the facility manager who may dictate when the reception needs to conclude.
- Budget: Consider the total number of expected participants and formulate a reasonable budget. This number may vary significantly from one year to the next based on the number of new inductees.

### Sample Pledges

*I pledge myself to uphold  
The high purposes of the National Honor Society  
To which I have been selected.  
Striving in every way  
By word and deed  
To make its ideals  
The ideals of my school  
And of my life.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I pledge myself to uphold  
The high purposes of the National Honor Society  
to which I have been selected.  
I will be true to the principles for which it stands;  
I will be loyal to my school;  
And will maintain and encourage  
High standards of scholarship, service, leadership,  
and character.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I, (repeat name), being aware of the honor which  
is being bestowed upon me  
By my selection for membership in the National Honor Society,  
Do hereby pledge loyalty to this organization.  
It shall be my earnest purpose  
To give unsparingly of my time and energy toward  
the promotion of all school activities.*

*I will strive to be at all times a model student,  
And will never knowingly  
Bring reproach upon my school.  
I pledge myself  
To uphold the high purpose of this Society  
For which I have been selected,  
Striving in every way  
By word and deed  
To make its ideals  
The ideals of my school and of my life.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*I pledge to maintain high scholastic standing,  
To hold as fundamental and worthy  
An untarnished character,  
To endeavor intelligently and courageously  
To be a leader,  
And to give of myself freely in service to others.  
In so doing, I shall prove myself worthy  
Of a place in the National Honor Society.*

*I pledge myself  
Always to seek the light of truth,  
To hold scholarly habits,  
To engage in worthy service,  
And to lead forward in all things  
That shall advance the welfare of the school.*

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

## The Traditional Ceremony

The oldest and most common induction ceremony is the candle-lighting service. Many variations are in use; however, the basic form is very simple. On the stage or platform is one lighted candle representing the Society's torch, the symbol of the eternal light of knowledge, flanked by four unlighted candles or lights representing scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Usually the principal, adviser, chapter president, or some other official explains the significance of the candle symbolizing knowledge. Other officers or members follow the same pattern until each candle has been lighted and described. The new members usually recite the pledge of membership and receive any symbols of membership immediately after the lighting of the last candle.

New members are inducted by the chapter president, the principal, adviser, and four other members who represent scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

A table on the stage is set with four lighted candles. While music is played, "Scholarship" enters with an unlit candle, lights the candle from one at the table, and takes a place on the stage. "Leadership," "Service," and "Character" enter, light their respective candles from Scholarship, and take their stations. The chapter president and principal enter through an arch on the stage, followed by the inductees, who stop at their chairs.

**President:** "Please be seated." The president then extends greetings to the guests, explains the purpose of the ceremony, and briefly reviews chapter history. The president's final comments are: "The membership of the (school's chapter name) Chapter of the National Honor Society has been earned by the effective demonstration of the four qualities held in high esteem by the Society. Four of our members will review these qualities for the candidates." (pause) "Scholarship."

**Scholarship:** (steps forward) "Scholarship means a commitment to learning. A student is willing to spend hours in reading and study, knowing the lasting benefits of a cultivated mind. We should continue to learn even when formal education has ended, for education ends only with the end of life. Knowledge is one great element in life, which leads to the highest success, and it can be acquired in only one way—through diligence and effort. Learning furnishes the lamp by which we read the past, and the light that illuminates the future. Candidates have the charge to continually expand their world through the opportunities inherent in scholarship."

**President:** "Service."

**Service:** (steps forward) "My office is service. Service can be described in various ways. In the routine of the day's work, many opportunities arise to help others. Willingness to work for the benefit of those in need, without monetary compensation or without recognition, is the quality we seek in our membership. We are committed to the idea of volunteering our time and abilities to the creation of a better tomorrow."

**President:** "Leadership."

**Leadership:** (steps forward) "Leadership should exert a wholesome influence on the school. In taking the initiative in class and school activities, the real leader strives to train and aid others to attain the same objective. The price of leadership is sacrifice—the willingness to yield one's personal interests for the interest of others. A leader has self-confidence and will go forward when others hesitate. No matter what power and resources may exist in a country, they are ineffectual without the guidance of a wise leader. Leadership is always needed; thus, to lead is a substantive charge to each of our members."

**President:** "Character."

**Character:** (steps forward) "Character is the force within each individual which distinguishes that person from others. It gives each of us our individuality. It is that without which no one can respect oneself, nor hope to attain the respect of others. It is this force of character that guides one through life and, when once developed, grows steadily. Character is achieved and not received. It is the product of constant action, striving daily to make the right choice. The problem of character is the problem of self-control. We must be in reality what we wish to appear to others. By demonstrating such qualities as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship, we may hope to prove by example that we value character."

**President:** "The candidates will rise and repeat the pledge."

Candidates repeat the pledge and are then instructed to walk across the stage where each receives the emblem and membership card. The principal, who may assist in the presentation of the emblems, is then introduced. The principal makes congratulatory remarks and invites the guests to a reception following the ceremony and the president adds congratulations and dismisses the new members and guests.



# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

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- Location: What is the best and available location for the event? Consideration should be given for the elderly and the disabled.
  - Room set-up: Air conditioning/heating, sound (a PA), tables/chairs needed, etc.
  - Decorations: What to do? When to decorate? School colors? Honor Society colors?
  - Refreshments: Food (sweet? nonsweet?), drinks, allergies?
    - Cake decoration with logo: Permission is needed for some stores.
    - Consult with the cafeteria manager because he or she may want to contribute.
    - Parent/member contributions?
  - Supplies: Utensils, plates, cups, table cloths, punch bowls, platters, etc.
    - Discount providers: Look for local kitchen/restaurant or wholesale suppliers for bulk purchases of supplies
  - Nametags to help identify parents, teachers, and new members.
  - Special guests
    - Administration reps, superintendent, school board members
    - Introductions? Assign a current member as a personal guide.
  - Guest book for signing
  - Gifts/mementos for new inductees and/or their parents
- Duty stations: Map out a plan for covering all reception functions.
  - Program
    - Entertainment
    - Paper program of the agenda for the reception
    - Toast to the new members and/or their parents
  - Staff: Chaperones, supervision
  - Photographer: Will your chapter historian take care of getting photos or will you invite a local newspaper photographer to attend?
  - Emergency plans: Illness, natural disasters, accidents, etc. Consult with your school administrators on your responsibilities in this area.
  - Cleanup: By members, custodians, etc. See that enough trash cans are available for the reception and for cleanup afterwards.
  - Follow-up: Expenses/bills, thank yous, evaluation planning for next year.
  - Keep all of your plans and notes in a file for future reference.

The national office is always looking for recent photographs (hard copy or digital) of induction ceremonies to use in our various publications and on the Web site during the year. Please consider sending copies, along with any and all permission forms for use of student images, to the national office. When possible, your chapter and school will be identified for your contribution. 🍀

# INDUCTION OF MEMBERS

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# 6. CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Chapters of the National Honor Society are obligated by the national constitution to engage in a limited number of specific activities each year. In addition, they may choose to participate in other activities that support the purposes of the organization as outlined in Article I. This chapter of the handbook will review some of the activities fundamental to all chapters and also provide ideas for chapters seeking ways to expand their outreach.

## 6.1 Chapter Name

Many chapters create a special name for their chapter to be used in lieu of the school name when referring to their chapter. Chapter names are often established in honor of a chapter member, adviser, or principal who has influenced the development of the chapter in some important manner. If a special name is selected, it is recommended that the reasons behind the selection of this special name be incorporated into the annual induction ceremony. This is a way to establish and preserve an important segment of chapter history. Chapters wishing to have their chapter name placed on their charter must order a replacement charter, complete with the chapter name information, from the NASSP sales office.

## 6.2 Dues for Members

Chapters determine and specify in their bylaws the amount of



local chapter dues, if any, for their members. Dues are not to exceed \$10 per year per member. Membership should not be denied because of a student's inability to pay.

## 6.3 Meetings

The holding of chapter meetings is not a specific requirement for NHS, but such meetings do serve an important purpose by providing the means for planning, teaching leadership skills, communicating to the membership, and generally making the adviser's job a little easier. Member responsibility concerning meeting attendance should be described in the chapter bylaws. The procedure to follow when an absence is necessary should also be outlined in the bylaws. It is important that all meetings are planned well, have a well-thought-out agenda, and are operated according to some recognized method of procedure (e.g., *Robert's Rules of Order*, etc.). It is the responsibility of the chapter officers, with support of the chapter adviser, to plan and conduct all meetings in such a manner that members believe their time is well spent.

Although recognizing the importance of attending meetings, the National Council cautions against dismissal for poor attendance. A member who fails to attend meetings should be counseled at length by the chapter adviser before disciplinary action is taken.

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## Chapter Management Tool: Sample Meeting Agenda

As you plan meetings for your chapter throughout the year, consider using the model provided for your meeting agenda. Whether this is the agenda you use or not, always have a written agenda developed and distributed prior to the meeting so that your chapter members know what their responsibilities are if they appear on the agenda and what topics will be discussed at the meeting so the members can be prepared. Chapter officers, particularly the chapter president, are encouraged to work with the chapter adviser to prepare each meeting's agenda. Care should be given to consult the agendas and minutes from previous meetings to determine those issues that merit continued consideration. Prior to the meeting, the following actions should take place:

- A copy of the agenda is distributed to all members or is made available for viewing
- A presiding officer is identified for the meeting and time reviews the agenda items
- Individuals with specific responsibilities at the upcoming meeting (e.g., secretary, treasurer, committee chairs, project chairs, etc.) are notified indicating the nature of their duties for the meeting and when they appear on the agenda
- Members are notified and reminded of the meeting time and place.

### Sample Agenda Outline

- I. Call to order
- II. Roll call/attendance procedures
- III. Minutes of the previous meeting (review and approval)
- IV. Treasurer's report\* (review and approval)
- V. Committee reports\*
  - A. Standing committee reports
  - B. Special committee reports
- VI. Old/unfinished business\*\*\*: Carried over from the last or previous meetings
- VII. New business\*\*
- VIII. Other reports, announcements, and reminders of events or responsibilities including, but not limited to, the announcement of the date and time of the next regularly scheduled meeting of this group.
- IX. Guest presentation or program topic for this meeting. (Location of this segment of the meeting agenda may depend on the nature of the content and

the scheduling needs of the guest presenter, for example, the principal, who may need to speak at the beginning of the meeting instead of the end.)

### X. Adjournment

\* It is recommended that all reports be submitted in writing to the secretary by the end of the meeting, and that a time limit or format be given to each reportgiver to ensure consistent and informative reporting.

\*\* When motions are presented for consideration by the membership, it is strongly recommended that the chapter use the fundamental principles of meeting management from *Robert's Rules of Order* or other established systems of meeting management.

### Meeting Management Resources

Looking for resources to help facilitate the use and understanding of parliamentary procedure? To start, consider purchasing a copy of *Parliamentary Procedure Without Stress* (revised edition) by Roberta M. McDow, available from *The Leadership Store*. But if you're really in a hurry, here are several important Web sites for you to peruse. Please note that these references, listed in alphabetical order by site name, are for general information purposes only. Their listing does not constitute an official endorsement by NHS, NJHS, or NASSP.

[www.jimslaughter.com](http://www.jimslaughter.com)—Site sponsored by Jim Slaughter, parliamentarian, attorney, and parliamentary procedure consultant (and former student leader).

[www.parli.com](http://www.parli.com)—Robert McConnell Productions offers resources for training in parliamentary procedure.

[www.parliamentarians.org/parlipro.htm](http://www.parliamentarians.org/parlipro.htm)—Run by the National Association of Parliamentarians, this site has some basic how-to information that is very helpful.

[www.parliamentaryprocedure.org](http://www.parliamentaryprocedure.org)—Official site of the American Institute of Parliamentarians that includes book links and information on becoming a certified parliamentarian.

[www.parlipro.org](http://www.parlipro.org)—Some general information including quizzes and mind-benders to keep your meetings in order.

[www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com)—The official site of *Robert's Rules of Order*.

We hope you find this information helpful as you pursue the effective management of your meetings.

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## 6.4 Projects

A well-thought-out and organized approach to projects is key to chapter success and to maintenance of the standards of NHS. The national constitution mandates that each chapter conduct a chapter service project each year (Article XIV). In addition, the National Council suggests that chapters choose one or more additional major projects for the school year. Each member would then be expected to contribute to those projects. (See Appendix J for a project report form.)

### 6.4.1 Chapter Service Projects

As stated in the constitution, all NHS projects must do the following:

- Fulfill a need within the school or community
- Have the support of the administration and faculty
- Be appropriate and educationally defensible, and not in conflict with the activities of other school organizations
- Be well-planned, organized, and executed.

The executive committee is encouraged to see that chapter projects are scheduled or arranged so those members who work or have family responsibilities are able to participate. No member who sincerely wishes to fulfill the service obligation should be prevented from doing so because of scheduling conflicts.

### Project Planning

To facilitate the planning of effective projects, the following guidelines have been adopted from the curriculum of the National Leadership Camps sponsored by NASSP.

#### *Twelve Ws of Project Planning*

Planning any activity requires careful thought and preparation. Before stepping into action, be sure that you can answer the following questions:

- What are you planning to do?
- Why do you want to do this project?
- When and where will the activity take place?
- Who will benefit from the project?
- What staff member(s) will need to approve the project?
- What funds are needed?
- When will the basic planning be done?
- What committees are necessary?
- What kind of publicity is needed?
- Who deserves a special thank you?
- Was the project worthwhile?
- What's next? Where do we go from here?

### 6.4.2 Individual Service Projects

Each member has the responsibility to choose an individual service project (ISP) in line with his or her particular talents and interests. This approach emphasizes the need for cooperative effort in service to the community while providing an opportunity for individuals to discover and develop their unique contributions. Many chapters regularly complete their chapter service project obligations, but often overlook the additional mandate of individual service projects. Below are a few suggestions for making this component a prominent part of your chapter:

- The constitution indicates that the project should reflect the "particular talents and interests" of the member. The individual member is given the responsibility of choosing and participating in the project, though he or she should be held accountable for reporting this in an official manner to the local chapter.
- Generally, when choosing the projects, it is best to steer away from activities that directly benefit a member's family.
- Service projects done for financial or other compensation are often viewed as contrary to the common definition of service, though unique programs may be appropriate exceptions to this rule when the compensation, such as a small gift, is small relative to the amount or quality of service provided.
- When tabulating the individual service projects of members, chapter advisers should establish a definite deadline or schedule for completion that concludes at least one month prior to graduation to avoid the end-of-senior-year rush.
- If the local chapter so chooses, individual service can be performed while participating in a project planned and implemented by another group on campus or in the community. ISP does not necessarily imply that these projects must be completed alone, merely beyond the activity undertaken through the required chapter service project.
- Verification of service by asking for an adult's signature from a supervisor or chaperone is a way to guarantee that all chapter members are fulfilling their responsibilities in a fair and appropriate manner.
- Chapter advisers are encouraged to set up a system where chapter members seek approval for ISP prior to completing the project. A master list of previously approved projects can be developed to save the adviser time; however, preapproval avoids circumstances where the chapter might be unwilling to accept the service

# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

provided (e.g., a project being done for the member's family if that would run contrary to the local chapter guidelines).

- Advisers can delegate the record-keeping components of ISPs to chapter officers as part of their duties of office. A central file should be kept under these circumstances and advisers should regularly counsel their officers regarding the regular maintenance of this aspect of chapter activity.
- To facilitate your chapter members finding appropriate service project ideas, the chapter might consider setting up a bulletin board (standard or electronic) of project opportunities for members to review. Notifying social service and community organizations of the existence of this feature may bring in a large number of ideas for your chapter and other students in the school.
- In addition to listing this responsibility on the new member obligations list for all candidates prior to selection, it is recommended that friendly reminders about completing this important service obligation be part of the meeting agenda throughout the year.

## 6.4.2.1 Project Ideas

The following are a few ways in which chapters can be involved in the school and community. *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine is another source of project ideas. Chapters may contact the national office for further information. Schools with service projects that they are particularly proud of should consider entering them in the Outstanding Service Project Award competition sponsored annually for schools attending the national conference.

### School Service

- Organize a health fair
- Run a school clean-up campaign
- Award scholastic letters to deserving students
- Usher at school or public events
- Hold a teacher and staff recognition day
- Participate in school evaluation programs
- Help establish a new chapter of the National Honor Society at another school
- Plan freshman and new student orientation
- Sponsor a library drive or other programs to bring new educational equipment into the school
- Furnish student representatives for the various school committees
- Organize a good sportsmanship guidebook
- Set up a peer-tutoring program
- Welcome and orient new staff members

- Collaborate with other cocurricular activity groups on their service projects.

### Community Service

- Organize individual or group tutoring programs
- Make tape recordings for the blind
- Establish a hospital aid program
- Collect holiday toys and supplies for hospitalized or underprivileged children
- Sponsor a foster child
- Develop a program of energy conservation
- Promote environmental service projects
- Volunteer to staff a community hotline
- Promote ecology projects
- Volunteer to be a daycare youth worker
- Undertake a food drive for a local food bank or shelter
- Conduct a bloodmobile with the American Red Cross
- Support a homeless shelter by providing clothing or serving meals.

Visit [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org) for a list of service opportunities found in your area. The site offers a search tool (under "Get Involved") to assist in identifying these items. The site is sponsored by Youth Service America, an organization actively supported by the national office of NHS.

### Student Leadership

- Sponsor a leadership training conference for student leaders
- Organize special programs in observance of National Student Leadership Week, observed annually during the third week in April
- Honor leaders of cocurricular activities with recognition awards
- Start a leadership class at your school
- Sponsor a day in which school leaders trade places with such local officials as the mayor, police, chief, finance director, etc.
- Raise funds to send student leaders to a national student leadership camp.
- Publish a regular column in the school newspaper recognizing an outstanding school leader
- Organize a student-of-the-week or student-of-the-month program
- Present public demonstrations of leadership techniques
- Keep a scrapbook of school leader activities
- Maintain a leadership library.

\*For more information, contact the national office or view available resources in *The Leadership Store* catalog.

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\*\*For more information, contact the national office or visit the Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

## Character Building

- Create an honor code for your chapter or your student body
- Add a character Quote of the Day to the daily announcements
- Create bulletin boards or Web pages on character traits
- Sponsor an “Ethics Day” event and include the community (see *Ethical Decision Making*, in the national catalog for details)
- Teach character lessons to local elementary students
- Honor persons of good character from your community at your induction ceremony
- Honor a chapter member (or other student) for his or her good character each year at the school awards ceremony
- Promote good character traits with posters for each teacher’s classroom
- Sponsor an anticheating or antiplagiarism campaign
- Teach respect.

Visit the following Web sites (each with its own set of links) for a variety of additional ideas: [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org), [www.character.org](http://www.character.org), and [www.charactereducation.org](http://www.charactereducation.org).

## Citizenship Education

- Work to introduce voter education and registration programs into the curriculum
- Educate students about the laws for voter registration, voting procedures, and civic responsibilities
- Sponsor a campaign to encourage eligible students to register and vote
- Publicize dates for general elections, primaries, or special elections
- Sponsor bipartisan or multipartisan panels of political candidates
- Organize a group to attend a city council meeting or visit the state legislature.

## NHS Alumni and Parents

- Sponsor a meeting with a guest speaker for your chapter alumni during homecoming week
- Organize a newsletter to send to chapter alumni
- Coordinate a fundraising project with the alumni in support of your chapter (e.g., raising money for pins for new members or for scholarships for deserving outgoing seniors)
- Host a dinner for famous alumni still in the area of your school

- Host a special parents recognition/appreciation dinner
- Incorporate parents and alumni into the induction ceremony.

## Intergenerational Exchange

- Plan and coordinate a local Youth Conference with Older Americans
- Develop a list of organizations that need volunteers to assist with older people for student use
- Organize a program featuring retired persons from various backgrounds
- Team up with an elderly person on a volunteer project
- Arrange an errands service for the elderly shut-in
- Write a newspaper article challenging stereotypes of the aged
- Create a piece of art that presents an image of humanity that bridges all ages
- Maintain a library on the senior period of life
- Sponsor a question-and-answer session on the senior years of life
- Record the youthful experiences of older people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds
- Arrange a discussion of the stereotypes of older people that appear in advertising, the media, and literature
- Organize an awards program to recognize the contributions older people make to the community
- Submit an article to the local newspaper about an older person’s experiences
- Have a Generations Working Together Week
- Hold a school assembly to recognize intergenerational activities and Older Americans Month (May)
- Create an art show featuring intergenerational activities and artists.

## Career Education

- Provide a college corner with current catalogs or brochures
- Hold a college and careers night with representatives from colleges, schools, industry, and business establishments
- Set up a career intern program.

## Intercultural Exchange

- Sponsor students who might otherwise be unable to participate in domestic or international student exchange programs
- Organize a committee to welcome and befriend exchange students
- Plan an International Week

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- Plan a fine arts assembly
- Operate a book exchange
- Collect books to send to needy schools in the United States and abroad
- Organize a speakers bureau
- Sponsor an Ethnic Heritage Day
- Volunteer to participate in excavation of local archaeological sites
- Cooperate in restoration projects.

## Fundraising Activities

- Evaluate your financial needs. Don't do fundraising unless there is a supportable goal for the activity, especially because your members are probably already booked with fundraising activities through other organizations to which they belong.
- Visit [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) and look under the section on idea sharing for ideas from the field.
- Collect fundraising ideas and resources from back issues of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, publications in the catalog, and other groups on campus.
- Consider raising money to give as scholarships to deserving senior members.
- Establish a financial goal for your service projects through which you also contribute an amount in support of the organization (e.g., the local food bank, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, etc.) in addition to the work your members undertake on their behalf each year.
- Establish a student store or concession stand with staff from the chapter to provide ongoing revenue.
- Sell things. Make sure there is a demand in school or the community, that the products are of good quality, and that you're not competing for the same market with other groups on campus.
- Do an Internet search for fundraising and see what you find.
- Create an advisory committee of businesspersons and parents to develop creative and enterprising alternatives to candy sales (seek administrative support prior to pulling the group together).
- Explore and use the e-fundraising links found on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

## 6.5 Graduation Activities for NHS

High school graduation is often the most public of school ceremonies each year. Before planning on any recognition or involvement of NHS members, please consult with the principal or senior class sponsor regarding these intentions. As

with your induction ceremony, efforts should be taken to make certain to uphold the dignity and solemnity of the graduation ceremony.

It is worth taking time at the beginning of the new calendar year or the beginning of the second semester to speak with senior members of the chapter about your expectations and the importance of their living up to their obligations of membership. Providing friendly reminders that membership in NHS is only retained as long as the chapter's standards are maintained will allow you to hold senior members responsible for their actions at the conclusion of their high school careers.

Here are some points to consider as graduation nears:

- Verify active senior membership and remind them that they must be in good standing to represent the chapter at graduation. This should be in writing in the chapter bylaws or the member obligations list to facilitate enforcement. (See Article XV, Section 3, of the constitution for support.) Generally, the phrase "in good standing" means the member is maintaining the standards by which he or she was selected, has fulfilled or is fulfilling all obligations of membership (dues, meeting attendance requirements, service obligations, etc.), and has not gotten into trouble where school rules or the law are concerned.
  - Validate that all membership obligations have been met (dues, service hours, etc.).
  - Order and organize insignia for members in good standing.
  - Determine a schedule for disseminating insignia items to senior members who are found to be in good standing.
  - Arrange for stickers to be affixed to diplomas of active senior members. This is an optional chapter activity. Please check with your principal to determine if there are any local or state prohibitions against using such stickers on the official diploma.
  - Confirm the names of senior members with the graduation supervisor (senior class sponsor, administration, etc.). Often, the names of senior members are noted with an asterisk in the graduation program and a footnote indicating that these students are members of the National Honor Society chapter at the school. The printing of the programs may take place some days or weeks prior to the ceremony, so please be aware of the schedule of events.
- Supplies to consider using for graduation or the annual awards assembly include the following:
- Membership stoles (worn over graduation gowns)
  - Membership tassels for graduation caps



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- Membership honor cords
- Medallions
- Member stickers (seals) for diplomas

## 6.6 Planning for the Year

Here are a few events on the national calendar that we hope all NHS advisers will keep in mind as they and their chapters prepare for the coming year:

**August/September**—Arrival of your back-to-school mailing from the national office, including information on the upcoming conferences and workshops. Registrations for the NHS National Conference will be due in October. Also, if you haven't reviewed your local chapter policies and procedures and the national handbook in a while, this would be a good time to begin the process.

**October**—National Character Counts! Week will be celebrated in mid-October. Use this week to emphasize character in your school. Expect the arrival of your adviser ID card and certificate of annual affiliation from the Membership Department at the national office.

**November**—NHS National Conference is held. In addition, advisers should be receiving the NHS scholarship information packets during the month.

**December**—Holiday projects abound. This is a great time for service projects for special groups in your community.

**January**—Performance review for your chapter members. Deadline for submitting this year's nominations for the NHS national scholarship. Be sure your plans for spring inductions have been outlined and approved.

**February**—With thoughts turned to love, this is a great time to sponsor a faculty appreciation effort. In addition, if you haven't done so already, plans for your spring selection and induction should be underway. LEAD conferences are usually held in February, March, and April.

**March**—Though spring is just in bloom, it's time to think about summer leadership opportunities for your new chapter officers. This is also a good time to finalize your orders of NHS supplies for your spring inductions.

**April**—National Student Leadership Week (NSLW) will take place toward the end of this month. Using your NSLW poster, sent in a winter edition of the magazine, plan to recognize your chapter leaders and other student leaders in your school. The renewal invoice for your annual affiliation fee arrives in the principal's office this month. Get the payment process underway before the June 30 deadline.

**May**—As the school year comes to a close, get those new chapter officers elected and plan for next fall, setting up some summer planning meetings if you need to (by the pool, in the

park, at the beach, etc). Submit your annual report form to the national office before you leave for the summer.

Of course, one of the best ways to keep abreast of upcoming special events is to read *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and visit [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) every month and pass on copies to your chapter members so they can help you remember the important activities coming up during the school year.

### 6.6.1 Conferences and Workshops for NHS

A variety of meetings are held each year to give advisers and students the opportunity to learn more about their National Honor Society.

#### 6.6.1.1 NHS and NJHS National Conference

Each fall, NHS and NJHS host the national conference. Begun in 1993, this conference is open to students and advisers from NHS or NJHS chapters. At this hotel-based meeting, participants hear dynamic speakers, participate in meaningful workshops, and network with their peers from around the country. During the conference, delegates explore the contemporary meaning of the Society's criteria. In 2002, the conference became the host of the NHS Scholars' Bowl and NJHS Junior Scholars' Bowl, offering an opportunity for students to test their skills in this ultimate academic challenge. Registration forms are mailed to all affiliated chapters in the spring and regular notices are provided in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine as well as in the Conferences and Programs section of the Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). See the separate Scholars' Bowl link for details on this competition. Schools attending the conference can also compete for one of the honored Outstanding Service Project awards, which recognize 10 chapters for their unique and exemplary service projects.

#### 6.6.1.2 LEAD Conferences

Usually between the months of February and April of each year, NHS and NJHS, along with the National Association of Student Councils (NASC), sponsor several weekend conferences for student leaders and activities advisers. These conferences provide essential training in leadership skills for students and professional development training on a variety of topics relevant to advising student activities. At these conferences, nationally known speakers present at general sessions. At small group workshops, successful practitioners from the field share a variety of ideas and programs with participants. A representative of the national staff presents a special session on Honor Society policies and procedures at each conference. Brochures on the workshops are sent to all active chapter advisers and appear in the Conferences and Programs section of [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

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## 6.6.1.3 State Conferences and Workshops

In addition to these nationally sponsored programs, more than 20 state associations exist in the United States, all of which provide various meetings, conferences, and workshops for students and advisers.

## 6.7 Annual Reports

Each active chapter is required to submit an annual report of activities to the national office. A form for reporting your chapter activities will be sent to the chapter adviser by the national office in a spring edition of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and on the Web site each year. Deadline for submission is June 30 each year. It is the responsibility of the chapter adviser to complete and return this annual report and to retain a copy for chapter files. Official membership lists are to be maintained at the school.

## 6.8 Public Relations for the Chapter and Its Activities

Today, when people are questioning the value of just about every facet of education, public relations (PR) is more important than ever. PR is what leads to understanding and support for youth, for your school, and for your chapter. It is no longer enough to merely operate any school program; it is essential to demonstrate its value, inform all interested audiences, and evaluate the program's effectiveness. This is all part of a quality PR effort.

Patrick Jackson, a former president of the Public Relations Society of America, says public relations "develops attitudes which change behaviors." That's a good working definition for NHS chapters. Your goal, through PR, is to identify audiences that need to hear your message, determine the best ways to reach those audiences, and deliver a message that will help them understand the importance of NHS and support your chapter.

The first opportunities you have for promoting good PR are through your student handbook, at new student orientation programs, and through parent newsletters in which you describe the chapter and the fundamental procedures and traditions associated with it. Informative pieces that are clearly expressed and thorough in these arenas will establish your PR program firmly in the school and community. Other key audiences might include teachers who could encourage students to participate in the NHS, administrators and school boards who will provide resources for successful chapters, students who are candidates to become chapter members, local business and civic leaders who could provide recognition for your chapter, and even state legislators who

will enact laws influencing student activities.

Communication vehicles might include editorials or columns in the school newspaper, invitations to business leaders to attend a chapter event, face-to-face meetings with administrators or school boards reviewing your chapter's past achievements and plans for the future, and a public listing of former NHS members from your school showing their success as adults. The more support you can obtain from these individuals the more likely you will have the necessary adult support, financial resources, community understanding, and student involvement to run a high quality program.

To develop such support, it is no longer enough to just publish an occasional news release or newsletter. They can be effective in building awareness about chapter members and activities—an essential step in gaining support—but not by themselves. Each NHS chapter should develop a PR plan that should include the following:

- Identifying the four or five important audiences to communicate with in your school and community
- Determining the three or four key messages those audience should understand
- Selecting communication vehicles to best deliver those messages
- Defining a budget (which does not have to be extensive), naming one or more individuals or a committee to head your PR efforts, setting timelines and deadlines
- Determining how to evaluate your PR activities.

Any or all of these activities can help you recognize chapter members, projects, and philosophies:

- News releases about new members, officers, or chapter projects in the school and community newspapers.
- A guest column (by the chapter president or PR committee chair) for the school newspaper or a local community newspaper about the value of your NHS chapter.
- A presentation at a school staff meeting outlining what students gain from NHS and calling for faculty support.
- Production of a question-and-answer sheet about NHS chapter issues to distribute to school staff, student leaders, parents, or other audiences. Determine what questions people may have by interviewing members of key audiences beforehand.
- A presentation to your school board about recent successful projects. This activity should be coordinated through your principal or superintendent.
- A speech at a civic club about the value of NHS and what your chapter has recently contributed to the community. There may be adults at the school or parents of

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chapter members who are members of civic clubs and could arrange for an invitation.

- An annual newsletter or report that recalls the various achievements of your chapter. Distribute the newsletter to people you hope to influence—school staff, local legislators, business leaders, school board members.
- A Web site providing pertinent details about your chapter.
- Look for ways to involve members of key audiences in your projects. (There's no better way to develop a positive belief in an organization than to see firsthand the positive things it does.

For more guidance, see Appendix T and the PR Toolkit at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

## 6.9 Official Insignia

When the National Honor Society was founded in 1921, the National Council authorized and approved an official emblem. This emblem, as stated in the Honor Society's constitution, can be issued by a National Honor Society chapter only to duly elected active or honorary members.

E. J. Eaton, one of the members of the first National Council, described the emblem:

The emblem of this society is the keystone and the flaming torch. The keystone bears at its base the letters CSLS, which stand for the four cardinal principles of the organization: character, scholarship, leadership, and service. As the keystone is placed by the builder to hold the perfect arch in perpetual stability, so the structure of our education must be held firm and true to the purposes of life by the virtues represented in this symbol. To bear forward the searching light of truth, to lead that others may follow in light, to keep burning in our school a high ambition for the enduring values of life, and to serve—these purposes are symbolized in the torch.

The distribution of official NHS emblems is controlled exclusively by the National Council. Advisers and principals are given the authority to purchase official insignia from the national sales office. Consequently, only the principal or chapter adviser can place telephone, fax, or e-mail orders. All official insignia are listed in *The Leadership Store*, the annual catalog of products and services sent to advisers in all member schools at the beginning of each school year as well as being posted on the NHS Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). (See Appendix I for camera-ready logos.)

From time to time, the national office licenses commercial vendors to produce and sell items bearing the official insignia of the organization. Indications of this license are expected to be included in all promotions produced and distributed by these licensees. Advisers who question the authenticity of any promotion bearing the name or insignia of the Honor Society

should report their concerns to the staff of the national office. Look for the ® or "TM" as an indicator of the official emblem.

The National Honor Society emblem is registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office and cannot be duplicated without the expressed permission of NASSP. The names "National Honor Society" and "NHS" and the insignia design are also similarly protected.

### 6.9.1 NHS Trademark Policy and Logo Usage Guidelines

All local and state advisers are responsible for helping to protect the use of all NHS trademark items. NASSP, the parent and owner of the rights to all Honor Society names and logos, expresses its policy concerning the use of trademark materials as follows:

Local NHS chapters and state associations are permitted to use trademark items without obtaining approval from the national NHS office (NASSP) on printed materials, promotional pieces, and displays that are not sold. Approval must be obtained in writing from NASSP for any item that will be sold by local or state NHS chapters or that is produced by a commercial vendor. Commercial vendors are not permitted to use NHS trademarks on any goods offered for sale or otherwise unless they have been licensed by NASSP.

### 6.9.2 On the Web

For Internet or Web site development, local chapters may use the NHS logo for a period of three years as long as the following conditions are met:

- The "TM" or ® (trademark) sign should appear next to the name (National Honor Society) or initials (NHS) when it first appears on the page.
- A footnote is added to the page where the "TM" or ® appears stating: "National Honor Society and NHS are duly registered trademarks of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). Unauthorized copying or use of said trademarks is strictly prohibited."
- A printout of the usage described above is sent to the national office at the following address:  
NHS & NJHS Logo Usage  
1904 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1537  
Fax: 703-476-5432  
E-mail: [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us) (subject: logo usage)

### 6.9.3 Web Site Link Usage

Local chapters may establish links to the NHS Web site

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found at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). Please inform the national office if your chapter has its own homepage or Web site so that you can be included in the electronic network of NHS chapters.

## 6.9.4 Use of the Official Emblems

The purchase of an emblem is not an obligation of membership. Emblems are often purchased through the school activity fund on the same basis as athletic letters and are presented to new members at the induction ceremony. Community organizations (e.g., PTA, Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions Club) sometimes provide funds for the purchase of the emblems. In a school where no financial provision is made, individual members may purchase the emblem through the adviser.

Regardless of who pays for the emblem, the title to the emblem remains with the chapter until the member has graduated. Each member should have a clear understanding of this stipulation. Members who are dismissed for any reason must surrender the emblem to the chapter adviser. If the dismissed member refuses, that individual should be reported through normal school disciplinary channels. If the emblem was paid for by the member, the chapter should reimburse the student for the original cost of the emblem.

The emblem and other insignia should always be worn with dignity and pride. Individual student members may not design their own clothing or jewelry featuring official NHS insignia.

In some schools, the National Honor Society pin is worn on the graduation gown. Other schools recognize Honor Society members by having them wear the official stole over the academic gown. In many instances, NHS members are so designated in the printed program. If chapters indicate in the local bylaws or guidelines that all members have a right to wear the pin, stole, or honor cords regardless of their standing, then this right cannot be removed without first dismissing the member per the due process outlined in Article X of the national constitution. If, on the other hand, chapters indicate that such insignia are privileges of membership and will only be allowed among members in good standing, the chapter may revoke such privileges in the event the member is not in good standing. (See Article XV, Section 3, of the national constitution.)

Pins and charms may be engraved with the member's initials, but the engraving must be done locally, not through the national office.

Graduate members who lose emblems should contact the principal of the school where induction took place. If the principal certifies in a letter to the national office that the individual was selected for membership and is a bona

fide graduate member, a price list and order form will be sent. Unless membership can be so verified, additional emblems cannot be supplied.

An official catalog with complete instructions for ordering supplies is sent to each chapter adviser annually and can be found at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). Advisers should use only current order forms, updated annually, when ordering official insignia. Chapters that do not have a current catalog and order form may secure one by contacting the NHS Sales Office, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191. Be sure to state the name of the school and chapter and include your school affiliation number, which can be found either on the adviser's membership card or on the mailing label of all mailings originating from the national office including *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.

## 6.10 Official Colors, Motto, and Flower


The official colors of the National Honor Society are blue and gold. Advisers wishing tone specifications can contact the national office for official Pantone color designations.

The Honor Society's motto is "Noblesse oblige," a French phrase literally meaning "nobility obligates." In broader terms, it signifies that those of high rank (or birth, in its original context) have the obligation to behave honorably, generously, and responsibly to others.

The official flower of NHS is the yellow rose.

## 6.11 Commercial Requests

The national office cautions principals, chapter advisers, and members to be wary of commercial groups that request lists of NHS members for any reason. Such groups often operate fraudulently. School officials concerned about offers that appear to exploit students should check with local postal authorities or the Better Business Bureau if the organization in question does not fulfill its claims, or consult the NASSP advisory list of student contests and activities. This list is disseminated to all NASSP principals in the fall of the year and can be found at [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org).

In addition, all official correspondence from NHS, including all invoices for affiliation renewal, will bear the official logo and the Reston, VA, return address. Chapters suspecting misuse of the name or logo or the questionable request for member names can also report this information to the national office. 

# 7. DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL



**A**s in the case of selection, all discipline and dismissal procedures must be clearly described in writing. This description should be available to anyone who requests it. The Faculty Council is responsible for developing all discipline and dismissal procedures (Article VI, Section 4) that are consistent with the NHS constitution and handbook.

It is the responsibility of the chapter adviser to periodically review the standing of members for compliance with Honor Society standards and for fulfillment of chapter obligations as described in the chapter bylaws. When a member falls below any of the standards by which the member was selected or fails to fulfill chapter obligations, the adviser should inform the errant member in writing of the nature of the violation, the time period given for improvement, and provide warning of the possible consequences of nonimprovement (i.e., consideration of dismissal or additional disciplinary measures being imposed). It is helpful to both the student and the adviser to follow up the letter with a conference. If the student does not make the improvement in the specified time, that student is subject to whatever disciplinary measures are considered appropriate by the Faculty Council.

Disciplinary measures other than dismissal are acceptable for minor offenses. For example, the Faculty Council may suspend certain chapter privileges, remove a member from chapter office, request that the student perform additional school or community service activities, or have the student receive special counseling. The goal of disciplinary measures

should be to reeducate the student to more appropriate behavior. If the discipline is constructive, there is a greater likelihood that the student will improve in the particular area in which there is a deficiency.

## 7.1 No Automatic Dismissal

A member can never be dismissed automatically for failing to maintain standards, not meeting member obligations, or even being found guilty of violating school rules or the law. A written notification and hearing are called for in Article X, Section 4, and must be conducted by the Faculty Council to dismiss a member. By definition, a member is a student who has successfully completed both the selection process and the induction ceremony. Consequently, the process for discipline and dismissal of members differs significantly from the process used for selection. In addition, chapters can indicate that certain violations will lead to immediate consideration of dismissal by the Faculty Council, but they can never describe such violations as warranting “automatic dismissal” under any conditions.

Members should understand fully that they are subject to dismissal if they do not maintain the standards of scholarship, leadership, service, and character that were used as a basis for their selection. The Faculty Council can select to discipline a member by placing them on warning (sometimes referred to as suspension or probation), during which time they are considered not in good standing with the chapter, although technically still retaining membership. Such warning periods are generally for a specific amount of time after which regular

# DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

membership is restored. Article XV, Section 3, notes that only members who are in good standing will be allowed to wear the Society's emblem, unless the local chapter bylaws indicate to the contrary. Chapter advisers are encouraged to remind senior members of this condition on several occasions during the members' last year and include it in the written list of chapter member obligations.

Members should also be informed that they are allowed limited warnings during their membership, and that in the case of a flagrant violation of school rules or the law, a warning is not required for dismissal, but a hearing will still be held. The hearing is identified in the NHS constitution as a right of membership; is guaranteed as due process as identified by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution; and requires the chapter to notify the member of the action being contemplated, the reasons for the action, the date and time of

the hearing, and the opportunity for the member to respond either in writing or orally. A student who is dismissed or who resigns is never again eligible for membership in NHS.

Faculty Councils should use dismissal sparingly. Prior to any vote on dismissal, the Faculty Council should investigate thoroughly before any action is taken. If the Council determines that the facts warrant consideration of dismissal, the member should be notified in writing of the violation, the possibility of dismissal, and the need for scheduling a hearing with the Faculty Council. (See Appendix K for sample letters.) The member should be allowed to appear before the Faculty Council and explain his or her view of the circumstances. A parent or guardian may be present with the member; however, it should be noted that the primary purpose and focus of the hearing is to allow the member to present his or her case.

## Chapter Management Tool: Dismissal Hearing Agenda

- Introductions of attendees, facilitated by the chapter adviser.
- Explanation of the proceedings by the adviser. This is a good place to quote the handbook, which indicates that "the primary focus of the hearing is to allow the member to present his or her case." Following the statement of purpose, a review of the "charges" being brought against the member is made. Excerpts from the hearing notification letter that outlined the charges and was sent to the member can be read at this time.
- Statement of case. The member is given the opportunity to respond to the charges.
- Question-and-answer period. This is an opportunity for the Faculty Council members to seek clarification from the member regarding his or her position or actions.
- Statement by parent (optional). No right to be present exists for any parent or other party representing the accused member, however nothing specifically prohibits their sitting in on the sessions. Whether or not such individuals are allowed to speak is left to precedent per the standard operating procedures of the chapter, and to the discretion of the presiding adviser.
- Final statement by the member before conclusion of this portion of the meeting.
- Excusing of the member (and parents and others). This indicates that a decision regarding the case in question is forthcoming, and if possible gives an indication of the timing and method of notification that will be used.

Following this portion of the hearing, the Faculty Council, still facilitated by the chapter adviser, engages in discussion, and, if all the pertinent information has been provided, they can make a decision by voting. (A majority vote is all that is needed for dismissal.) If additional clarification is needed, the Council should set a meeting date for coming back together for the purpose of concluding the case. As previously stated, it is strongly recommended that the results of the Faculty Council's decision be shared first with the principal prior to notification of the member or the parent.

Thanks to NHS adviser Jeff Hagers from Bentonville (AR) High School for taking the national recommendations a step further and providing this model for all chapter advisers to consider.

# DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

## 7.2 Dismissal Procedures Overview

In all matters of dismissal, local advisers should first review the data found in the most recent editions of the national constitution and the national handbook. Next, a review of the existing guidelines for your local chapter should be undertaken. It is important that all local guidelines conform to those found in the national constitution. Questions regarding conformance can be directed to the national office.

To avoid confusion, it is always appropriate to refer to these cases as dismissal from the chapter and not expulsion. Expulsion is a term that bears legal connotations in some states when used to refer to the removal of a student from the school. In most cases, it is safe to refer to dismissal from the chapter when removing a member from your roster. The following points should also be taken care of in all dismissal cases:

- Procedures for dismissal are to be determined by the local school's NHS Faculty Council (with review by the principal, superintendent, school board, school system attorney, etc., when necessary). Student input on these procedures can be sought, however the final say on the procedures is always left to the Faculty Council.
- A written description of the discipline and dismissal procedures should be available to interested parties. A review of these procedures with your chapter members and officers is essential along with frequent reminders. Student handbooks or chapter handbooks should include these. In addition, chapter members should be reminded regularly of the standards that they are expected to maintain.
- A member can be considered for dismissal when performance falls below the acceptable levels of any of the standards by which the student was selected, when the member fails to fulfill chapter obligations, or when the member is found guilty of violating school rules or the law.
- It is highly recommended that a student be warned in writing whenever the student falls below any standard. It is further recommended that copies of this correspondence be sent to the parents and that a copy of the letter, including the date it was sent, be maintained by the adviser. Some schools prefer the presentation of such written warnings in person; others use registered mail to guarantee receipt of the letters at home. This is a matter of local precedent, worth checking with the principal.
- The Faculty Council determines when an individual has exceeded a reasonable number of warnings, thus warranting consideration of dismissal.

- In all cases of pending dismissal, a chapter member shall have a right to be notified in writing of the offenses and to a hearing before the Faculty Council. This is the due process guaranteed to all chapter members under both the NHS constitution and the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Please note that this hearing is prior to dismissal. Under no circumstances is there automatic dismissal from the Honor Society.
- Appeals of dismissal are to be handled first by the school principals and, thereafter, in the same fashion as disciplinary appeals in the student's school district. Neither the National Council nor the national office has the authority to hear appeals in cases of dismissal. If a member is dismissed, written notice of the decision should be sent to the member, his or her parents, and the principal. The member must then surrender the NHS emblem and membership card to the chapter adviser. If the member is unwilling to do this, the matter should be treated as a school disciplinary matter.

## 7.3 Appeals for Dismissal Cases

The dismissed member may appeal the decision of the Faculty Council first to the principal and then, as indicated under the local school district's policies governing disciplinary appeals, follow the normal channels for an appeals process. If the Faculty Council acts professionally with due care and fairness, then there should be few occasions for such appeals. It is in the best interest of the chapter that those most familiar with Honor Society goals and procedures be responsible for decisions concerning the chapter and its membership (i.e., the Faculty Council).

In the case of dismissal appeals, the principal is generally the first recipient of the appeal. He or she shall follow the local district appeals process. Decisions made should be based on adequacy and fairness of the Faculty Council procedures. In the rare instance in which dismissal cases are successfully appealed by a member, the principal is encouraged to share the rationale for reversing the initial decision and the Faculty Council is requested to graciously receive and implement the decision. The National Council and NASSP do not have the authority to hear or make any decisions regarding appeals in dismissal cases. (See Article X, Section 7.)

## 7.4 Resignation

A member who resigns from the National Honor Society will never again be eligible for membership or its benefits. Resignation from the Honor Society should involve the submission of a written statement by the resigning member that

## DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

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is dated and signed by both the student and his or her parent(s). Verbal resignations are generally insufficient to end membership. Students contemplating resignation should be informed of the ramifications of their resignation.

Students cannot be forced to resign. This situation would be interpreted as a dismissal order for which the process, as outlined in Article X of the national constitution, must be followed. ☞



# 8. SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD PROGRAMS



*Note: The information found on these pages is accurate as of this printing. To verify information regarding any of the programs noted below, please visit [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) and look in the Scholarships and Awards section for updates.*

## 8.1 NHS National Scholarships

NHS members who exhibit outstanding scholarship, leadership, service, and character may be eligible in their senior year to be nominated to compete in the National Honor Society Scholarship Awards program. Each year the chapter adviser receives information concerning the procedures for determining eligibility. Nominations are not based on need or on any one criterion. Rather, the nominating committee identifies students who are outstanding in the four qualities of NHS—scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

Each nominee completes the nomination form, which details the student's participation in service organizations, clubs, and athletics; employment experience; achievements in the arts and sciences; and academic record. Nominees are also expected to write an essay on an assigned topic. Teacher

recommendations and the principal's evaluation of the student are another part of the application. In selecting the winners, the National Council also considers the size and type of the student's school.

Information concerning the number and value of scholarships, eligibility rules, and application data is sent by NHS to the chapter adviser in November. Winners are announced in the spring.

The scholarship must be used to pursue a course of study leading to a degree at an accredited university, college, or junior college in the United States.

Scholarships are paid directly to the college for deposit into the student's account. The funds may be used only for tuition, fees, room and board, and books and supplies. Follow-up studies on past scholarship winners indicate that exemplary achievement continues through college. A large percentage of the winners have graduated from college with honors in a variety of academic fields and many have gone on to earn graduate degrees.

Millions of dollars in scholarships have been awarded since the National Honor Society Scholarship Awards program was established in 1945. The program is sponsored by NASSP.

# SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD PROGRAMS

Since the founding of the program, a number of companies and foundations have joined NASSP as regular contributors.

## 8.2 Other Scholarships and Awards from the National Office

The Department of Student Activities of NASSP sponsors or administers a variety of national competitions for scholarships and awards. Through these annual programs, the national office helps to recognize outstanding students in secondary schools throughout the nation. We encourage your school to participate!

Additional information on all of these programs, including yearly program deadlines, can be found on our Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us), or in *Leadership for Student Activities*, published monthly by NASSP for schools actively affiliated with the national office. All dates are tentative until official applications or nomination forms are printed.

### Principal's Leadership Award (PLA)



Principals use this national scholarship program to recognize one outstanding student leader from the senior class each year. Currently, school winners compete at the national level for 100 scholarships of \$1,000 each. PLA is funded by Herff Jones, Inc., and is administered by NASSP. Any high school senior may be nominated by his or her school. Each school may nominate only one senior to compete.

Each fall, nomination forms are sent to the building principal of all U.S. schools with a 12th grade. Check with the principal's office or guidance department of your local high school for forms. A timeline follows:

- October—Scholarship packet mailed to principal
- December—School winner application deadline
- April—Winners announced by NASSP in conjunction with National Student Leadership Week

### Prudential Spirit of Community Awards



THE PRUDENTIAL SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARDS

These awards recognize students in grades 5–12 who have demonstrated exemplary community service. Schools and participating organizations may select one local honoree for every 1,000 students (or portion thereof). Local honorees are then judged at the state level. One high school and one middle level student in each state, the District of Columbia,

and Puerto Rico are named state honorees and each receives \$1,000, a silver medallion, and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, DC, with a parent or guardian. The runners-up in each state receive bronze medallions as distinguished finalists, and other top applicants receive certificates of excellence. At the national recognition events in Washington, DC, 10 state honorees (5 high school and 5 middle level students) are named national honorees and each receives an additional \$5,000, a gold medallion, and a crystal trophy for their school or organization.

Information and application packets are mailed each fall to the building principal and counselors in every middle level and high school in the country and to the following organizations: Girl Scouts, 4-H, Camp Fire USA, American Red Cross, YMCA, Volunteer Centers of the Points of Light Foundation, and the Volunteer Center National Network. Applications are also available online at [www.principals.org/awards/prudential.cfm](http://www.principals.org/awards/prudential.cfm) or by calling 888-450-9961 (toll-free). A timeline follows:

- September—Awards packet mailed to principals, counselors and participating organizations
- October—Student deadline to schools or participating organizations
- November—Postmark deadline to state judges
- February—NASSP notifies state honorees through their schools or participating organizations
- May—National recognition events in Washington, DC

## 8.3 How to Win a Scholarship from NASSP

**Question:** How can our school select a nominee who will win one of the scholarships available from NASSP?

**Answer:** The NHS National Scholarship program and the others listed here are generally designed to identify well-rounded nominees or those who fit the specific criteria of the program. Such conditions are generally achieved when mental, physical, social, and spiritual development are all present and exhibited through involvement in academics, the arts, athletics, and other student activities. Here are some suggestions:

- Information provided by and about nominees on their nomination forms should clearly demonstrate their superlative qualities.
- Avoid using unknown abbreviations wherever possible. National organizations are widely known but state-based or local groups are not.
- Be sure that the administration fee (if required and as identified on the nomination form) is paid and

# SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD PROGRAMS

included in the nomination packet along with all other requested materials. Also make sure the packet is sent on time to the correct company address found in the materials.

- Complete the nomination form thoroughly, paying special attention to obtaining all of the required signatures and recommendations (student, adviser, principal).
- Provide effective recommendations that do not merely restate information found elsewhere on the form, but give insight to the character of the nominee. The scholarship committee is a group of secondary school principals who respect the recommendations provided by their peers.
- If your nominee has more activities than can fit in the space provided, activities listed should be the best activities to support the nomination and reflect the well-rounded nature of the nominee.
- Encourage all potential nominees to perform significant service for the school or the community that speaks to an important local concern and creates visible results.
- Stress to nominees the importance of a well-written essay that responds effectively to the narrative assignment. Always check for correct spelling and grammar—the readers are educators, after all.
- Ensure that the submitted form is neat and well thought out.

For additional insight, be sure to review the scholarship winner profiles found in the fall editions of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.

All nominees are judged against other nominees from their state and from schools of similar size within the state (small, medium, large, or extra-large schools as defined in the nomination packet). This component of the selection process allows students to compete against peers from similar educational circumstances. The NHS and PLA scholarships are merit based and not based on need.

Nomination packets are distributed each fall to all duly affiliated schools and chapter advisers. The deadline for submission is in January for NHS each year. Selection is completed by April and winners are notified in May of each year.

—Excerpted from the January 2000 issue of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.

## 8.4 Scholarship Resources

Students, advisers, and even parents should consider the following resources when setting out in search of financial resources to support their postsecondary education plans.

- **Guidance department at school.** Many scholarship and award program opportunities can be secured through the guidance counselors at school. The main office of many schools will forward all scholarship and award nomination packets to the attention of the school guidance counselors.
- **School and public libraries.** Both school and public libraries feature books and software that allow students to search through a large database of scholarships to find those that are suited to the needs and the characteristics of the individual student.
- **College and university financial aid offices.** If the student has been accepted or has applied for admission to a specific college or university, the financial aid office is usually more than willing to assist parents in searching for available scholarship funds.
- **World Wide Web.** By using various search engines on the World Wide Web, sites offering financial aid and scholarships can be found in abundance on the Internet.
- **Bookstores.** Many major bookstores and newsstands sell financial aid and scholarship resource guides.
- **Commercial entities.** Many commercial entities offer their services in locating scholarship resources for a fee. Though many of these consulting services are legitimate business enterprises, be aware that in September 1996, the Federal Trade Commission issued a warning concerning “bogus scholarship search services,” which allegedly bilk students and their families of millions of dollars every year. Because school, library, computer, and Internet sources are free, it is recommended that these resources be exhausted before accepting any offers that claim to “do all the work...for a fee.”

## 8.5 NASSP National Advisory List of Student Contests and Activities

For more than 60 years, NASSP, through its National Committee on Student Contests and Activities, has provided high school principals with the National Advisory List. The national committee is guided by principals’ desire to protect students from exploitive programs and to identify programs having educational benefits. To this end, the purpose of the National Advisory List, then, is to provide information to assist principals in guiding students and parents in making decisions regarding participation in a wide variety of program opportunities. Also, the National Advisory List guidelines provide information on such topics as scholarship search services, student recognition programs, and educational student travel.

## SCHOLARSHIP AND AWARD PROGRAMS

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Although each school will determine the contests and activities it chooses to take part in, the Student Contests and Activities National Advisory List is offered as a guide. It is advisory in nature and is a result of careful screening and review of information voluntarily submitted to the national committee. Inclusion of a program on the National

Advisory List indicates the program was found to meet the standards set by the committee and does not imply endorsement by NASSP.

A link to the current list is available at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us) and [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org) (the NASSP Web site). ↩

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## Appendix A: A Survey of Your Honor Society Chapter

How much do you know about your Honor Society chapter? Take time to answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Answer each question. If you don't know the answer, leave it blank.

1. Our Honor Society chapter is actively affiliated with the national office.  YES  NO
2. Members of the chapter are regularly shown and read information from *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine.  YES  NO
3. There is a written job description for each chapter officer and committee chairperson.  YES  NO
4. Chapter officers set specific goals annually to be accomplished by the chapter.  YES  NO
5. Officers are required to complete a leadership training program.  YES  NO
6. The name of the chapter adviser is known by chapter members and published at school.  YES  NO
7. Selection to the Honor Society is accomplished through use of a 5-member Faculty Council.  YES  NO
8. A schedule of regular meetings is developed and used by the chapter.  YES  NO
9. Bylaws of the chapter are reviewed annually and kept in compliance with the national constitution.  YES  NO
10. Agendas are developed and used at each meeting of the chapter.  YES  NO
11. The chapter president meets regularly with the principal of the school and chapter adviser.  YES  NO
12. A system of committees has been established and is used during the year.  YES  NO
13. Members are presented with a calendar of events and projects and activities of the chapter for the year.  YES  NO
14. The student body has an opportunity to evaluate activities of the chapter.  YES  NO
15. There is a systematic means of raising funds for the chapter.  YES  NO
16. The chapter has joint projects with classes or clubs and organizations within the school.  YES  NO
17. Some activities of the chapter are designed to provide service to either the school or community.  YES  NO
18. Some activities of the chapter are designed to support the academic curriculum or student involvement therein.  YES  NO
19. Student activities of the chapter are regularly designed to improve student–faculty relations.  YES  NO
20. The Honor Society sponsors activities to improve student understanding of its purposes and programs.  YES  NO
21. Accurate descriptions of the Honor Society regularly appear in the student handbook presented to all students.  YES  NO
22. The chapter sponsors activities to aid the development of good character among students.  YES  NO
23. The Honor Society induction ceremony is a well-respected program among the traditions of the school.  YES  NO
24. The local selection process is understood by the faculty and students and considered fair and effective when used.  YES  NO
25. Members of the chapter are proud of their chapter, what it stands for, and its history in the school.  YES  NO

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## Appendix B: A Checklist for Honor Society Chapters

Is your chapter operating in full compliance with the national guidelines for NHS? Use the following checklist to initiate your review.

- Affiliation:** Have you submitted payment of your annual affiliation fee to cover the July 1 to June 30 membership year? Renewal invoices are mailed to principals of active chapter schools in late spring. Generic copies of the invoices are available at [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).
- Chapter Adviser:** Has the chapter adviser been appointed by the principal from the faculty? The name of this individual should be included when submitting the annual affiliation fee in the space provided on the renewal invoice. Multiple advisers are acceptable at the local level; however, no principal or assistant principal can serve as chapter adviser and only a single adviser will be included in the official chapter database at the national office.
- Faculty Council:** Has the principal approved the 5-member Faculty Council for the year? The adviser serves as a nonvoting sixth member of this body.
- Publish:** Is your local selection process (including criteria and schedule) published for all students, parents, and faculty to see per Article IX, Section 4 of the national constitution?
- National Handbook:** Is the chapter currently using the most recent edition of the national handbook? Copies are obtainable by contacting the national Sales Office by phone at 866-647-7253 or by e-mail at [sales@nhs.us](mailto:sales@nhs.us).
- Meetings:** Have you scheduled regular meetings for the chapter, including your induction ceremony(ies) for the year and informed the chapter members of this schedule and their responsibility to attend?
- Bylaws:** Does your chapter have its chapter bylaws developed, printed, and published for all chapter members? See the national handbook for suggested content guidelines.
- Service:** Has the chapter planned the required annual chapter service project(s) for the current school year?
- Individual Service:** Have members been informed about their obligation to engage in individual service projects for the current year? Is there a system in place for accounting for their fulfillment of this obligation?
- Obligations:** Have members been fully informed in writing (via the chapter bylaws) of the total list of membership obligations that they are responsible for this year, including, but not limited to payment of dues (if charged), service hours, meeting attendance, etc.?
- Professional Development:** Is the adviser reviewing the content of the monthly issues of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine or the Adviser Zone on the national Web site ([www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us)) for updates from the national office? Has the adviser considered joining the state association (in states where they exist) or attending one of the training opportunities sponsored by the national office (national conference, LEAD conferences, etc.)? See the Web site for details.
- Annual Report:** Did you submit your annual report form to the national office by the June 30 deadline? If not, please plan to use the form found in the April issue of *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine (or on the Web site) to complete and return for the coming year.

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## Appendix C: Suggested Outline for Honor Society Chapter Bylaws

**Article I—Name.** Statement of the name of the organization.

**Article II— Purpose.** The general purpose of the group.

**Article III—Authority.** Powers vested in the organization and the authority of the principal.

**Article IV—Membership and Obligations.** Definition of membership for the group and identify obligations for all chapter members (dues, meeting attendance, etc.).

**Article V—Selection Procedures.** Establishment of the time, methods, and procedures for the nomination and selection of members. (Information in this section must be consistent with the national guidelines, developed by the Faculty Council, and is not subject to member approval as per Article IX, Section 4, of the national constitution.)

**Article VI—Meetings.** Frequency of meetings and provisions for special sessions.

**Article VII—Chapter Leadership.** The duties and responsibilities of the organization, the officers, adviser, and members. (Include committees, too, if you have any.)

**Article VIII—Officer Election.** Procedures for election of officers, removal from office, and filling vacancies.

**Article IX—Rules of Order.** Definition of rules of order and references for conducting society business (usually *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*).

**Article X—Discipline and Dismissal of Members and Officers.** Domain of the Faculty Council and elaborate on the local due process based on Article X of the national constitution.

**Article XI—Ratification/Approval.** Method and procedure for ratification of the bylaws.

**Article XII—Amendments.** Provisions for amending the bylaws.

### Sample Bylaws

Provisions found within this sample have been compiled from a variety of bylaws submitted over the years to the national office. Local chapters should review their own needs, policies, and procedures to amend this model to suit their local needs. Though bylaws are a constitutional mandate (Article XVI), the verbiage found in this sample is not. All components of local bylaws must conform to the guidelines and regulations found in the national constitution.

In the sample bylaws below, blanks ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) and underlined phrases indicate areas of the bylaws where individual chapters must add local information not otherwise mandated by the national office.

## ARTICLE I: NAME AND PURPOSE

**Section 1**—The name of this chapter shall be the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the National Honor Society of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school).

**Section 2**—The purpose of this chapter shall be to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of school).

## ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1**—Membership in this chapter shall be known as active, honorary, and graduate. Active members become graduate members at graduation. Graduate and honorary members have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

**Section 2**—Membership in this chapter is an honor bestowed upon deserving students by the faculty, and shall be based on the criteria of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

**Section 3**—Eligibility

- a. Candidates eligible for election to this chapter must be members of the sophomore, junior, or senior class.
- b. To be eligible for selection to membership in this chapter, the candidate must have been in attendance for a period of one semester at \_\_\_\_\_ (school name).
- c. Candidates eligible for selection to the chapter shall have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 (out of 4.0; 85 or "B" are alternative minimum standards for schools using either 100-point scales or letter grades only). This scholastic level of achievement shall remain fixed, and shall be the required minimum level of scholastic achievement for admission to candidacy. All students who can rise in scholarship to or above such standard may be admitted to candidacy for selection to membership.
- d. Upon meeting the grade level, attendance, and GPA standard requirements, candidates shall then be considered based on their service, leadership, and character.

## ARTICLE III: SELECTION OF MEMBERS

**Section 1**—The selection of members to this chapter shall be by a majority vote of the Faculty Council consisting of five faculty members appointed by the principal. The chapter adviser shall be the sixth, nonvoting, ex officio member of the Faculty Council.

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**Section 2**—Prior to selection, the following shall occur:

- a. Students' academic records shall be reviewed to determine scholastic eligibility.
- b. Students who are eligible scholastically ("candidates") shall be notified and asked to complete and submit the Student Activity Information Form for further consideration for selection.
- c. The faculty shall be requested to evaluate candidates determined to be scholastically eligible using the official evaluation form provided by the chapter adviser.
- d. The Faculty Council shall review the Student Activity Information Form and faculty evaluations in order to determine membership.

**Section 3**—The selection of new active members shall be held once a year during the second semester of the school year. (Alternative or additional selection periods may be added.)

**Section 4**—Candidates become members when inducted at a special ceremony.

**Section 5**—Once selected and inducted, all members are expected to maintain the standards by which they were selected and maintain all obligations of membership.

**Section 6**—An active member of the National Honor Society who transfers from this school will be given a letter indicating the status of his or her membership and signed by the principal or chapter adviser.

**Section 7**—An active member of the National Honor Society who transfers to this school will be automatically accepted for membership in this chapter. The Faculty Council shall grant to the transferring member one semester to attain the membership requirements and, thereafter, this member must maintain those requirements for this chapter in order to retain his or her membership.

Note: The selection process used at the local level may vary from the procedure outlined above; however, such variations must still conform to the national constitution.

## ARTICLE IV: DISCIPLINE AND DISMISSAL

**Section 1**—Any member who falls below the standards of scholarship, leadership, character, or service may be considered for dismissal from the \_\_\_\_\_ chapter of the National Honor Society. A member of the National Honor Society is expected to maintain his or her academic standing and take an active role in service and leadership to his or her school and community.

**Section 2**—If a member's cumulative GPA falls below the standard in effect when he or she was selected (fill in the minimum cumulative GPA for your chapter selection), he

or she will be given a written warning and a time period for improvement. If the cumulative GPA remains below standard at the end of the warning period, the student will be subject to further disciplinary action by the Faculty Council, which may include consideration of dismissal from the chapter.

**Section 3**—If a member fails to perform any of the published obligations of membership, he or she will be given a written warning and a time period for improvement. If the obligation remains unmet at the end of the warning period, the student will be subject to further disciplinary action by the Faculty Council, which may include dismissal from the chapter.

**Section 4**—Violation of the law or school regulations can result in dismissal of a member. These violations include, but are not limited to, DWI; stealing; destruction of property; cheating; truancy; or possession, selling, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school or school-related activities. [Note: This section should reflect the content of any existing behavioral guidelines in place with the chapter or at the school. Input from the local school administration is essential for this provision.]

**Section 5**—Offenders of the school conduct code (such as use of profanity, failure to comply, unexcused absence, excessive tardiness, etc.) will receive written warning notification. A conference may be requested by either party (Faculty Council, student, or parent). If the member is involved in another violation of the school conduct code, the member may be considered for dismissal.

**Section 6**—In all cases of pending dismissal:

- a. The member will receive written notification indicating the reason for possible dismissal from the adviser or Faculty Council. The member and adviser will discuss the written notification in a conference. Situations that involve flagrant violations of school rules or the law can warrant disciplinary action without a written warning although a hearing must still be held (see below).
- b. The member will be given the opportunity to respond to the charge against him or her at a hearing before the Faculty Council prior to the vote on dismissal. The Faculty Council will then vote on whether to dismiss. A majority vote of the Faculty Council is needed to dismiss any member.
- c. The results of the Faculty Council vote will be reviewed by the principal and then, if confirmed, expressed in a letter sent to the student, parents, and principal. Dismissed members must surrender any membership emblems to the adviser.



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- d. The Faculty Council's decision may be appealed to the building principal and afterwards through the school district discipline policy.
- e. When a student is dismissed or resigns, he or she is no longer a member and may not be reconsidered for membership in the National Honor Society.

**Section 7**—In lieu of dismissal, the Faculty Council may impose disciplinary sanctions upon a member as deemed appropriate.

## ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

**Section 1**—The officers of the chapter shall be president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

**Section 2**—Student officers shall be elected at the last meeting of each school year. All returning active members are eligible to run for a position as an officer. All active members of the chapter are eligible to vote. [Note: The timing of the election of chapter officers is determined locally.]

**Section 3**—A majority vote shall be necessary to elect any officer of this chapter. If the first vote does not yield a majority, a second vote shall be taken of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes. [Note: Plurality can be used to determine the outcome of elections as an alternative to a majority vote.]

The following duties should reflect the responsibilities developed for officers in the local chapter:

**Section 4**—It shall be the duty of the president to preside at the meetings for this chapter.

**Section 5**—The vice president shall preside in the absence of the president and shall also keep a record of members' contributions to leadership and service.

**Section 6**—The secretary shall keep the minutes of meetings and be responsible for all official chapter correspondence.

**Section 7**—The treasurer shall keep the record of chapter expenses, dues, and all other financial transactions of the chapter. [Note: If additional or alternative officers or duties exist, their positions and duties of office should be detailed in this article of the bylaws. Also consider adding components that would describe when officers could be relieved of their duties (suspensions, etc.) in cases not involving dismissal from the chapter. Additional provisions that speak to filling vacancies should they occur during the year (for whatever reason) are also advised. Consult with the school's student council adviser for local precedents in these areas. See also the national handbook's outline for chapter bylaws that incorporates these topics.]

## ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Section 1**—The executive committee shall consist of the faculty adviser and the chapter officers.

**Section 2**—The executive committee shall have general charge of the meetings and the business of the chapter, but any action by the executive committee is subject to the review of the chapter members.

## ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

**Section 1**—Meetings of this chapter shall be \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., monthly, weekly, etc.).

**Section 2**—This chapter shall conduct its meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order*.

**Section 3**—All chapter members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled chapter meetings. [Note: If there is a chapter policy on absences, defining excused versus unexcused absences, it should be inserted into this article.]

## ARTICLE VIII: ACTIVITIES

**Section 1**—The chapter shall determine one or more service projects for each year.

**Section 2**—All members shall regularly participate in these projects.

**Section 3**—These projects shall have the following characteristics: fulfill a need within the school or community; have the support of the administration and the faculty; be appropriate and educationally defensible; and be well planned, organized, and executed.

**Section 4**—Each member shall have the responsibility for choosing and participating in an individual service project that reflects his or her particular talents and interests and as approved by the chapter adviser. This is in addition to the chapter projects to which all members contribute.

**Section 5**—The chapter shall publicize its projects in a positive manner.

## ARTICLE IX: EMBLEM

**Section 1**—Each member of this chapter who is in good standing with regard to the membership standards and member obligations shall have the privilege of wearing the emblem adopted by the National Honor Society. [Note: The content of this section parallels Article XV, Section 3 of the national constitution, revised 2000.]

**Section 2**—Any member who withdraws, resigns, or is dismissed from the chapter shall return the emblem to the chapter. [Note: If the members purchased such emblems, the chapter is obligated to reimburse the student for said expense.]

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**Section 3**—Chapter members who are seniors in good standing shall be granted the privilege of wearing the honor cords or other insignia adopted at the local level at graduation.

## **ARTICLE X: DUES**

**Section 1**—Annual dues for this chapter shall be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Section 2**—Dues will be payable to the chapter treasurer within 30 days of induction. [Note: This section is optional.]

## **ARTICLE XI: POWERS**

**Section 1**—The chapter adviser is given the authority to supervise the administration of chapter activities, as delegated by the school principal.

**Section 2**—The principal shall reserve the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter.

**Section 3**—These bylaws are designed to amplify provisions of the national constitution and cannot contradict any components thereof. The chapter is obligated to adhere to the provisions of the national constitution in all activities it undertakes.

## **ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1**—These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the chapter, provided notice of the proposed amendment has been given to members at least one month prior to the vote. The exceptions are Articles III and IV (selection and discipline), which are developed by the Faculty Council with the approval of the principal.

**Section 2**—Bylaws and amendments must be consistent with the constitution of the National Honor Society.

Additional articles can be added as needed. It is often convenient to have the last article dealing with amendments. Also, be sure to include the following at the end of your chapter bylaws:

Date: (Important to indicate the date of last approved revisions, e.g., May 30, 2003.)

Signatures: Chapter president, secretary, adviser, and principal (for historical record)

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## **Appendix D: Legal Memorandum, Fall 2003 Selection, Dismissal, and Discipline: Legal Guidelines for National Honor Society and Other Selective Organizations**

Grades, competitive school activities, selective course placement, and selective honors encourage and reward students for their work and avail them of opportunities in higher education and employment. However, students, or more often the parents of students, who do not receive the results they desire will often demand explanations and adjustments. When conflict arises, the first inclination of school officials may be to abandon the practice of distinguishing students, or to reduce their standards, but this would be a mistake. Instead, those entrusted with the duty to oversee selective activities must continue to evaluate students and use well-defined procedures and professional practices to place themselves—and the process—beyond reproach. The National Honor Society (NHS) 1 may serve as a model of such procedures and practices for not only its own chapters, but for selective student activities in general. This edition of A Legal Memorandum uses NHS to explore the legal issues facing selective student activities.

### **Membership: Whose Right Is It Anyway?**

In the handful of legal challenges to selection decisions by NHS chapters, courts have consistently held that membership in NHS and other selective organizations is a privilege, not an entitlement. As such, there has been no recognition of a property or liberty interest in membership selection that would give rise to constitutional due process rights. In *Miller v. Goldberg* (1981), a New York trial court analogized nonselection for NHS to the nonrenewal of a untenured teacher; like the untenured teacher, the nonselected student has only “an abstract need or desire” to be offered membership and not a legitimate claim.

In *Karnstein v. Pewaukee School Board* (1983), a U.S. District Court in Wisconsin endorsed this view, noting that membership in NHS is an “honor” rather than a legal “entitlement” and therefore does not warrant “the requirements of due process of law.” This rule is so well established that in *Dangler v. Yorktown Central Schools* (1991), a U.S. District Court in New York not only rejected a student’s challenge to his nonselection, it sanctioned the plaintiff with a \$60,000 penalty for bringing a frivolous lawsuit.

Since the NHS selection process does not involve a liberty or property interest, the due process clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments do not apply. However, once a student has been inducted, he or she gains a limited

property right to membership; the U.S. Constitution notwithstanding, the NHS Handbook entitles NHS members to due process if they are going to be deprived of their membership.

Due process is a very broad concept. At a minimum it requires the individual whose liberty or property is in jeopardy to be provided notice and an opportunity to be heard (*Fuentes v. Shevin*, 1994). Returning to the untenured teacher analogy used by the court in *Miller v. Goldberg*, as tenured teachers are entitled to certain due process before dismissal, so too are NHS members. (Also see *Warren v. National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 1974; and *Ector County Independent School District v. Hopkins*, 1974.)

### **Discriminating Without Prejudice**

School officials should remember that selective organizations are meant to be selective. Schools must avoid using inappropriate criteria when determining which students should be invited to join a team, enroll in advanced courses, or be offered membership into honorary groups. However, schools also should not abandon their duty to differentiate and distinguish students to provide them with appropriate education and to recognize and encourage student achievements. When standards are reduced to avoid conflict, programs and honors lose their value. Therefore, appropriate selectivity is essential to any useful selection process.

### **The Target: Identifying the Criteria**

Every decision to select, discipline, or dismiss a student from a selective student activity must be based on the standards for membership. The only way that such decisions can be fair is if they are based on clearly defined standards that are published and presented to the students. Though subjectivity may play an important part in the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members, making the selection process as objective as possible will make the selection process less vulnerable to criticism.

The NHS Constitution identifies four criteria to be used in the selection of its members: scholarship, leadership, character, and service. Each of the four factors naturally involves subjective assessments. Thanks to student cumulative grade point averages, scholarship requires the least subjective review by the Faculty Council; while leadership and service are more subjective, they can still be quantified and considered with relative objectivity. However, character judgments are subjective by nature; therefore, it is not surprising that most controversies result from issues involving character.

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The Faculty Council may reduce the subjectivity of its character evaluation by relying on documented evaluations of student performance. Such evaluations may include school records, character or conduct ratings on report cards, professional records of individual faculty members, comments based on professional evaluations and action, discipline actions, and faculty evaluation forms.

## How Far Back?

While NHS honors outstanding scholarship, leadership, character and service, it is important to remember that students are growing and learning—they will make mistakes and are expected to mature. This raises the question of how far the Faculty Council should look when examining a student's past. Courts will likely leave this question to the discretion of the Faculty Council as long as the Council's decision is applied consistently. However, the NHS Handbook prevents the Faculty Council from reviewing students' behavior prior to high school.<sup>2</sup> When making its assessment, the Faculty Council should consider the severity of prior shortcomings and evidence of improvement. Most important, the Council must apply the same standard to all students.

## Beyond the School: Is Good Character Homework?

NHS is meant to honor exceptional students for their achievements. In doing so, the Faculty Council will often consider achievements—both in and outside of the school—when making selection, discipline, and dismissal decisions. Courts have consistently recognized NHS's right to consider students' behavior in the community outside of school when selecting, disciplining, and dismissing members. Whether or not to consider students' behavior outside of school is left to the discretion of the local chapters. If chapters choose to consider students' behavior beyond the school walls, then schools should make it known to both students and parents that student behavior in and outside of school will be evaluated.

In *Farver v. Board of Education* (1999), students were suspended from participation in school activities, including NHS, when they were caught attending a weekend party where alcohol was being served to minors. The U.S. District Court in Maryland held that alcohol abuse was of sufficient concern to school officials, and thus refused to prevent the suspensions from school activities. There have been several cases like *Farver*, dealing with students' off-campus alcohol consumption; in each case, the court recognized underage drinking as an offense reasonably within the scope of NHS punishment. In *Warren v. National*

*Association of Secondary School Principals* (1974), a student was dismissed from NHS after a Faculty Council member witnessed him drinking alcohol off campus at a nonschool-related social outing. Though the court ruled for the student, it did so not because the offense was not punishable, but because there were inconsistencies and procedural faults in the Faculty Council's response to underage drinking.

A less-clear legal issue arises when juvenile criminal records are used to assess a candidate's or member's character. Because juvenile records are generally confidential, their use by the Faculty Council raises interesting concerns. While the legality or illegality of using juvenile records by the Faculty Council is unsettled, because such records are generally confidential it is prudent for principals to refrain from allowing their use and base decisions on information that can be legitimately accessed.

## Drug Testing

In an effort to fight drug abuse, some school districts have instituted mandatory, suspicionless drug testing for students participating in student activities. In *Board of Education v. Earls* (2002), the U.S. Supreme Court found that drug testing of students who participate in student activities does not violate students' Fourth Amendment protection from unreasonable search and seizure. However, NHS chapters should not implement drug-testing programs independent of school policies; before establishing a drug-testing program, school officials should engage legal counsel.

**Inappropriate Discrimination: Selection Should Not Be Based on Rumor, Racism, Sexism, or Other Capricious Grounds**

Prejudice has no place in the NHS selection process, nor should it be a factor in the selection process of other student activities. A student's race, gender, ethnicity, political persuasion, socioeconomic background, family, disability, or any other characteristic unrelated to the criteria for NHS should never prevent a student from obtaining or maintaining membership. The Faculty Council should also not base its decisions on rumor or hearsay. The Faculty Council should rely on students' official school records, information submitted by students (generally not school records), and, whenever possible, firsthand observations from the faculty.

## Free Expression

Where the U.S. Constitution protects students' expression, schools must not prevent their expression or retaliate against students for engaging in free speech. Courts have given

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schools enormous leeway with regard to restricting speech in order to facilitate order. However, when expression is not disruptive, it is generally protected; for example, the Supreme Court has decided that the U.S. Constitution protects students who choose not to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This protection extends to protect students' participation in school-sponsored organizations.

The application of First Amendment protections to student activities was illuminated by the U.S. District Court in New Haven, CT, in a case regarding a student's refusal to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. There, the court ordered a student's induction into NHS when evidence led the court to believe that the student's nonselection was in retaliation for her refusal to pledge allegiance to the flag (Greenberg, 1997). The case involved a high school senior who refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance because she believed that there was no justice for Black Americans. The Faculty Council responded to claims of retaliation by citing disciplinary issues, but the court concluded that the limited incidents cited by the committee were directly related to the school's policy of sending students who refused to recite the pledge to the principal's office. The court cited the student's exemplary record and school involvement, and noted that prior to her nonselection, neither she nor her parents were ever informed of any problems with her conduct. The court concluded that the concerns cited by the committee were pretextual and that the student's nonselection was based on her refusal to recite the pledge.

Plaintiffs, however, do not always find such success. In *Dangler v. Yorktown*, the plaintiff claimed that he was denied membership in NHS in retaliation for his father's outspoken criticism of the school. The court rejected the claim when the plaintiff was unable to provide evidence that the father's comments were part of the Faculty Council's consideration after the Council provided other reasons for his nonselection. Selection, discipline, and dismissal should never be used to suppress students' constitutional rights or to retaliate for the exercise of those rights. The best defense against false claims of retaliation is to have well-defined procedures and criteria for selection and to be willing and able to provide reasonable, constitutional explanations for nonselection.

## Special Education

Students with disabilities may not, and should not, be excluded from consideration because of their disability; neither must they be given an unfair advantage. When a student meets NHS standards in every way except that prevented by a disability, they should not be disqualified from con-

sideration for honorary membership (Article VIII, Section 3, of the NHS Constitution). As the NHS Handbook explains, honorary membership is available to students who represent the ideals of NHS but who are disqualified from consideration through no fault of their own.

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) investigated a parent's claim that his son was denied induction into NHS on the basis of his disability (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). At the start of the selection process, the parent submitted a letter to the Faculty Council explaining that his son was being treated for "abnormalities in the thoracic spine" and, as a result, his activities would be limited. After reviewing the student's activities and teacher surveys, the Faculty Council elected not to offer him membership. The student was given a letter from the adviser congratulating him on his scholastic accomplishments, but informing him that he did not meet all of the standards for selection.

In response to inquiries by the father, the principal interviewed members of the Faculty Council and relayed to the father the student's failure to satisfy the leadership and service requirements. After further inquiry, the father was informed that his son "refused to participate in any class discussions, would not sit in the circle for seminar discussion, and would not make any oral presentations." It was also explained that the student was absent from club meetings without providing reasons and had listed membership in the Chess Club though he had attended only one meeting. The OCR interviewed school officials and concluded that the Faculty Council did not consider the student's disability during the selection process and did not even realize his condition until they received the father's letter. In addition, the Faculty Council considered the student for honorary membership, but found that he did not meet the service, leadership, and character criteria. The father claimed that his son was unable to meet the NHS criteria because of his disability, but he was unable to provide OCR with a list of "relevant activities that the student was unable to perform that would satisfy the NHS criteria." Therefore, the OCR concluded that the student was not denied membership on the basis of his disability. The OCR did ask the school officials to include a nondiscrimination disclaimer<sup>3</sup> in letters to parents to inform them that the process did not involve discrimination. Schools should include the nondiscrimination disclaimer in all letters regarding NHS and may consider honorary membership for students whose disability prevents them from satisfying the standards for selection despite the student's representation of the virtues advanced by NHS.

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## Gender

Throughout the history of NHS, females have generally been offered membership in NHS at a higher rate than males. This sometimes gives rise to parent complaints of gender discrimination against boys, but looking at the criteria for selection should quickly quiet such claims. The factors that guide the NHS selection process are gender neutral. The difference in eligibility rates may be explained by differences in the pace of adolescent development between boys and girls, by different social norms and related peer pressure, or by other gender differences during adolescence. Schools must avoid considering gender or using gender-biased factors when considering selection, and all students—regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity—should be held to the same standards for scholarship, leadership, character, and service.

## Pregnancy

Schools must be especially careful to avoid any inadvertent gender bias when considering character. It has been clearly decided that while premarital sex may be considered a character deficiency, schools that choose to consider it should do so very carefully if at all. Pregnancy is the most easily accessible evidence of premarital sex, but to use pregnancy as a measure without also making efforts to penalize paternity outside of marriage creates a gender bias against female students. Courts have consistently upheld this rule. In Arizona, a U.S. District Court determined that a pregnant female student was not admitted into NHS because she was pregnant while a male student who was an unwed father was admitted. Finding this to violate Title IX, the court ordered that the NHS induction ceremony not take place without the student. The school authorities then canceled the entire induction ceremony to avoid admitting her; subsequently, holding that the school acted in bad faith, the court ordered the school to pay the plaintiff's attorneys' fees (Schweitzer, 1999).

In another case, a high school junior with a GPA well above the locally required 3.5 was not selected for NHS due to pregnancy. Finishing her junior year with a 3.9 GPA, her scholarship in the classroom, including two Advanced Placement classes, was exemplary. She was also very active in school and community activities. The student became pregnant in the fall of 1997. Subsequently, she and another pregnant student whose GPA qualified her for consideration were not offered membership in NHS. The students brought a Title IX action against the school district. Finding that the students' nonselection was based on their pregnancy, the Federal District Court of Kentucky ordered the

NHS chapter to admit the students on a preliminary basis until a final judgment by the court could be made regarding selection. However, the parties settled their suit before a final judgment was made by the court. The court held that premarital sex was a legitimate issue of character, but that using pregnancy as a proxy when paternity was not considered was a violation of Title IX (Chipman v. Grant County School District, 1998). The NHS Handbook does not encourage chapters to consider pregnancy when evaluating character, but leaves the question of values to local chapters. The courts have made it clear that if chapters wish to consider premarital sex against students' character, then there must be enforcement for males as well as females.

## Procedure: It's The Journey, Not The Destination That Counts

Courts are generally reluctant to intervene in school matters when intervention means second-guessing the evaluations of professional educators (Schweitzer, 1999). However, courts are more likely to intervene when the procedure used is challenged. Therefore, the three most important legal considerations for selective school organizations are procedure, procedure, and procedure.

As with most selective activities, induction into NHS is a privilege, not a right, and as such does not warrant due process. However, students and parents will expect, and should receive, fair treatment. Fair treatment can be achieved through the thoughtful creation and professional execution of procedures designed to ensure fairness. Once a student becomes a member, the issue of fairness becomes one of constitutional importance; after a student is inducted, he or she is entitled to due process should his or her membership become jeopardized. Both during and after the selection process, transparency and clarity are central to the integrity of the process. Access to the procedures allows parents and students to understand the reasons for nonselection and helps keep the selection process honest.

The NHS Constitution and NHS Handbook provide certain procedures for the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members that must be followed by every chapter. The NHS Handbook also provides guidance regarding possible additional procedures. The principal, adviser, and Faculty Council should read these materials carefully and conform their practices to the NHS Constitution.

## Information Forms

A simple but extremely important step that chapters should

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take to prevent complications is a matter of terminology. The term “application” can carry with it many complex legal implications that are inappropriate in the context of NHS membership. To avoid binding themselves to unnecessary restraints, chapters should more accurately identify the information provided by students being considered by using the term “information forms.”

## Teacher Evaluations

Courts have consistently upheld the professional use of teacher evaluations in the selection process. A U.S. district court in Arkansas has held that teacher evaluations, including anonymous evaluations, do not violate the U.S. Constitution (Bull v. Dardanelle, 1990; Price v. Young, 1983). In states where anonymous evaluations pass judicial scrutiny, courts will generally defer to the discretion of school officials. Because anonymous evaluations raise questions about the integrity of the selection process and may make explaining selection decisions more difficult, the NHS Handbook prohibits their use. Moreover, in states such as Texas, by law, evaluations may not be anonymous. The Texas Commissioner of Education ruled in 2002 that because anonymous evaluations prevent parents from receiving full information regarding their child’s activities—which they are entitled to by the Texas Education Code—such evaluations are in violation of the Code and therefore not allowed (Byard v. Clear Creek Independent School District, 2002).

## Information: Revelation Breeds Resolution

NHS is not a secret society. Its selection process should be publicized. Under the NHS Constitution, the selection process must be published and available to parents, students, and faculty members. To the greatest extent possible, the criteria and process for selection should be printed in the student handbook. In addition, a description of NHS, its standards, and the selection process should be included in school newsletters, newspapers, or other publications that are available to schools and can reach interested parents and students. The more informed parents and students are about the expectations, the less surprising the results should be.

Though in many states it is not legally required, fairness and professionalism requires, and NHS encourages, chapters to provide students and their parents with reasons for nonselection when requested. By providing students with explanations, NHS may facilitate students’ improvement in areas where they fail to meet criteria and help to improve their chances for selection in the future. Disclosure also protects

the integrity of the decision by demonstrating valid reasons for nonselection. By responding to requests for explanation by students and their parents, schools can assuage concerns of discrimination and capriciousness. With few exceptions, federal law does not mandate explanation, but many states do. For example, both New York and New Jersey have policies that require school officials to provide reasons for students’ nonselection when parents request them. Faculty Councils and principals should determine what level of information to disclose in accordance with state and local laws and their chapter bylaws. It can be as simple as telling the student and parent which of the four criteria was not met, or more substantive information may be shared. Here again, it is important that their decision be consistently applied.

## Writing: If You Write it, Do It; And If You Do It, Write It

Often courts look to the governing documents of NHS to determine the responsibilities of the adviser, Faculty Council, and principal. Therefore, when chapters document their procedures they are binding themselves to their own expectations. For example, in Warren v. National Association of Secondary School Principals (1974), a teacher caught a student drinking outside of school and led the Faculty Council to dismiss the student from NHS. However, the Faculty Council did not follow the procedures outlined in the NHS Constitution and in their own chapter bylaws. Because of this, the court found that the student’s dismissal violated his right to due process. Thus, schools should be deliberate when establishing and changing bylaws, because what is written will often bind them.

The binding nature of NHS documents might lead some to consider putting very little of their procedure in writing. Though writing may at times constrain the chapter, it also serves as one of the chapter’s greatest protectors. Given that courts generally avoid questioning the judgment and discretion of school officials, the bulk of courts’ reviews are concentrated on whether or not the school followed procedures. Just as courts look to NHS documents for guidance as to what should have been done when they are not followed, they also may look to the documents as the rule of law that the chapter must follow. In such cases, if the chapter follows its own procedures, and the procedures are fundamentally fair, then the court will not intervene. Further, having clear procedures may legitimize decisions and avoid the actualization or appearance of capricious and arbitrary decision making.

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## Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), governs the handling of education records. FERPA entitles students and their parents access to most school records and requires schools to maintain the confidentiality of student information in these records. However, in most cases, NHS records—such as teacher evaluations and Faculty Council notes—are not, and should not be, education records as contemplated by the federal law. The Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has ruled that NHS documents that are not made part of the permanent school record are not covered by FERPA (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Therefore, the applicability of FERPA will depend on how and where the records are maintained.

Because NHS records generally do not, and should not, become permanent school records, FERPA has limited application to the retention of NHS records. The U.S. Department of Education’s Family Policy Compliance Office has held that it is not a violation of FERPA to destroy evaluations if there are no pending requests for review of them at the time of destruction. (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Therefore, so long as state and local laws and policies do not require the school to retain such records, school officials may destroy teacher evaluation forms used in the selection process if there are no pending requests for the documents. If chapters choose to do this, they should maintain a record sufficient enough to assist the principal or other authoritative body in any review of the Faculty Council’s decision. This may include a tally of points if a point system is used or a summary of the areas of deficiency that prevented selection. It also may be worthwhile for schools to put a time frame on appeals. For example, if no appeal is filed within a reasonable time after notice of nonselection, then the school may destroy documents used in the selection process. Students and parents should be informed of such a policy before selection decisions are made.

While FERPA does not necessarily protect documents accumulated in the selection process, state laws and local school system policy requiring record retention and disclosure vary. For example, Texas law considers NHS records, including evaluations, as education records; therefore, NHS records must be retained by the school (Texas Attorney Gen. OR 90-244, 1990). In Texas, parents may even have access to notes that members of the faculty write to themselves about a parent or student. In *Lett v. Klein* (1996), the school system was ordered to deliver to a father a teacher’s notes regarding complaints concerning his child’s grade. Texas is not the norm, but principals and Faculty Councils should consult

state law and local policy to determine how to handle records.

## Due Process For Discipline and Dismissal

The NHS Constitution gives the chapter the power to discipline and dismiss members for failing to maintain the standards of conduct required for membership in NHS. Unlike selection, discipline and dismissal require at least minimal due process. The NHS Constitution provides members due process by requiring that members receive notice of dismissal proceedings and an opportunity to be heard prior to the Faculty Council’s vote on the case in question. While many of the rights associated with criminal or even civil due process do not apply to the discipline or dismissal of members<sup>4</sup>, the Faculty Council must exercise basic elements of fairness that include: written notice of the reasons for the proposed action; time to prepare an explanation of any mitigating circumstances; and an opportunity to present that explanation to the Faculty Council. Written notice of a final decision to dismiss should be sent to the student or his or her parent, and to the principal. After being dismissed, a student may appeal the decision first to the principal and thereafter under the same rules pertaining to any other disciplinary action used in the school district.

Dismissal from NHS is never automatic. Even if a student falls below the criteria for selection, dismissal does not automatically follow. The right to a hearing, as outlined in Article X, Section 4, of the NHS Constitution, must be applied. Once dismissed, a former member may never be reconsidered for admission. It is important to remember, however, that National Junior Honor Society members do not automatically become NHS members. Thus, the Faculty Council may elect to not select a student despite his or her membership in NJHS; in such a case, the student would remain eligible for future admission into NHS.

The adviser should periodically review the standing of members for compliance with NHS standards. Any member who falls below the standards should be warned in writing of the nature of the violation and the possible consequences of nonimprovement. If a student’s behavior is deteriorating, advisers are encouraged to inform students of their concerns and allow them time to improve. However, a single infraction, if serious, may warrant consideration of dismissal without providing an opportunity for improvement. The NHS Constitution in no way prevents a chapter from dismissing a student after a single infraction when the student’s behavior is a gross violation of NHS standards, school rules, or the law. To be fair, advisers should make students aware of what



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is expected of them. This is best achieved by discussing expectations with members and informing members' parents, in writing, of the expectations and obligations placed on members.

For minor offenses, the adviser or Faculty Council may choose to discipline a member rather than pursue dismissal. Discipline measures may include suspension from NHS activities or restriction of member privileges. For example, members may be denied the privilege of wearing the NHS cord at graduation. Certain NHS benefits may not be denied to members even if they are not in good standing. For example, NHS members must be recognized at graduation as members of NHS and include NHS membership on applications and résumés. These benefits may only be revoked by a member's dismissal or the member's resignation. 🖨

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) guidelines parallel those of NHS. For simplicity, this memo references only NHS.

<sup>2</sup>For NJHS, review is limited to the years during which the student was a middle school student.

<sup>3</sup>Sample nondiscrimination disclaimer: NHS maintains policies and practices that are designed to prevent discrimination against any qualified candidate on the basis of race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, and disability. This policy of nondiscrimination applies to all practices, including the selection, discipline, and dismissal of members.

<sup>4</sup>For example, students do not have the right to cross-examine witnesses or to a public hearing.

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## Appendix E: Model Selection Process Description for Student Handbooks

**Question:** What should our school's student handbook say about the NHS selection process?

**Answer:** The national constitution (Article IX, Section 4) indicates that, "A description of the selection procedure shall be published in an official school publication that is widely available in a timely fashion to all students and parents of the school." This requirement is widely known and can be the cause of unwanted attention if your chapter is not adhering to this guideline. To assist in preparing an effective piece for your handbook, first check to see that your selection process guidelines conform to the national standards. Once confirmed, use the guidelines to prepare an informative piece for your handbook. The following model is offered for your convenience:

The National Honor Society chapter of (insert school name) is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of this prestigious national organization. Membership is open to those students who meet the required standards in four areas of evaluation: scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NHS and have been revised to meet our local chapter needs. Students are selected to be members by a 5-member Faculty Council, appointed by the principal, which bestows this honor upon qualified students on behalf of the faculty of our school each (insert month/months).

Students in the 10th, 11th, or 12th grades are eligible for membership. [Note: Eligibility can be altered according to your local guidelines, thus limiting the year or years of eligibility. See the chapter on selection for clarification.] For the scholarship criterion, a student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale (see previous Note). Those students who meet this criterion are invited to complete a Student Activity Information Form that provides the Faculty Council with information regarding the candidate's leadership and service. A history of leadership experiences and participation in school or community service is also required. [Note: Schools with specific minimal requirements for leadership or service, e.g., "participation in at least two student activity organizations each year" or "10 hours of documented community service," should include such specific requirements based on the rubrics used by the selection committee in reaching their decisions.]

To evaluate a candidate's character, the Faculty Council uses two forms of input. First, school disciplinary records are reviewed. Second, members of the faculty are solicited for input regarding their professional reflections on a candidate's service activities, character, and leadership. [Note: These evaluations from the faculty are not required and are options for chapters at the local level.] These forms and the Student Activity Information Forms are carefully reviewed by the Faculty Council to determine membership. A majority vote of the Council is necessary for selection. Candidates are notified regarding selection or nonselection according to a predetermined schedule.

Following notification, a formal induction ceremony is held at the school to recognize all the newly selected members. Once inducted, new members are required to maintain the same level of performance (or better) in all four criteria that led to their selection. This obligation includes regular attendance at chapter meetings held (insert duration, e.g., "monthly") during the school year, and participation in the chapter service projects(s). [Insert additional member obligations here if they exist for your chapter.] Students or parents who have questions regarding the selection process or membership obligations can contact the chapter adviser, (insert adviser name here), in Room (insert room number) or by phone at (insert school phone number).

Please review your established procedures carefully and see that the descriptions you provide are accurate. You are encouraged to seek the review of your principal prior to submitting this description for publication. By taking the time to elaborate on your selection process and to provide a general overview of your procedures, you not only live up to the expectations of the national constitution, but also send a strong and complete message to all about the value of NHS on your campus.

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## Appendix F: Sample Student Activity Information Form

### NHS Selection Procedures

(NOTE: THIS IS NOT AN APPLICATION FORM. We encourage local chapters to use this as a template, adding relevant components to reflect their local selection guidelines.)

(Insert Chapter Name) Chapter of the National Honor Society

Directions: Please complete all sections. Type or print all information and submit it by the published deadline. Do not be modest. Every bit of information will be used by the Faculty Council to assist with the fair consideration of your candidacy during the selection process.

Completion and submission of this form does not guarantee selection. Should you have questions about this form, please contact (fill in the appropriate contact information).

### I. Administrative Information

Name

Current grade level:

Other information as required by the local chapter, e.g. homeroom number/teacher, current grade level, student identification number, etc.

**II. Leadership Positions**—List all elected or appointed leadership positions or other positions of responsibility held in school, community, or work activities. Only those positions in which you were responsible for directing or motivating others should be included (e.g., elected officer for the student body, class, or club; committee chairperson; team captain; newspaper editor; work area manager; or other community leader). Please include the name of the adult responsible for supervising your leadership in each position.

Year	Leadership Position	Activity/Organization	Supervising Adult
9*			
10			
11			
12			

\*Include year 9 here and below only if included in the grades found at your school. If ninth grade is part of a middle level school, activities from that year should not be considered for the NHS selection process.)

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**IV. Service Activities** — List service activities in which you have participated. These can be individual or group service projects done either in or out of school [unless your Faculty Council specifically limits service to school activities only]. Generally, service activities are those that are done for or on behalf of others (not including immediate family members) for which no compensation (monetary or otherwise) has been given. Please ask an adult supervisor who can verify your participation in each activity to sign on the appropriate line, and also list the estimated number of hours you invested while performing this service. [Note: If a minimum number of hours or minimum number of projects is required for selection, please identify that information in this paragraph.]

Year	Activity	Hours of Service	Supervising Adult
9*			
10			
11			
12			

**IV. Other Student Activities**—List all other school-based activities (not noted above) in which you have participated in school. Include clubs, teams, musical groups, etc., and any significant accomplishments in each.

Year	Activity	Accomplishments
9*		
10		
11		
12		

**V. Other Community Activities**—List other community activities in which you have participated and note any major accomplishment in each. These should be any activities outside of school in which you participated for the betterment of your community (e.g., religious groups, clubs sponsored outside the school, Boy or Girl Scouts, community art endeavors, etc.). Do not repeat participation already listed above. Please include the name of the adult supervisor of each activity.

Year	Community Activity	Hours	Accomplishments	Supervising Adult
9*				
10				
11				
12				

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**VI. Work Experience, Recognition, and Awards**—Though not a specific criterion for membership, please list below any job experiences, honors, or recognition that you have received that support your candidacy for membership in the Honor Society. Work experience may be paid or volunteer.

Year	Job, Recognition, or Award	Group or Activity	Hours Spent on Job or Activity (if applicable)	Supervising Adult
9*				
10				
11				
12				

## VII. Signatures

I understand that completing and submitting this form does not guarantee selection to the Honor Society. I attest that the information presented here is complete and accurate. If selected, I agree to abide by the standards and guidelines of the chapter and to fulfill all of my membership obligations to the best of my ability.

---

Student Signature

Date

I have read the information provided by my son/daughter on this form and can verify that it is true, accurate, and complete.

---

Parent Signature

Date

---

Parent phone number(s)

We request this so that we can notify you regarding important details.

Return completed form to (insert specific individual/ location to which forms are be returned).

Note: Include the school address and phone number along with instructions on how questions about this form or membership in general can be answered by Honor Society staff/advisers.

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## Appendix G: Sample Faculty Evaluation Form

### NHS Selection for (insert year or semester/year)

The following students have been identified as candidates for selection to our chapter of the honor society. Candidacy begins by meeting our Scholarship criterion of (insert cumulative GPA criterion) which has been met by these students. Each candidate will submit to the Faculty Council a student information sheet, but additional information is being requested from the entire staff to assist in this important selection process. Every staff member is being asked to review, sign, and return this form.

Please carefully review the list of candidates. For each of the three criteria, please use the rating scale provided (1 to 4, where 1 = low/poor, 2 = below average, 3 = good, and 4 = high/outstanding) to evaluate any student with whom you have had professional interaction (i.e., as a teacher, adviser, coach, etc.). Should your rating be poor or below average for any candidate (either a score of 1 or 2), it is necessary for you to provide an additional comment that speaks to the professional rationale for this low rating or examples of the poor performance which led to the rating. Please consider these ratings as seriously as you would any grade entered into your grade book.

Please sign the bottom of the form. In the event you have had no professional interaction with any of these students, please attest to that fact by checking the box at the bottom, signing the form, and returning it.

All forms should be returned to the chapter adviser, (insert adviser name), by (insert deadline). Your cooperation in this important selection process is greatly appreciated.

Candidate's Name	Leadership	Service	Character	Comments (use the back for additional notes)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

I certify that my ratings and comments are sound and based on professional interaction with the candidates.

I certify that I have had no professional interaction with the above-named candidates or choose not to participate in the evaluation process for this year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## Appendix H: Sample Letters on Selection and Nonselection

### Sample Letter to Students Selected for Membership

[Use official chapter or school stationery that contains the school phone number.]

Dear (insert name):

Congratulations! You have been selected for membership in the (insert school name or chapter name) Chapter of the National Honor Society. Your selection was based upon careful consideration of your scholarship, leadership, service, and character by our Faculty Council.

We would like to have you as our guest at a formal induction ceremony at (place) on (date) at (time). Additional information will be provided to all confirmed participants at a later date.

Please return the attached form to the chapter adviser, (insert name), no later than (insert date). If you have any questions, please call (insert name) at the school.

Sincerely,

(chapter president signature)

President, National Honor Society

### Sample Response Form for Selected Members:

Please complete this form and return it to the adviser, (insert name), by (insert submission deadline).

\_\_\_ Yes, I plan to attend the National Honor Society induction ceremony on (insert date) at (time).

\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to become a member, but I cannot attend due to a previous engagement. (If you check this box, please contact the chapter adviser immediately for additional information.)

\_\_\_ No, I will not attend and I do not wish to accept membership at this time.

---

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

---

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Date

### Sample Invitation to Parents

The Principal and Faculty

of

(school name)

are pleased to announce the selection of

(student's name)

for membership in the (name of chapter) Chapter of the National Honor Society.

You are cordially invited to attend the induction ceremony to be held at (location)

on (date)

at (time).

A reception for new members and their parents will follow the ceremony.

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## Sample Letter to New Members Regarding the Responsibilities and Obligations of Membership

Dear New Inductee:

Congratulations! Membership in the National Honor Society is one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a high school student. Our chapter of NHS has worked hard to bring the accomplishments of outstanding students to the attention of parents, teachers, peers, and the community. Our chapter, along with the more than 15,000 chapters in schools across the nation, strive to give practical meaning to the Society's standards of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. These four ideals have been considered as the basis for your selection. No student is inducted simply because of a high academic average. The National Honor Society strives to recognize the total student—one who excels in all of these areas. The standards used for your selection were:

Scholarship—(insert local GPA) cumulative average

Leadership, service, and character—as demonstrated by activities and teacher evaluations.

Membership, however, is more than an honor. It incurs a responsibility and an obligation to demonstrate those outstanding qualities that resulted in your selection. Your membership also carries a responsibility to the chapter. If our chapter to the National Honor Society is to be effective and meaningful, each member must become involved. A list of chapter obligations will be provided to you at the first chapter meeting. We challenge you to live up to your obligations by participating in all of our chapter meetings and projects.

We look forward to your continued success.

Sincerely,

(Principal's signature)  
Principal

(Adviser's signature)  
Chapter Adviser

(Chapter president's signature)  
Chapter President

*Note: It is recommended that a list of all local chapter member responsibilities and obligations be shared annually with members and their parents as well as being available for all candidates to review prior to accepting membership.*



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## Sample Letter to Nonselected Students and/or Parents

Format note: << >> indicates content to be filled in by the local chapter adviser. Use of school or chapter stationery is recommended.

<<Date>>  
<<Student name>>  
<<Student home address>>  
<<City/state/zip>>

Dear <<First name>>,

On behalf of the Faculty Council of our <<NHS>> chapter, I am writing to inform you that after careful consideration, the Faculty Council of the <<chapter or school name>> chapter of the National Honor Society has voted to not select you for membership at this time. This decision was made carefully and came only after a thorough review of your candidacy by the Council. As you know, a candidate must receive a majority vote from the Council for selection. A careful review of your records did not result in that necessary vote.

Though, as a result of your excellent cumulative GPA, you were initially eligible as a candidate, the Council found your efforts in\* the area(s) of <<identify one or more of the remaining criteria as annotated in the list of nonselected students that contains the criterion(a) that each nonselected student did not meet.>> to be below our chapter selection standards.

We understand that this is disappointing news for you. However, we commend you on your successful efforts so far, in particular your academic accomplishments, and encourage you to continue your hard work in hopes that rewards and recognition will continue to come your way in the future.

Should you or your parents have any questions or concerns about this nonselection decision, please feel free to contact <<me/us>> within the next two weeks [or other appropriate and reasonable timeframe] at <<fill in school phone, room number, or other relevant information to facilitate contact being made>>.

Sincerely yours,

<<Adviser signature>>  
<<Adviser name/typed>>

cc: Chapter files  
Parents of <<student name>>

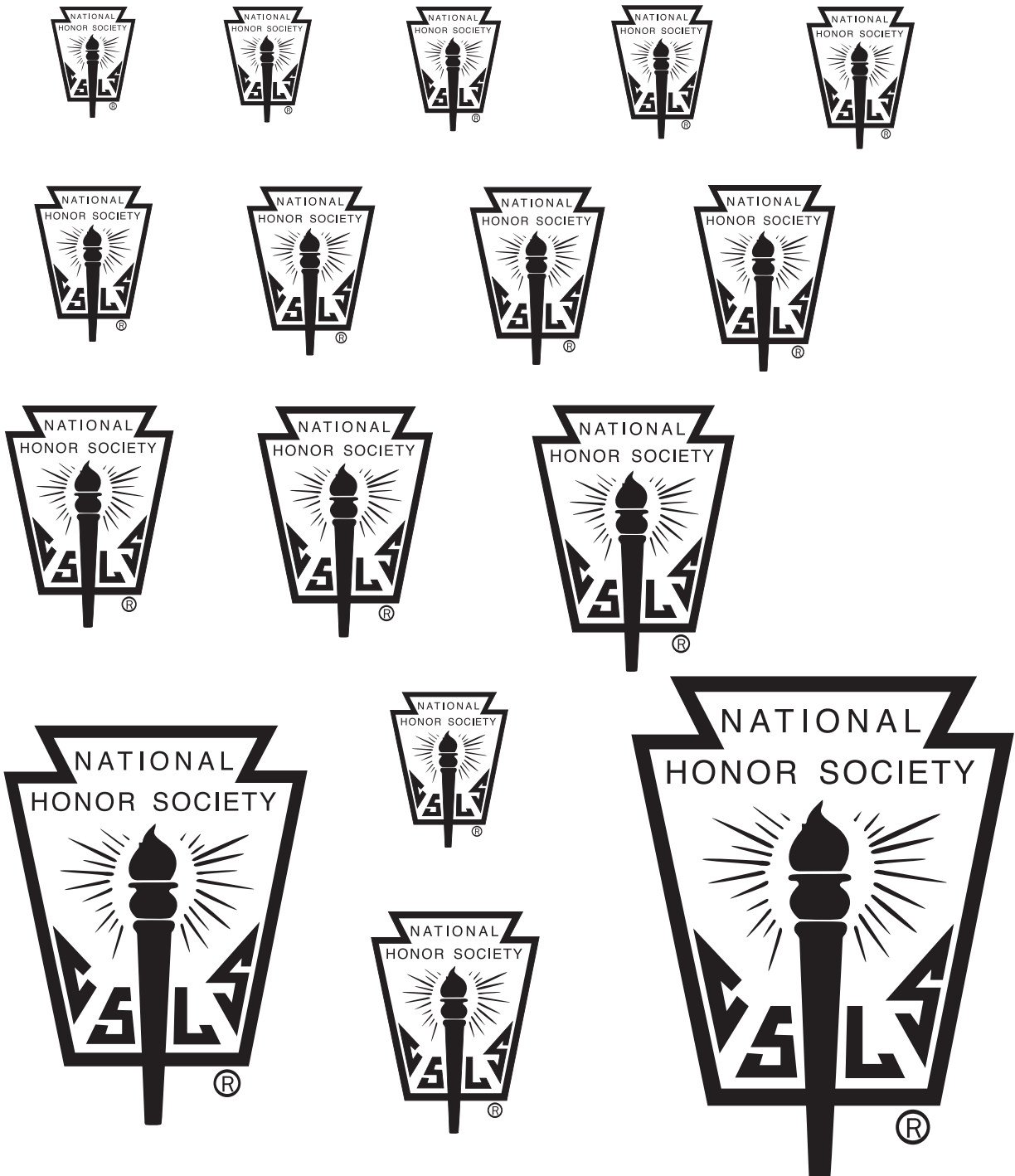
\*Alternative phrasing: "one or more of the remaining selection criteria" [if the chapter cares not to identify the specific criteria in which the candidate was found lacking].

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## Appendix I: Logos (camera-ready)

The National Honor Society (NHS) is proudly sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). To protect the NHS emblem, it is registered with the United States Patent Office. This registration, or trademark, prohibits exploitation by persons or companies attempting to use, manufacture, or distribute the emblem without special authorization from NASSP. All rights to the trademarks and service marks as well as other intellectual property and copyrights relating to NHS are reserved by NASSP.

Please refer to "Official Insignia" in chapter 6 logo usage information.



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## Appendix J: Project Report Form

The national office is interested in the many and varied projects undertaken by chapters across the nation. Use the form below to submit a description of your best project(s) at any time during the school year. Submissions can be used in publications, at conferences, and in developing general information about NHS activities for members. Feel free to copy this form in order to submit multiple ideas.

**Project category (check one):**

Character building    Fundraising    Leadership development    Service    Spirit building    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please print or type the following information:**

Name of project: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description (include the goals, implementation, and results): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Photos (black and white or color prints, slides, or digital images) may be sent in with this sheet or e-mailed separately to [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us). Please put identifying information for the photos on a separate sheet—do not write on the photos!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your name Your title

\_\_\_\_\_  
School name

\_\_\_\_\_  
School address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number E-mail Fax

You can mail this form to NHS and NJHS, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191-1537, fax it to 703-476-5432, or e-mail the content to [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us).

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## Appendix K: Sample Dismissal Hearing Notification Letter

<<Date>>  
<<School name and contact information (or school stationery)>>  
<<Member name>>  
<<Member address>>  
<<City/state/zip>>

Dear <<insert student's first name>>:

This is to notify you and your parents that you have fallen below the standards for <<identify the criterion or criteria in which the student has fallen below standard>> as set forth in the constitution of NHS, Article VIII, Section 1, and Article X, Section 2. [If additional charges are being brought against the student, e.g., violating school rules or codes of conduct, they should also be listed in this paragraph.

Specifically, <<Outline the nature of the charges referenced in the first paragraph. This should be sufficient to indicate to the readers that there is professional substantiation for the charges being brought against the student, e.g., reference to disciplinary actions by the school, reports provided by teachers, etc.>>

The nature of your conduct warrants consideration for dismissal from the National Honor Society. As called for in Article X, Section 4, of the national constitution, a written notification and hearing are called for and must be conducted by the Faculty Council. Furthermore, the NHS handbook states that, "in the case of a flagrant violation of school rules or the law, a warning is not required for dismissal, but a hearing will still be held. The hearing is identified in the constitution as a right of membership, is guaranteed as due process as identified by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and requires the chapter to notify the member of the action being contemplated, the reasons for the action, the date and time of the hearing, and the opportunity for the member to respond either in writing or orally."

Your hearing will be conducted <<day and date>> at <<insert time>> in <<location of the meeting>>. A parent/guardian may be present with you, but the primary focus of the hearing is to allow you to present your case before the Council.

If you wish to explain your case in writing, you should present the written statement by <<deadline date>> to <<chapter adviser and place where statement should be submitted>>. The letter will be considered in lieu of the face-to-face hearing and will fulfill the chapter's obligation outlined in Article X, Section 4.

Finally, you and your parents are requested to sign below to signify you have reviewed the contents of this letter, and return it to the NHS adviser by "insert date". If you have questions regarding the contents of this notification letter, please consult with the chapter adviser immediately.

Sincerely,  
<<Adviser name or, as an alternative, the principal's name>>

Please sign below and return to the chapter adviser.  
We have reviewed and understand the content of this notification.

---

Student Signature

Student Name

Date

---

Parent Signature

Parent Name

Date

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## Sample Notification of Dismissal Letter

<<Date>>  
<<School name and contact information (or school stationery)>>  
<<Member name>>  
<<Member address>>  
<<City/state/zip>>

Dear <<student's first name>>:

After careful review of the facts involved in your case, and taking into consideration the content of the information provided by you at the recent hearing, the Faculty Council of the [insert chapter or school name] Chapter of NHS regrets to inform you that you are being dismissed from the chapter at this time.

As a consequence of this decision, please return your membership card, certificate, and member pin (or relevant insignia items) to the chapter adviser within the next two weeks. In addition, we must inform you that members who are dismissed are never again allowed to become members of the National Honor Society nor make claims to membership in the future.

Should you wish to appeal this decision of the Faculty Council, you can do so by contacting the school principal, << principal's name>>, within the next two weeks [or alternative time limit established to be fair and appropriate by local school personnel] to set up an appointment to discuss your position.

Sincerely yours,

<<Adviser signature>>  
<<Adviser name>>

cc: Principal  
Chapter files

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## Appendix L: Frequently Asked Questions

Each FAQ answer includes a reference at the end to additional information on the topic at hand. Readers are warned not to take responses, or portions thereof, out of context and to review the additional information referenced prior to rendering an opinion or raising a concern regarding local chapter policies.

### 1. How does a school establish a chapter of the National Honor Society?

Any secondary school, public or private, that is accredited by its state department of education or by an accrediting agency approved by the National Council may apply to the national office for a charter. After the submission of a completed application form and payment of the chartering fee, and if the charter is granted, the new chapter is placed in the database of official chapters of the Society. The chapter is then expected to follow the national constitution, formulate its own bylaws, submit an annual report, and maintain annual affiliation with the national office. (See Chapter 3, Establish a Chapter)

### 2. What is the basis of NHS membership?

Membership is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors who have attended the school for the equivalent of one semester (or as accepted by the local Faculty Council per powers granted in Article IX, Section 1) and who have a cumulative GPA of 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale), or the equivalent standard of excellence. Individual schools may require a higher cumulative GPA and also designate the eligible grade levels of members. Students who meet the attendance and scholastic requirements are then evaluated by the Faculty Council on the basis of leadership, service, and character. Once selected and inducted, members must maintain these standards. (See Chapter 4.)

### 3. Where is the national office of the National Honor Society?

The national office is located at the NASSP national headquarters, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 20191-1537; Phone: 703-860-0200; Fax: 703-476-5432; E-mail: [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us); Web site: [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). All NHS correspondence should be sent via one of these contacts.

### 4. What can the national office do for chapters and state organizations?

The national office is responsible for providing all National Honor Society materials, including *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, *The Leadership Store* (the official

insignia catalog), the annual report form, and the materials for the National Honor Society scholarship. It also helps state associations arrange conferences and workshops. The national office also administers the NHS and NJHS national conference that includes the NHS Scholars' Bowl™ competition. The national office collects and studies the annual reports, answers questions about the Society's operation, and provides assistance to chapters. Publications on issues related to NHS and student activities are provided to chapters by the national office along with regular updates as they appear in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and on the Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). (See the appendices.)

### 5. Who is the final authority on chapter affairs such as selection, projects, disciplinary action, etc.?

On a day-to-day basis, the adviser is responsible for the operation of the chapter. If there is a question that must be resolved at the local school level, the principal will serve as the arbiter. However, as stated in Article V, Section 1, of the constitution, the principal has the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter and has the final say in such matters, except where a dismissal case has been appealed beyond the principal's office through normal school procedures. (See Chapter 3, Personnel.)

### 6. Who is the national secretary of the National Honor Society?

The NASSP director of student activities is the national secretary of NHS.

### 7. Are all NHS members automatically eligible for the NHS scholarship?

Only NHS members who are seniors in good standing with the chapter are eligible to compete at the school level to become one of the two nominees that every chapter can submit. Local school personnel determine their own method of identifying the two nominees from the chapter. The nomination forms for this program are evaluated by a national scholarship board on the basis of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. Awards are given to students in all 50 states, Washington, DC, and to chapters found in U.S. territories and overseas. Consequently, nominees only compete with other students from their same state or locale. Only chapters in schools that are actively affiliated with the national office receive the scholarship nomination forms. (See Chapter 8.)

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## 8. How can chapters learn what other chapters are doing?

The national conference, state conferences, and LEAD conferences provide good opportunities for sharing ideas and networking. Also, regular columns of NHS news and Q&As appear in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine. Chapters also share ideas on the message boards and the section of the Web site, *www.nhs.us*, devoted to sharing ideas.

## 9. If a student was a member of NJHS, is that individual automatically eligible for NHS?

No. NJHS and NHS are separate Honor Societies, both at the local and national level. Members of NJHS must be selected for membership in NHS in the same manner as all other candidates at the school. Similarly, disciplinary actions taken against an NJHS member should not affect that student's candidacy for NHS membership. (See Chapter 3, Membership.)

## 10. What explanation is owed to nonselected students?

Each chapter determines the appropriate method of notifying candidates who do not meet the chapter's standards for selection. The student can be sent a written note saying he or she was not selected and no further explanation is generally required. On the other hand, nothing prevents a local chapter from discussing the circumstances that led to a candidate's nonselection. Students who are not selected for membership should be informed as to whom they can contact if they have questions regarding the decision. Local chapters should check with local and state authorities to determine if other requirements exist that would dictate steps that must be taken by their chapter in this regard.

There is no right to membership, it is a privilege bestowed upon a student by the faculty of the school. However, some may disagree with the decision of the Faculty Council and need to have the selection procedure explained. Chapter advisers are encouraged to become familiar with the sections of the handbook that deal with the selection process and the nonselection issues. (See Chapter 4 and appendices.)

## 11. Can quotas or percentages be used to limit chapter size?

No. As stated in the handbook, quotas or percentages may not be set to limit membership or chapter size. If it is deter-

mined that the size of the chapter is unworkable, then the cumulative GPA or other standards can be raised. (See Chapter 4.)

## 12. Does a chapter have to have its own set of bylaws?

Yes. Article XVII of the constitution requires written bylaws for each local chapter. Written bylaws help individuals understand what is expected of them and help avoid problems and misunderstandings. All chapter bylaws are expected to conform to the national constitution of NHS. If you have a question about your bylaws, submit them to the national office for review. (See Chapter 3.)

## 13. Can grades earned in AP or International Baccalaureate classes be weighted when calculating the cumulative GPA?

Weighted grades are permitted only when they are figured in to the method of calculating the cumulative GPA by the school. If weighting is used, this should be specifically referenced in the local selection procedure guidelines as required by Article IX, Section 4 of the constitution. Local chapters should take steps to ensure that the grades for all candidates are considered carefully and in a fair manner. It is generally recommended that the GPA, as calculated for official school purposes such as report cards and transcripts, be used to determine scholastic eligibility for candidacy. (See Chapter 4.)

## 14. How do I obtain membership pins and other items to support and motivate the members of our chapter?

Each chapter is sent annually *The Leadership Store* catalog of products and services. An updated version can be found on the Web site, *www.nhs.us*. Orders are placed with the sales office. For all orders, schools must provide the school affiliation number. Only advisers and principals may place orders for NHS insignia items for the chapter. (See Chapters 4 and 9.)

## 15. How can we start a state association for NHS?

Guidelines for starting a state association can be found in the appendices as well as on the NHS Web site. Local chapters can join together to assure each other of their intent and then notify the national office. The state group should seek approval from the state principals association (contacts can be provided by the national office) prior to formally establishing an association. Once approved, the

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new state Honor Society organization should proceed with developing bylaws that identify the purposes, administrative structure, and functions of the new organization. With these elements in place, meetings, workshops, and conferences can be set up to meet the needs of the state members. (See appendices.)

## **16. How do we dismiss a member from the chapter?**

Before proceeding with any dismissal, advisers should review Article X of the national constitution and the segments of the handbook that refer to dismissal. Appropriate notice must be provided and a hearing must be scheduled for the member to present his or her case prior to the vote of the Faculty Council. Once the member is given notice and the opportunity to respond to the charges, the Faculty Council may vote to dismiss a member. (See Chapter 7.)

## **17. Do I have to provide a copy of our local selection process to a student or parent who requests this information?**

Yes. All chapters must have their selection process published and available for review. NHS is not a secret organization and the constitution speaks clearly about making this information available in a timely fashion. It is recommended that schools include this information in the student handbook and that they also have separate sheets conveying all relevant information about the selection process, and that these be kept on hand in the school office to field such requests in a timely manner.

## **18. Can an NJHS chapter be set up in a high school with grades 9–12?**

No. The constitution does not allow for this circumstance (see Article IV and Chapter 3). Only in mixed-level schools (K–12, 6–12, etc.) can two chapters coexist on one campus. Because the constitution indicates that ninth graders cannot be members of NHS, students coming from a middle level school (6–8) with an NJHS chapter will have one year when they will not be active in NHS or NJHS. In the opinion of the National Council, ninth graders need to focus on making a smooth transition from the middle level to high school, establishing a firm academic foundation and “learning the ropes,” and should not be encumbered with the pressures of selection procedures. This is a time, however, to orient the ninth graders to the criteria for membership in NHS and encourage their involvement in activities that would assist their

attaining membership once they reach the appropriate grade. (See Chapter 3.)

## **19. Can faculty evaluations be used in the selection process?**

Yes. The handbook provides some commentary on their use. Under no circumstances should these evaluations be considered a vote of the faculty. In addition, faculty members should sign all evaluations submitted and base their evaluations on sound professional judgments of the candidates. These evaluations serve to supplement the Student Activity Information Forms and to assist the Faculty Council in making the best decisions regarding membership. (See Chapter 4.)

## **20. How can NHS members obtain leadership training?**

At least two main opportunities exist. Students and advisers can register to attend the NHS and NJHS national conference held each fall or the LEAD conferences in the spring where specific leadership training takes place. Some state associations also provide conferences and workshops for training student leaders.

## **21. Must all chapters perform service?**

Yes. Article XIV of the national constitution mandates service projects as one of the main chapter activities each year. In addition, members must participate in individual service projects to continue to maintain their service criterion. Since its beginning, NHS has supported the participation in service projects as a way for students to learn the value of service, provide needed resources for the school or community, help the school maintain a positive image in the community, and to reinforce the curriculum through involvement. (See Chapter 6.)

## **22. What are the basic necessities of any NHS chapter?**

See the appendices for an article that covers this concern.

## **23. Where can chapter advisers obtain training?**

All activity advisers should receive professional development training in all of their areas of assigned responsibility. To support this position, the national office makes a variety of experiences available. Advisers can attend the NHS and NJHS national conference, LEAD conferences, or state conferences for special adviser training each year. Many local



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school districts provide annual training sessions for advisers in the schools within their district as well. For those advisers unable to attend these meetings, resources are also found in the publications section of the national catalog and on the Web site. Similarly, information on all professional development opportunities provided by the national office is presented in the annual Adviser Updates, in *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, and in the Adviser Zone found on the NHS Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

## **24. What steps should a chapter take if it is going to be disbanded due to school consolidation or for some other reason?**

The membership department of the national office should be notified of this situation. See contact information at the end of this section.

## **25. How do I get more information or assistance at the local, state, or national level regarding policies and procedures of the Honor Society?**

More information can be found through the following sources:

- NHS handbook. When in doubt, start at the source. Herein, you'll find a wealth of information regarding various aspects of NHS.
- Local chapter bylaws. Your locally developed guidelines may provide you some assistance, even if you aren't currently aware of their content. Should you find that there are no local bylaws, it is time to write them! Consult your national handbook for some guidelines on creating bylaws.
- Other advisers of chapters in the area. There is a veritable wealth of information awaiting your call in the form of advisers from chapters at nearby schools. Though their chapter procedures may not mirror yours, there certainly is information that you can glean from their

experiences. Give them a call and then keep a list of this valuable local network.

- Call your state honor society organization. More than 20 states now have active NHS organizations. The state organization may be able to put you in contact with an expert nearby who can assist you.
- Contact the national office. Our staff is ready to work with you to assist in clarifying the procedures and policies of NHS. With more than 20,000 chapters to tend, we encourage you to exhaust some of your local resources prior to calling. But don't let trouble brew—give us a call. Matters that don't need immediate attention can be sent in writing to the NHS national office at the address below.
- Consult the NHS and NJHS Web sites. Access to the NHS constitution as well as previous sets of questions and answers from *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine and relevant excerpts from this handbook will become a regular component of the sites. We hope you will begin to check in regularly online. 🌟

Contact us!

Policy and Programs  
National Honor Society  
1904 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191-1537  
Phone: 703-860-0200  
Fax: 703-476-5432  
E-mail: [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us)  
Web site: [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us)

Sales Department  
Phone: 866-647-7253

Membership Department  
Phone: 800-253-7746, press "4"

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## Appendix M: Products and Services for NHS Members and Chapters

### Sales Products and Services for NHS Members and Chapters

The following is a partial list of the products and services available for NHS members and advisers as found in the annual catalog, *The Leadership Store*, sent to all advisers at the beginning of the school year. The catalog is also found on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us). Please see the catalog for order numbers, prices, and a complete set of ordering instructions and forms.

#### Insignia

- NHS membership pins\*
- Year guards for pins
- Officer guards for pins
- Officer symbols
- Tie tack/lapel pin
- Necklace\*
- Charms\*

\*Also available as fine jewelry items in precious metals.

#### Other Insignia Items

- Membership certificates
- Membership cards
- NHS diploma seals
- Stoles, honor cords, and insignia patch
- Bumper sticker
- NHS gavel
- Banquet kits
- Stationery packets
- Charter replacements
- Chapter banner
- Engravable plaques
- Glass-front plaques for chapter membership roster

#### Clothing

- Sweatshirts
- Polo shirts with embroidered logo
- T-shirts
- Customized shirts

#### Services

- Publications
- NHS handbook
- *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine
- Annual report forms
- *The Leadership Store*
- Adviser updates\*

\*Check the national Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us), Adviser Zone

#### Meetings and Conferences

- National conference
- LEAD conferences
- Additional meetings sponsored by state associations

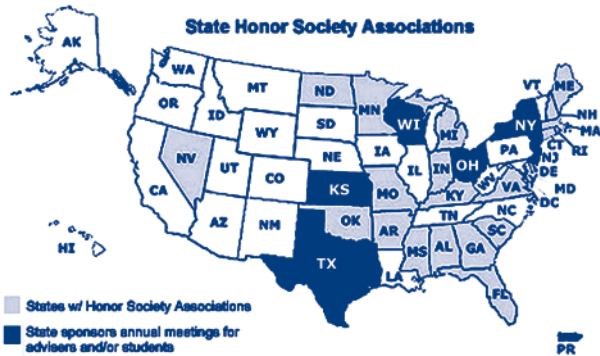
#### Scholarships and Awards

- NHS National Scholarship
- Principal's Leadership Awards
- Prudential Spirit of Community Awards
- Outstanding Service Project Awards
- Rynearson Adviser of the Year Award

For a complete list of benefits and services provided by the national office, please refer to the membership section of our Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us).

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## Appendix N: State NHS Associations



### Forming a State Association

A long-term goal of the national office is to see the formation of a state Honor Society organization in every state. To this end, the staff of the national office regularly supports efforts by individual chapters or state principals' associations in organizing state meetings to get the process underway. Individuals in states not currently offering state associations can pursue the formation of a state association by contacting the national office and using the following guidelines:

- **Develop it.** Determine the level of interest in forming a state organization. Find the names of schools and advisers in various parts of your state and develop a list of potential supporters for this cause. The national office can provide you with mailing labels or a computer printout of all of the NHS and NJHS chapters in your state—just call the national office for details.
- **Organize it.** Plan an organizational meeting, allowing plenty of time for people to get this on their agenda and to attend. Your school or organization might like to host such a meeting to save expenses. At this meeting, you should consider some or all of the following concerns:
  1. What do you want this organization to do? How will it further the purposes of NHS and NJHS (as stated in the national constitutions)?
  2. Who should belong? NHS and NJHS? Advisers and students? How will they become members? What will be required of members? Dues?
  3. What activities would you like to conduct? start with a new event that you do well, then consider expanding the services as the organization matures.
  4. How will the group be organized? What officers will there be? Who will compose the constitution and bylaws? Who will be the supervisor/director of the association, serving as the central contact, budget

developer/coordinator, membership coordinator, etc.?

5. Will the group meet on an annual basis? When?
  6. Who will contact the state principals' organization to pursue the support and recognition suggested by the national office guidelines? When will this meeting take place to forge the details of the support?
  7. Is this doable? Have we bitten off more than we can chew?
- **Formalize it.** Once you have the answers to the questions above, each state is required to develop an agreement between the new NHS and NJHS association that bears the support or acknowledgement of the state principals' association. Contact the national office to obtain a copy of the appropriate form.
  - **Publicize it.** Assuming you've followed all of the prescribed steps above, develop a plan for getting the word out—a public relations and marketing plan—to all potential member schools. Use your best organizational efforts to see that people in chapters throughout your state can recognize the value and importance of your new organization. Good luck!

For more details or assistance, contact the national office of NHS and NJHS at NASSP, 1904 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191; Phone: 703-860-0200; Fax: 703-476-5432; E-mail: [nhs@nhs.us](mailto:nhs@nhs.us).

### Benefits of Membership in State Associations

The national office supports the development and ongoing activities of all state Honor Society organizations. Participation in state associations adds value to membership in NHS and reinforces the purposes of the organization for all involved. In addition, state groups provide helpful networks of student leaders and activities advisers through which ideas are shared, problems are solved, and goals are achieved.

Existing state Honor Society groups conduct a variety of activities that can include:

- State conventions
- State officer training workshops
- Leadership workshops for students and advisers
- Newsletters to students and advisers
- Scholarship opportunities
- Statewide service projects
- State-sponsored delegations to the national conference and much more.

State associations can provide a variety of activities for their members. There are no mandatory activities

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that the national office imposes on state associations, but often the most meaningful elements include the sponsoring of a state service project through which all state chapters (through activities or fundraising) are involved in supporting a charity or group selected each year by the association's leadership. These state service projects can be submitted each year in the state service award competition sponsored by the national office, which recognizes the achievements of an outstanding state association each year. This award is named for Ardis Kyker, who actively served as the state director in Minnesota for many years.

Although not required for any chapter affiliated with the national organization, membership in the state association is strongly encouraged for all chapters in those states currently sponsoring an organization.

## Organizing State and District Conferences

The most common feature of all state Honor Society organizations is an annual state meeting. Those who wish to organize a state or district conference can contact the national office of the National Honor Society for individual assistance. However, the following are some general considerations to review as you plan and implement your next state meeting. Good conferences include:

- A purpose and theme developed around a contemporary issue
- A well-organized schedule
- Quality presentations by speakers or panels
- Leadership training sessions
- Student-led discussion sessions on school and chapter issues
- Entertainment or tours to add balance to the business sessions
- Seminars on such topics as finance, officer duties, projects, induction ceremonies, and selection procedures
- Sessions for advisers.

### Organizing Conferences

Planning a successful conference on the local, state, or national level depends on the details. Set out to brainstorm with a planning committee, not just for great speakers, but to mentally walk through a conference from start to finish and think of all the detailed specifics of the meeting. To assist in planning an outstanding conference here are some guidelines and suggestions.

### What audience will be attending?

Students, advisers, faculty, parents? Each requires different programming. If the attendees are from two or more of these audiences, a wide variety of issues will need to be addressed.

### What is the purpose of the conference?

Awards, education, recognition, networking, fun? Again, each purpose has specialized activities associated with it. A conference may include all of these, in fact using several offers a sense of balance in a conference.

### Develop a conference theme around the purpose and audience.

Try not to make the theme too "cute," but do make it catchy. A theme should be short and should be intertwined throughout the conference so that it will be memorable.

### Develop an appropriate, well-organized schedule.

Duration of a conference can be one day to several, during school and on weekends, or over a holiday. Determine which is the most effective for your situation.

Remember your audience when planning the schedule. Leave time between functions to change rooms, stretch, obtain meals or snacks, and use the restroom facilities. See that your schedule and the events are age-appropriate, particularly if your meeting is open to members of both NHS and NJHS.

Most conferences are held in high schools or other campus facilities. Special considerations must be made when working with a school. Make sure the proper steps are taken to secure the needed space and school support personnel (for example, custodians) to operate. If your conference is in a hotel, a contract will be an important part of your planning and securing the services of a well-trained member of the hotel's staff to assist in all of the details of the meeting. Contracts are formal legal agreements, so a) read them thoroughly, and b) see that only authorized personnel sign for your organization.

Take into consideration the rooms you will be using—their capacity, audiovisual and technical availability, and proximity to each other.

Make sure to plan enough rooms for the size audience you expect. Visit in person and check the facility and rooms you will use to make sure there are enough chairs or desk space, eating facilities (if needed), restrooms, and any other special needs you may have.

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## **Plan programming for the conference.**

Again, remember your purpose and audience. Develop topics, speakers, training sessions, and discussion groups to fulfill that purpose and that are directed toward your audience.

Workshop topics should be varied, ranging from serious to fun activities. If networking is one of the purposes, build it into the programming and also leave time for informal networking.

Presenters and speakers should be varied. Use both students and adults whenever possible. Students can share ideas and experiences that are valuable to other students and adults. Adults can offer expertise and guidance in specialized topics.

Develop an evaluation form to determine if the conference programming met the needs of the audience. This information will assist in reviewing the conference and also in planning the next.

## **Delegate conference responsibilities.**

A steering committee should be set up to oversee the planning and implementation of the conference. The steering committee is responsible for all the planning items above.

In addition, other committees should be set up to cover the main portions of the conference. This will allow for more involvement, but more importantly, it will give more people the opportunity to give input and lessen the chance of an important detail being missed. The steering committee is ultimately responsible for the success of a conference and should carefully track the progress of each committee. Some conference responsibilities are listed below that could be delegated.

Registration includes development of all registration related materials (tickets, name badges, etc.) and personnel for actual registration. Donations, such as pens, paper, candy, etc., from local businesses can be procured for inclusion in the registration packet.

Publicity includes publicizing the event before, during and after the conference with posters, signs, announcements, press releases, etc.

Program committee develops a printed program to include the conference schedule to be handed out at registration. The program can be copied or printed, bound or in a three-ring binder.

Food committee coordinates the procurement and delivery to the attendees. Many times either the school cafeteria can provide the food, or fast food chains can be approached for the donation of a lunch/dinner.

**Housing:** If an overnight stay is planned either host homes or a hotel facility must be procured. This can be a major undertaking and requires careful planning. With either option special care should be taken to oversee and chaperone the students for their safety and well being.

**Transportation:** If an overnight conference is planned then transportation must be provided to and from the school. Also, if an off-site presentation is to be used transportation must be provided. This can be coordinated through the school district of the host school.

**Security/Medical:** A safe, secure atmosphere must be provided for the attendees. Personnel should be provided for security of the facility and a nurse should be on-site for any accidents or illness that may occur.

**Insurance/Liability:** Sponsors of the meeting should check to see that appropriate insurance has been arranged for staff and participants. Requirements vary by state and district, and proper steps should be taken in this area.

Despite all the best plans and schedules, the conference planners will still need to improvise during the conference. Even if all details are covered, planning is exact and well done, something will go wrong. Count on it! It will happen, be it large or small. The air conditioner goes out and it is 99 degrees; the speaker goes on much too long and throws off your schedule. You cannot determine your emergency plan because you do not know what will go wrong. Don't panic—get your team to come up with a plan. Let the attendees know the problem and the plan. Keep your cool, take care of the situation, and the crisis will pass.

The national office of the National Honor Society offers its assistance to chapters or schools when sponsoring an NHS conference or workshop.

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## Appendix O: Overview of the National Office

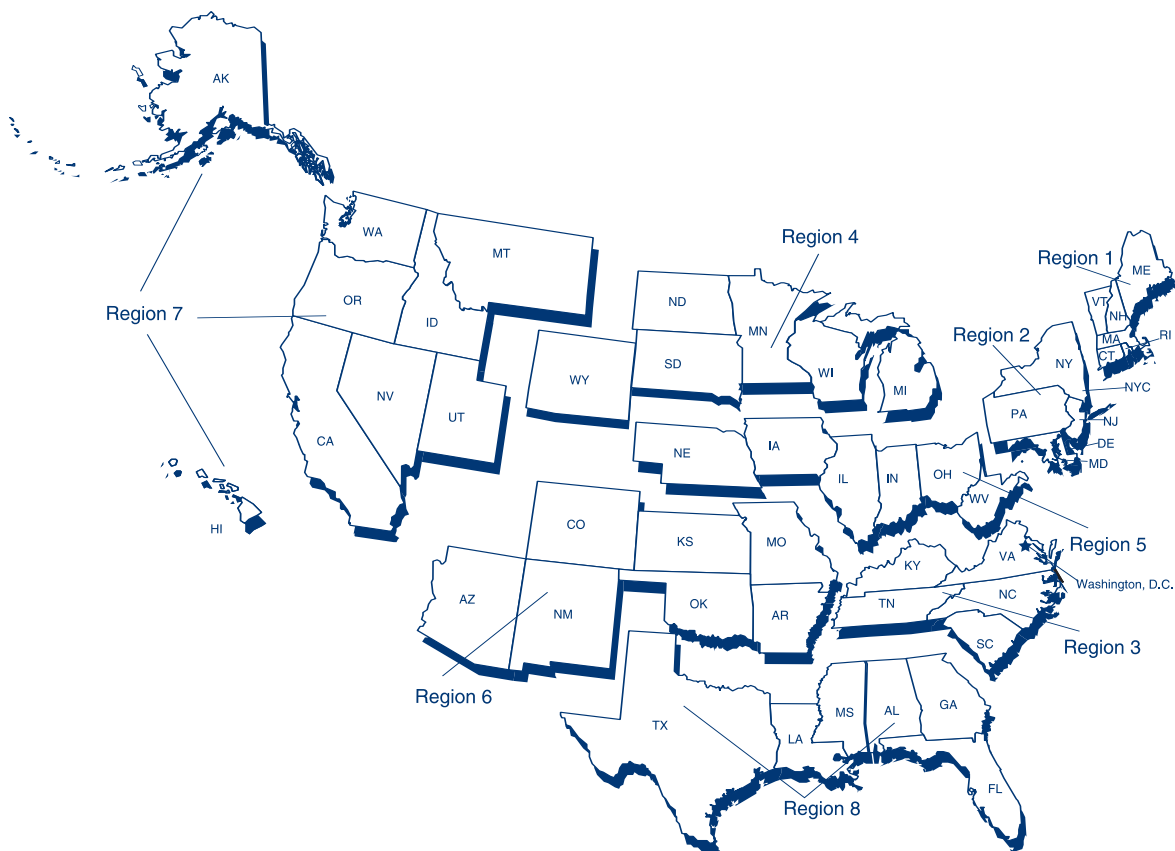
NASSP was founded in 1916. Today, the association is the nation's largest secondary school organization, representing more than 30,000 middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals in both public and private schools. The association's motto, "Promoting excellence in school leaders" speaks to the commitment of NASSP to train and serve secondary level administrators as they provide instructional and management leadership in their schools. A full description of the association and its many activities can be found at [www.principals.org](http://www.principals.org).

In 1921, NASSP organized the National Honor Society and has been the proud sponsor of the organization ever since. In 1929, the association added the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) to promote student recognition for younger students. Along with the staff of the student activities office that administers the programs and policies of the Honor Societies, many additional staff members serve the

membership in various other departments located in the national headquarters building in Reston, Virginia. The national staff serves students, activity advisers, and administrators in secondary schools nationwide and in more than 70 countries internationally.

The national office staff also administers the National Association of Student Councils (NASC) and several national scholarship competitions (see chapter 8). Leadership education and student recognition are the primary goals of all programs administered by the national office. The office provides a variety of leadership training opportunities, programs, publications, and other services for students and advisers in middle level and high school. Through these opportunities, the national office stresses the importance of student activities in schools, effective and engaged student leadership, service to others, and good citizenship.

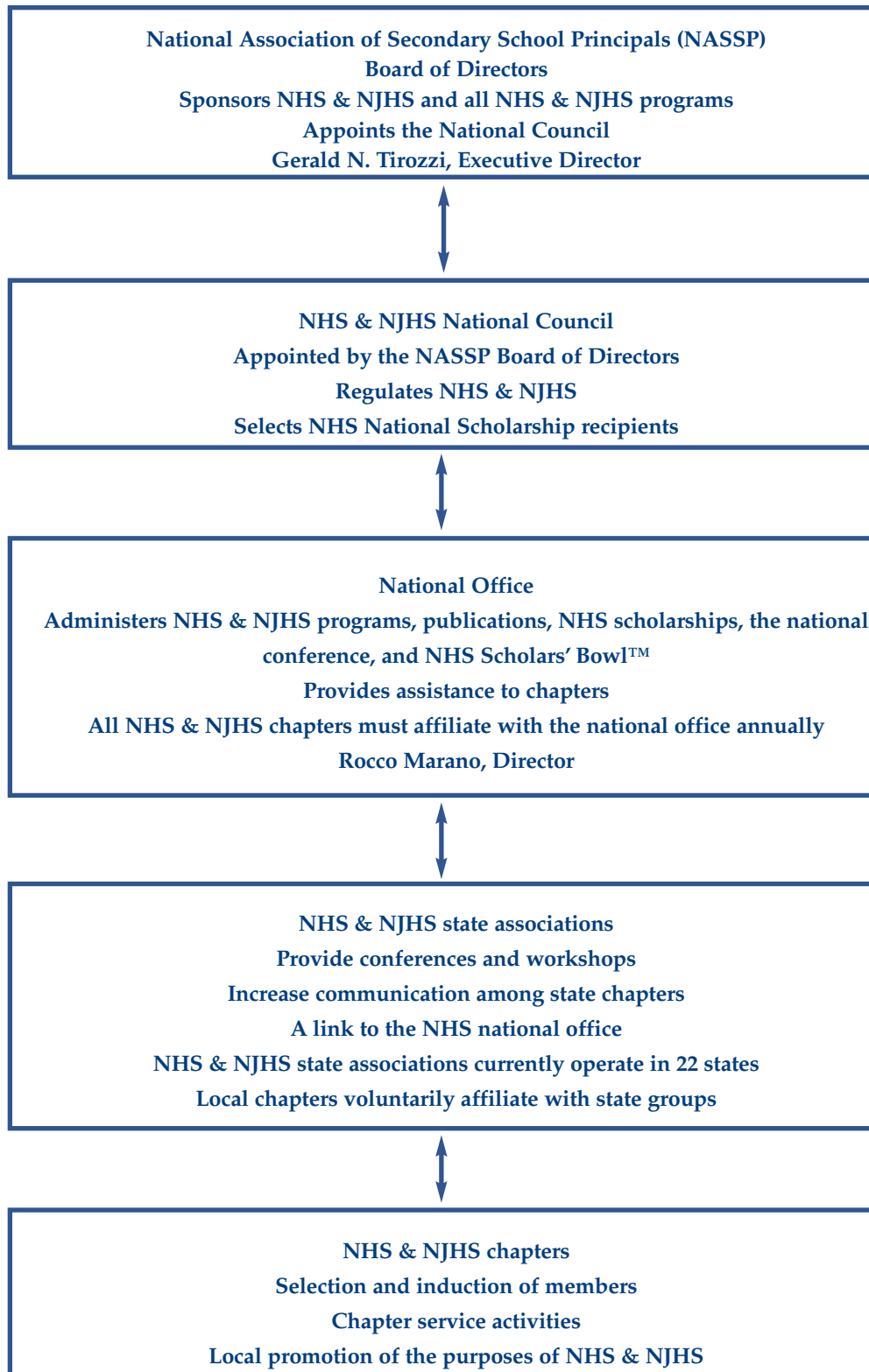
NASSP maintains eight administrative regions for its membership and the membership of the Honor Societies. The map below shows the location of these regions.



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## NHS Organizational Chart



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## Appendix P: NASSP Position Statement on Student Activities

### Issue

Beyond the standard curriculum of required and elective courses, schools enhance student learning and development by offering a range of cocurricular student activities.

Activities can be classified into the following categories:

- Direct extensions of required or elective courses (e.g., science club, math club, dance club), including opportunities for recognition of achievements in those areas through honorary organizations (e.g., National Honor Society, Quill and Scroll, Spanish Honor Society, Tri-M Honor Society [music])
- Clubs or activities that are expressions of student interest that may be interdisciplinary in nature or not have a direct curricular link (e.g., popular music club, skateboarding club)
- Student council or student government that serve as opportunities for students to engage in the democratic process and have a voice in the life of the school to the extent allowable by law, policy, or tradition
- Interscholastic and intramural athletics that provide students opportunities for development through sport (e.g., football, track, tennis, cheerleading).

### NASSP Guiding Principles

- Secondary schools properly provide for social and personal needs as well as for those that are strictly academic. Student activities are integral to an education, providing opportunities for all students that support and extend academic learning.
- The term “student activities” is preferred to “extracurricular” because “extra” connotes activities that are peripheral to a school’s main mission. Student activities are educational in nature and should be thought of as cocurricular.
- Student activities support the goal of teaching students to be responsible and fulfilled human beings, providing

them with opportunities that develop character, critical thinking, sociability, and specific skills.

- Research has shown a strong relationship between participation in student activities and academic achievement.
- Membership in national and state student activities organizations adds value to programs sponsored at the local level by providing training and other services, unique opportunities for networking, and additional recognition for those involved.

### Recommendations

- Recognize all activities carried out under the aegis of a secondary school in terms of their potential contribution to the school’s overall goals for young people.
- Encourage secondary schools to engage as many students as possible in student activities and offer sufficient variety to appeal to a wide range of student interests.
- Encourage administrators, educators, student activity advisers, and the general public to use the term student activities instead of extracurricular activities. Student handbooks, school documents, and other communication should reflect this more current terminology.
- Ensure that activities are age-appropriate; nondiscriminatory; well planned, organized, and implemented; supervised by professional staff; and evaluated on a regular basis.
- Ensure that participation in events sponsored by state and national organizations for youth is subject to identifiable minimum standards for the quality of the program, its content, and its practices regarding participant supervision and safety.
- Ensure that the staff directing student activities receives professional development in the area of responsibility, and appropriate compensation for the work provided while fulfilling this supervisory duty.

Approved by the NASSP Board of Directors, November 9, 2002.



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## Appendix Q: What to Expect in the Mail from Your National Office

### For Advisers

- Back-to-school mailing, including the Adviser Update (August)
- Monthly issues of the award-winning *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine. Inserts within the magazine will include:
  - a. *The Leadership Store* annual catalog (September)
  - b. Holiday promotion from *The Leadership Store* (October)
  - c. LEAD conferences brochure (November)
  - d. NHS and NJHS national conference brochure (March)
  - e. Annual report form for all Honor Society chapters (April)
  - f. National Student Leadership Week materials (April)
- Annual adviser identification card and school affiliation certificate (October)
- NHS national scholarship packet (NHS advisers only; November)
- Spring induction kit promotion from *The Leadership Store* (January)
- Spring mailing, including the Adviser Update and a publication for advisers (March)

### For Principals

- Principal's Leadership Award packets (October)
- Annual affiliation renewal notice (March or April)\*

### Additional Mailings

- Prudential Spirit of Community Awards promotion (September)

Note: Member mailings are also found on the national Web sites for easy replacement of lost materials.

Individuals can also contact the national office for assistance regarding any of these mailings. Some items, such as the NHS National Scholarship packets, are found only in the Adviser Zone, which requires a confidential login.

Name corrections or changes to school address should be faxed to the membership department at 703-860-3422 or e-mail to: [nhs\\_membership@principals.org](mailto:nhs_membership@principals.org).

Please share this information with the school secretary, school bookkeeper, or other staff members responsible for mail handling on your campus to ensure correct delivery of all materials.

\*All invoices from the national office bear the official logo(s) and the Reston, VA, return address. See the alert on the NHS Web site, [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us), for warnings regarding evidence of fraudulent invoices being distributed to schools nationwide.

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## Appendix R: Public Relations

### A Short Course in Educational Journalism

By Gayle Wayne, Ocean View (CA) School District

1. Type your story on one side of the paper only, using 8 1/2" X 11" paper.
2. Double-space the text.
3. Leave the top third of the first page blank, except for source information.
4. Source information should be at the top left corner of the first page and should include the full name and address of your school and the writer's name and telephone number (both day and night, if necessary).
5. End each page with a complete paragraph.
6. Make the story concise. If a second page is necessary, always indicate "MORE" at the bottom of the first page.
7. Use any of the following marks to indicate the end of the story: ### -30- XXX \*\*\*
8. Leave generous margins (minimum of 1" each) all around.
9. Consider the deadlines of the local press when planning and writing the story. Get the story in as far in advance as possible.
10. Send your news to the local reporter, by name. Your school system's PR coordinator may have relevant contact information for your school.
11. Always use first and last names and completely identify every person mentioned.
12. Go easy on the adjectives.
13. Use short words, short sentences, and short paragraphs.
14. If you don't see your story in print when you expect it, one follow-up call to the reporter is acceptable. Find out why it didn't run. You may learn something that will help you next time.
15. When editors cut a story because of space limits, they begin at the bottom of your story. The following is an example of the order in which the content of your story should follow:

Who? What? When? Where? Why?

Essential detailed information

Important

General miscellany

Nice to have

For additional information on public relations activities for your chapter, see chapter 6. And the PR Toolkit on [www.nhs.us](http://www.nhs.us)

## Suggested Press Release A: Induction Ceremony Notification (To be typed, double-spaced, and released before new members are selected.)

### For Immediate Release

Contact: (NHS adviser)

Date:

Phone:

(Name of school) School's annual induction ceremony for the (name of chapter) Chapter of the National Honor Society will be (day, date) at (time) in the (location).

To be eligible for membership consideration, students must have a cumulative GPA of (insert GPA). In addition, candidates must meet high standards of leadership, service, and character. Members of the (insert relevant grade levels) classes were evaluated and selected by the Faculty Council of the chapter.

Leadership is based on the student's participation in two or more community or school activities, or election to an office (or other relevant standard established by your chapter). To meet the service requirement, the student must have been active in three or more service projects in the school and community office (or other relevant standard established by your chapter). Character is measured in terms of integrity, behavior, ethics, and cooperation with both students and faculty office (or other relevant standard established by your chapter).

Students are reviewed by a Faculty Council consisting of five members of the faculty appointed by the principal. This year (insert total new inductees number) students are being considered for membership.

###

## Suggested Press Release B: Post-Induction Ceremony

(To be typed, double-spaced, and released after new members are selected.)

### For Immediate Release

Contact: (NHS adviser)

Date:

Phone:

(Number) students from (school name) were inducted as new members of the National Honor Society in a ceremony held at the school yesterday. Members were selected by the chapter's Faculty Council for meeting high standards of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Students inducted were: (insert list of new members).

"We are very proud to recognize these outstanding members of our student body. National Honor Society members are chosen for and then expected to continue their exemplary contributions to the school and community," said (insert name), chapter adviser.

The (insert school name) chapter has been active since (insert year). Each year the chapter sponsors several service projects for the school and community, which in the last few years have included (insert chapter service activities).

The National Honor Society ranks as one of the oldest and most prestigious national organizations for high school students. Chapters exist in more than 15,000 high schools and, since 1921, millions of students have been selected for membership. Millions of dollars in scholarships have been awarded to senior members since 1945 by the sponsoring organization, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

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## Appendix S: Scheduling Your Selection and Induction Procedures

Surveys undertaken by the national office indicate that when planning the timing of the selection and induction cycle at the local level, chapters favor having just one induction ceremony per year. Although nothing prevents a school from having more than one cycle per school year, more than 80% of chapters only conduct one ceremony each year. In addition, the same surveys indicate that nearly 65% of chapters undertake their processes in the spring of the year, leaving nearly one-third of all chapters participating in the fall of the year. To reiterate, the timing and frequency of induction ceremonies are decisions left to the staff of the local chapter.

To help understand the calendar and planning implications of the timing chosen at your school, the following planning suggestions are offered.

### Model A: Chapters Undertaking Spring Inductions Only

Several important factors need to be considered when looking at your spring calendar. To start, when can grades be available for calculating cumulative GPAs for candidates? Consult with your principal, guidance office, or information services (computer) manager for assistance. Once that is determined as your starting point, please consider the following factors in planning your spring ceremony:

- Date of graduation and spring events for seniors
- Prom date for spring
- Schoolwide student elections if held in spring
- Spring sports and arts program schedules
- End-of-year testing (e.g., state proficiency exams, AP, SAT, ACT)
- Other important events or traditions for your students, school, or community
- The chapter's budget indicating the amount of funding available for hosting your ceremonies.

Although the NHS induction ceremony is important to the school community, there may be other local activities that are considered of greater priority than your induction processes. Looking back on last year's induction process to see if any major conflicts arose is a good place to start in this process. Administrators, activities directors, arts directors, guidance counselors, and athletic directors will be able to provide good information to assist you in planning, particularly if there is no master school calendar available.

Some suggested steps to organize your procedures for the spring include the following:

- Submit selection process for school calendar approval and posting. This requires establishing all dates and activities through this round of selection and securing the date and place of the induction ceremony. In addition, consider ordering the induction supplies as early as possible. Please allow six to eight weeks from the time of ordering for delivery.
- Publicize the process. Get your schedule and selection process description on the student handbook, faculty handbook, and parent newsletters. Because many student handbooks are printed over the summer, you will no doubt need to confirm some information prior to the end of the previous school year. Consult with your principal regarding the timelines you need to follow.
- Schedule the meeting for the Faculty Council.
- Determine who the candidates are for this round of selection (GPA calculations; coordinated with counselor's office or school information manager). For a spring selection, calculation of the cumulative GPAs of relevant students from the end of first semester will need to be undertaken.
- Have a sufficient number of student information forms (SAIF) or candidate packets on hand. Always have extra copies in case a student loses his or her original forms.
- Announce candidates and the method of obtaining candidate packets (pick up from adviser, meetings for distribution or explanation, etc.). The method of notifying candidates should be considered seriously. In many instances, merely posting the names for public viewing on a bulletin board is not sufficient to guarantee that all candidates are notified. Alternatives would be personalized messages delivered through first period teachers, through homerooms, or via letters home to both the student and the parents. It is important to determine if the methods you are using are guaranteeing 100% notification to all candidates.
- Review the evaluation process (if used) and disseminate the evaluation forms at a faculty meeting. Consult with the principal about getting on the meeting agenda at an appropriate time.

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- Collect all SAIFs and evaluations. It is to the advantage of the adviser to see that a response is provided by all candidates, even those that decline being considered, and from all teachers, including those that chose not to evaluate candidates for valid reasons.
- Hold the selection meeting with the Faculty Council.
- Share the Faculty Council results with the principal prior to notification of selection and nonselection.
- Announce the results of the Faculty Council selection process. Prior to notifying those students who were selected for membership into the Honor Society, meet with or notify nonselected students first. Because nonselection can be very disappointing news for both students and their parents, consideration should be given to confidentially convey this information in an effort to avoid embarrassment for the student(s) in question. Also, be available to field questions regarding nonselection.
- Proceed with plans for the induction of new members with assistance from the chapter officers and members of the Faculty Council.
- Notify local media (newspapers, radio, TV, etc.) of the selection of new members. It is best to build in some time for responding to inquiries regarding nonselection before disseminating new member lists to the press.
- Rehearse for the induction ceremony. Remind members that attendance is mandatory. Also, set aside time for a walk-through of the ceremony even if this is done as part of your regular chapter meeting.
- Conduct the induction ceremony along with necessary cleanup.
- Follow-up with thank-you notes to all who assisted with the selection and induction.
- Schedule evaluation of the selection and induction processes with the administration, Faculty Council, and chapter officers. File the evaluation comments with your planning guide for the next round of selections.
- Plan and carry out the first chapter meeting of old and new members. Include an opportunity to evaluate the selection and induction processes for input from the new and old members.
- Plan and carry out the election of chapter officers, the establishment of chapter goals for the year, the chapter service project(s), and other activities that support your goals.

## **Model B: Fall Induction Only**

Follow the outline presented in Model A with the following notes:

- GPA calculations will be from the end of the previous school year. Guidance counselors or information technology managers could probably undertake this task during the summer if given the parameters prior to your departure for the summer.
- When determining your induction date, plan in reverse (“backwards planning”) to make certain that it affords you sufficient time at the beginning of the school year to notify candidates, undergo the entire selection process, order supplies, and plan the ceremony.
- Look into other school-based activities when planning your ceremonies including fall sports seasons, fall arts activities, homecoming, and other holiday, traditions, or community activities.
- Plan and carry out the selection process and induction ceremony, keeping the students, faculty, administration, and parents well informed about your activities.

## **Model C: Fall and Spring Inductions**

The outline for Model A is still appropriate, but this model has to be applied twice during the same school year. Please reference comments in both Models A and B above.

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## Appendix T: Ordering Additional Copies of the Handbook

Who else on your campus needs a copy of this handbook? Additional advisers? Members of your Faculty Council? The principal or assistant principals? Others?

The handbook is available for \$12 for member schools, or \$24 for nonmembers, plus shipping and handling. To order additional copies, simply call or fax the NASSP sales department. Only principals and chapter advisers may place member orders. You'll need four pieces of information to place an order:

1. Your school's national office affiliation number (the number found in the upper corner of the address labels on mailings and *Leadership* magazine)
2. The product number for this publication, which is #7310508
3. Method of payment (check, purchase order, or credit card)
4. Name and address of the person receiving the copies, along with a phone number where that person can be reached in case there are questions about or changes to the order

Orders can be placed by calling 866-647-7253 and requesting the sales office, or by faxing an order to 703-620-6534.

### NHS Handbook Order Form

#### Shipping Address

School name			
Address			
City	State	Zip	
School Affiliation Number	Phone	Fax	
E-mail address (To track your order, please include your e-mail address.)			

#### Billing Address (if different from shipping address)

School name	Address		
City	State	Zip	
Attention	Phone	Fax	
E-mail address			

#### Order Information

Order Number _____	Item _____	Unit Price _____
Quantity _____	Quantity Discount _____	Total _____
Subtotal _____	Shipping & Handling: _____	<b>TOTAL</b> _____

VA residents only add 5% sales tax:
If shipping and handling fees are not enclosed, you will be billed.

#### Method of Payment (Payment or purchase order must accompany order.)

- Check** (Make payable to NHS/NASSP [NASSP Tax ID #52-6006937]).     
  **Purchase order**
- Credit card** Card type:  
  MasterCard  
  VISA  
  American Express

- Personal     
  Business/School

Account number	Expiration Date
Cardholder signature	Print name of cardholder
Cardholder billing address	

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## Appendix V: NHS Handbook Evaluation Form



Please share your comments about the 16th edition of the NHS handbook by completing the brief questionnaire below.

**1. Overall evaluation (check one)**

- A great new edition
- Good update
- Adequate replacement
- I liked the old one better. Here's why: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. What is one thing that you like most about this new edition?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. For our next edition, would you prefer to receive this text on a CD?**

- Yes
- No (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Other thoughts to share on this concept? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Would you be willing to purchase a custom-designed notebook in which this handbook would be placed costing between \$10 and \$12 per notebook?**

- Yes     Not likely

**5. What additional information would you like to see in this handbook (i.e., additional topics, other resources, etc.)?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Additional comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Tell us about you.**

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Years served as chapter adviser? \_\_\_\_\_

State (please include) \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail or fax this evaluation to:  
NJHS Handbook Evaluation, 16th Edition**

1904 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191  
Fax: 703-476-5432  
E-mail: njhs@nhs.us

**Thanks for taking the time to evaluate the new handbook! Your comments are appreciated.**

# NOTES

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