

OHS CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the members of the Open High School Community, do ordain and establish this Constitution to maintain a school where individuality, creativity, and responsibility in learning are encouraged; where the integrity of individuals and groups is respected; and where cooperation is valued over competition; and decision-making power is shared by all members of the Open High School Community.

Article I

The highest form of student government in Open High School is Town Meeting.

Section I

During Town Meeting, all propositions presented to the school must be approved by two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of Town Meeting.

Section II

There must be a minimum of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the student population present in order for anything to be approved at Town Meeting.

Section III

Town Meeting will meet at least once a month. Only Student Representatives, by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote, shall have the authority to call an Emergency Town Meeting. An Emergency Town Meeting shall pertain to the following circumstances:

1. Information that needs to be spread to the students quickly
2. A growing concern that has to be addressed immediately
3. A decision that needs to be made immediately

Section IV

Only Student Representatives (Reps) shall moderate Town Meeting.

Section V

Town Meeting will have the following responsibilities:

1. Making general announcements
2. Governing student activities
3. Give solutions to problems in the Open High School Community
4. Acknowledge inputs from the current staff in regards to the student population as a whole
5. Recognizing students, talents, awards, and accomplishments
6. Vote on proposals and/or committees

Section VI

Attendance at Town Meeting is mandatory.

Article II

Open High School will have a student-led government called Student Representatives (Reps) composed of two (2) representatives from each family and one (1) alternate representative in the case of absence of the original representatives.

Section I

Reps will have the following responsibility:

1. Report the concerns of their Families to Reps
2. Decided where Rep meetings will take place
3. Establish committees to divide the responsibilities of the group
4. Discuss ideas to make the school run more efficiently
5. Plan events such as Town Meeting, Day in the Park, Winterfest, etc.
6. There is to be a designated moderator at every Rep meeting and permanent secretary chosen at the beginning of the year.
7. Opening the meetings up to everyone unless the meeting is deemed as closed, or a conflicting situation occurs that prevents the meeting from being held
8. Work with parent associations, staff meetings, and other school organizations to build upon the functioning of Open High School. A mandatory of two (2) Reps is required to attend each.
9. Create legislation that is necessary and proper for the development of Open High's community and in agreement with the student body.

Section II

Reps are to meet at least once (1) a week.

Section III

Each Rep shall get one (1) vote in all matters. Alternate Reps may only vote in the case of absence of their official Rep from their Family. The Reps sponsor is allotted one (1) vote, but no other staff member may partake in voting during a Reps meeting.

Sectional V

A maximum of two (2) Reps have the right to attend Staff Meeting and are allotted one (1) vote to represent the student body, unless the meeting is deemed as closed or confidential, in matters pertaining to decisions made in Staff Meeting.

Section VI

Reps have the power to edit or add any section of the Constitution with the approval of Town Meeting.

Article III

Open High School's student body will have a judicial system called Community Court.

Section I

There will be a maximum of seven (7) members of Community Court. They will consist of five (5) students and one (1) staff member that is not official administration personnel, and one (1) optional parent representative. Such staff member must be approved by Reps. There must always be an odd number of judges and a minimum of three (3) judge's ruling on a case. All members of Community Court, including the staff member, shall have one (1) equal vote.

Section II

Community Court has the power of Judicial Review and to decide on a verdict for cases presented.

Section III

Cases must be presented in writing and brought to the staff member in charge of Community Court.

Section IV

A trial brought to Community Court shall follow the following format:

1. The plaintiff shall present their argument and any witness to the Court.
2. The defendant shall present their argument and any witness (es) to the Court.
3. The judges of Community Court shall ask questions to the plaintiff, defendant, and witness if necessary.
4. The Court will make its ruling within one (1) school week of the final hearing.

Section V

The court will make its decision by majority vote. The ruling will be presented to the school within five (5) school days, unless the case is deemed confidential by the plaintiff and/or defendant. However, all students have the right to know a case is taking place and the verdict, excluding the stating of specific names for confidential cases.

Section VI

Any one has the right to sit and observe a public trial while the Court is in session. If an observer(s) is causing too much of a disturbance, they may be asked to leave.

Section VII

No Community Court Member is allowed to judge a case that he or she is personally involved in or there is a conflict of interest. Under such circumstances, he/she must notify the staff member of Community Court.

Section VIII

No Community Court member is allowed to be a Rep or Alternate Rep.

Section IX

The losing party has the right to appeal the ruling at Staff Meeting and Town Meeting. The appeal process must be approved by Staff Meeting with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority. The staff member that is on Community Court will not vote in the appeal process. The case will then be sent to the Town Meeting which must also approved by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority.

Section X

If a party refuses to attend court proceedings, then the Court shall rule in favor of the opposite party.

Section XI

Elections for Community Court must be held every new school year.

Section XII

An official of Reps or Community Court member who is abusing power, will be put to trial by Reps. An official case will be held in Community Court. An appointed member of Reps will stand in as a judge for said Community Court member involved in the case, and will represent the official vote of all Reps in determining the verdict. Both parties have the right to present all

arguments and defenses. Dismissal of an official must be in accordance with $\frac{3}{4}$ majority from members of Reps and $\frac{2}{3}$ of Community Court. The official shall be given a two (2) week notice on the verdict; in the meantime, he/she is not allowed to fulfill their position and an elected Rep must stand in their place.

Article IV

The students of Open High School shall be divided into families according to a random draw.

Section I

The Open High School Community shall be divided into family units, each under the leadership of a staff member who acts as a family head.

Section II

Families shall meet at least once a week. The responsibility of Families will consist of the following:

1. Choose two (2) Reps and one alternate Rep.
2. Inform family members of official announcements administered from OHS
3. Discuss problems that the school and/or students are facing
4. Aiding students who are having any difficulties adjusting to Open High School or have personal complaints
5. Discuss the weekly announcements from Reps
6. Provide a place for students to freely interact and connect with other students within their Family.

Section III

All rising seniors will be able to choose their family head prior to the beginning of the school year. Seniors must admit three (3) of their top choices of family heads with the knowledge that not all wishes can be accommodated. There can only be a maximum of five (5) seniors per family head. All other students will be randomly placed into families.

Section IV

No student is allowed to switch Families once their family head has been chosen, unless they have a serious conflict with such family head. In such a case, the student may appeal to the Principal.

Section V

Two (2) members from each family shall be elected to join their family head to partake in prospective student interviews.

Article V

At the end of every attendance check or at any time determined suitable to the community, those students who have not adjusted well to the Open High School shall be referred to the Peer Counseling Group (PCG). The PCG shall be overseen by the school counselling office at OHS.

Section 1

Staff and community court shall determine eligible students based on attendance and behavior reports.

Section II

PCG shall meet at least once a week. Attendance shall be mandatory for each student until the group determines that the group is no longer necessary or beneficial to that student.

Section III

The Student Representatives shall appoint three (3) students, with the consent of Town Meeting, and the staff shall appoint one (1) member to serve on PCG each new school year. PCG may make recommendations to staff concerning its students and potential members.

Section IV

PCG Meetings shall consist of

1. a review of the Open High School Rules and Constitution
2. a review of common problems and experiences of students
3. counseling of students about their problems and habitual behavior
4. advising students on ways to adapt to Open High School
5. exercises in human relations and communications skills

Section V

Upon leaving PCG, students shall complete a standard Open High School evaluation form which may be placed in the students' transcripts if so desired. However, no credit shall be awarded for PCG.

Article VI

Section I

OHS will have (a minimum of) a 16 week Elective course schedule dedicated to the interests of the OHS community.

Section II

Staff members may decide on their course schedule on said elective day, and whether such class is taught in the OHS building.

Section III

Classes on said Elective day can be taught by current teachers at OHS, as well as students, with the approval of the Principal and the sponsoring of a current teacher at OHS.

Section IV

Choice of electives shall be determined by a random lottery system of the families. All seniors will get first priority within their family.

Section V

Elective day will also be the day Town Meeting, Class Meeting, or Staff Meeting will be held.

Article VII

All students at OHS have the right to amend the school's constitution through the following processes.

Section I

In order for the constitution to be changed, these steps must be followed:

1. Proposal in Reps
2. Passed by Reps with $\frac{2}{3}$ majority
3. Voted by $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of the current OHS students at Town Meeting

4. Reps makes the changes to the constitution within two (2) weeks of ratification along with the date it was ratified.

or

1. A proposal is brought to Town Meeting by petition of sixty (60) percent of the current student population
2. Voted in Town Meeting by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the current students of OHS
3. Reps makes the changes to the constitution within two (2) weeks of ratification along with the date it was ratified.

Article VIII

The Constitution applies to everyone that is a part of the Open High School community.

Section I

Everyone has access to the Constitution.

Section II

The Constitution will always be kept in the office and administered per student request; it shall also be published on the school's website. If there are any changes to the Constitution, all published Constitutions must be updated within two (2) weeks of ratification. One (1) copy of the previous Constitution must be saved by the Sponsor of Reps. All students have access to previous Constitutions.

Constitutional Bylaws

1. Volunteer Credit: students shall perform thirty (30) hours of community service each year, one hundred and twenty (120) hours over the course of all four (4) years at OHS.
2. Textbooks shall be returned or paid for before report cards and/or transcripts are administered
3. Attendance is mandatory in Class Meeting, Family Meeting, and Town Meeting. If a student misses three (3) consecutive meetings due to unexcused absences, their attendance record will be brought to the attention of the Family Head. The family will review those absences and discuss the situation with the student. If the student continues to disregard Family, Class and/or Town Meetings, the family may decide on appropriate consequences. If the Family Head misses three (3) consecutive meetings due to unexcused absences, the family has the right to discuss said absences and/or bring these absences to the attention of administration
4. All moderators of Town Meeting shall hold a copy of the OHS Constitution
5. The moderator of Town Meeting shall not be allowed to make a proposal while functioning as moderator unless he/she has approval from Reps. In such a case, said moderator must make it known that his/her proposal is not a representation of Reps, but announced as a student of OHS.
6. OHS is required to have a form of lounge for all student access that may serve as an area to study, recreation, and communication. The lounge may be closed by a majority vote of Reps; this decision may be brought, by appeal, to Town Meeting, where it may be overturned by $\frac{2}{3}$ of Town Meeting. Once closed, the lounge may be reopened by a majority vote of Community Court and/or a detailed agreement stating the deadline for the evacuation of the lounge.
7. Reps is required to maintain an available refrigerator and microwave for student use.

8. The privilege of using other facilities outside of OHS may be taken away for improper use. All privileges taken away are automatically given back at the end of the school year or in accordance with another agreement.
9. The privilege of using school property may be taken away due to improper use or abandonment shall it be deemed necessary. Said property may be returned in agreement of parties or upon the following semester and/or school year.
10. All proposals for class fundraisers and events must have a starting date and be presented via a written source.
11. No eating, drinking, or concession selling in/during Town Meeting.

Bill of Rights

In order to maintain the tradition and spirit of Open High School, the Bill of Rights contains a list of essential privileges all students, teachers, and staff are granted. The Constitution defines the framework by which a member of the Open High Community may seek redress for their grievance(s). It is the responsibility of all members to uphold these rights.

1. All members of the Open High community have the right to be called by their preferred name.
2. Every member of the Open High community has the right to an assigned space for personal belongings.
3. All students have the right to peacefully assemble/protest their beliefs and opinions.
4. All members of the Open High community have freedom of expression in accordance with the OHS Constitution and RPS Policies.
5. All members of OHS have the right to vote in Town Meeting.
6. All members of OHS have the right to appeal to Community Court.
7. All students are allowed a lunch period off campus unless a scheduling constraint, inclement weather or an outside threat poses a danger to the students
8. Students have the right to a student lounge.
9. Every current student of OHS has the right to attend prom.
10. Each class sponsor and/or officer has the right to know their financial status and to determine the goals/rules of the class in compliance with the OHS Constitution and RPS Policy.