

**RIVERVIEW COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY
SELECTION PROCEDURES**

PREFACE

The National Honor Society (NHS) program is under the sponsorship and supervision of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The NASSP has established procedures, requirements, regulations and suggestions for the local chapter to follow as they go about the task of identifying academically talented student exhibiting positive characteristics of leadership, service and character.

The National Council of the NHS authorizes charters for local secondary schools that meet and maintain requirements set forth in the NHS constitution. The principal is entrusted with the right to approve all activities and decisions of the chapter including decisions regarding the selection/dismissal of members as well as being a part of the chapter's appeal process.

The principal is required to appoint a faculty council consisting of a minimum of five voting faculty members. The faculty council's responsibility is to implement, in concert with the principal and faculty advisor, the selection procedures for student membership in the NHS and to communicate selection procedures in an official school publication in a timely fashion to all students and parents.

Important statements from The NHS Handbook published by the NASSP include:

"Membership in local chapters is an honor bestowed upon a student."

"Students may not apply for membership in the NHS. Membership is granted only to those students selected by the faculty council in each school."

"All decisions concerning selection have a certain subjective element, but problems can be avoided if the faculty council has developed and followed some objective criteria. However, whatever procedure is followed, it must be fair, non-discriminatory, consistently applied and written for public dissemination."

"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 chapters in jeopardy."

"Parents and students must understand that no student has a right to be selected for membership in a chapter of the NHS. 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 society standards and to recognize the potential danger of yielding to pressure tactics."

"Chapters are not obligated, however, to share with parents and students information concerning specific students not selected for membership in the Society. The principal should, of course, listen to complaints from students not selected, or from the parents of such students. Following such discussion, if the principal believes that some kind of technical mistake has been made, the principal may ask the faculty council to reconvene in order to review the situation. Technical 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 like. Commonly, however, complainants question the judgment of the faculty council. It is important to try to make the complainants understand that all decisions of the kind involved in the selection process have some subjective aspects... In absence of specific evidence to the contrary, however, the principal must assume that the members of the council are exercising their discretion in a legitimate manner and with the good faith expected of them."

"The National Council and the NASSP shall not review the judgment of the faculty council regarding selection of individual members to local chapters."

"Who is the final authority on chapter affairs – selection, projects, disciplinary action, etc? The principal has the final say in such matters, except where a dismissal case has been appealed through normal school channels. In this instance, the decision of the committee, superintendent, or school board is final."

"This does not mean that the students or their parents have a right to see the evaluation sheet or other papers which may have been used by the faculty council in making their decisions on selection."

"To avoid these problems most faculty councils merely do not retain their working papers after they reach their decisions, preparing only a summary sheet listing those students who were considered, and those who were selected, showing in addition, perhaps, the total scores of all students considered. In case of a protest, such a summary sheet can be reviewed by the principal, and the part showing a particular student's score can even be shown to the parents in substantiation of the student's non-selection."

“Requests or demands that members of the faculty council should be presented for interrogation on how each member evaluated the complaining student, should be firmly but politely refused.”

I. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS TO BE A CANDIDATE FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. Students must have attained at least a junior class standing, as demonstrated by having earned the district designated credits, and have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5.
2. Students must have attended Riverview Community High School (RCHS) for the equivalent of at least one trimester. Special consideration for students of military parents, exchange students, or other unique circumstances where parents are transferred in their work may be appropriate based on the principal receiving a recommendation from the student's previous principal.
3. An NHS member from another school who transfers to RCHS shall be automatically accepted as a member of the Riverview NHS provided the student brings a letter from his/her former principal or chapter advisor. Transfer members must meet and/or maintain the RCHS's membership standards within one trimester in order to retain membership.

II. CANDIDATES RESPONSIBILITY

1. Eligible students will be invited to attend a meeting called by the NHS sponsor and/or principal and receive the forms and information regarding the procedures and timeliness for the current selection process.
2. Eligible students must identify at least two (2) separate activities that relate to leadership and two (2) that relate to service. These may be activities that take place in the school or in the community. The student is responsible to have the sponsor, coach or individual in charge of the activity complete a recommendation form. Teachers may not write a recommendation letter unless they are a sponsor of an activity or a coach of a sport you participated in. Family members may not write a recommendation letter or sign the recommendation form. The student must see that the four (4) completed recommendation forms are returned to the NHS designated individual by the designated deadline. Again, there must be four (4) different individuals completing the recommendation forms and two (2) must relate to two (2) different leadership activities and two (2) must relate to two (2) different service activities.
3. Eligible students must comply with all procedures and timeliness or forfeit eligibility for further consideration at this time as an inductee in the NHS.

III. SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. The NHS chapter sponsor, in conjunction with the building principal, shall announce and convene a meeting of all academically eligible students for the NHS. The meeting shall be well publicized and handled in a manner that ensures each eligible student did receive the meeting notice with appropriate lead time and with a clear understanding that they need to attend.
2. The NHS advisor, with the assistance and review of the high school principal, will prepare the list of eligible students meeting the requirements set forth in Section I.
3. A list of all eligible students will be developed on the “Staff Evaluation Form” and given to all professional staff members currently working at RCHS.
4. Each teacher will be asked to make a judgment regarding the leadership, service and character traits of those students that they currently have, have had as a student before, or who they have knowledge of based on school associated activities at RCHS. In addition to indicating whether or not they feel the student possesses appropriate traits in the three (3) categories, the teacher is encouraged to write any remarks, positive or negative; they feel appropriate regarding the student. The “Staff Education Form” will be returned to the faculty council. This council will certify to the building principal which faculty members have returned the completed forms.
5.
 - a. The faculty council will receive the rating sheets from the professional staff and the four (4) leadership/activity recommendations provided by each eligible student. They will not be reviewed by the NHS sponsor or building principal.
 - b. A student should receive at least six (6) ratings from the professional staff in addition to the four (4) required recommendations for leadership and service to be considered by the faculty council. The faculty council may go back to members of the professional staff for clarification of their comments and/or for further input as a part of their decision/making process. Where specific

circumstances exist that six (6) staff ratings were not submitted, the faculty council will make an exception and utilize the number available. A student who has not received any negative evaluations and/or comments on the "Staff Evaluation Forms" will be designated as a candidate for induction unless he/she is determined to be ineligible pursuant to Section 5-D.

- c. It is the responsibility of the faculty council to evaluate the comments and recommendations on the "Staff Education Forms" in light of the leadership, service and character categories and determine how they will utilize the staff comments and recommendations to reach a decision.
- d. A requirement will be developed by the faculty council, subject to the approval of the principal, for a determination of ineligibility based on attendance, detention, and suspension. This requirement will be set forth in writing and communicated to all students who meet the requirements set forth in Section I. Provisions for "reasonable rehabilitation" should be included so that students will not be permanently prevented from future consideration for most infractions.
- e. Evaluation of students under Section 5-C and D must be applied on a fair, non-discriminatory and consistent manner.
- f. A majority vote of the faculty council will be required for a student to be designated as a candidate for induction. A vote of the entire faculty is not allowed.
- g. A letter, signed by the high school principal and NHS sponsor, shall be sent to each student eligible under the 3.5 GPA requirement, indicating one of the following situations:
 - 1. Student did not follow through and submit necessary items and therefore is not eligible to be considered as a candidate for induction at this time. Assuming you are not a senior, you may consider applying again provided you meet the GPA requirement.
 - 2. Student has been designated as a candidate for induction and is invited to participate in the NHS induction ceremony on (indicate time, place, date, etc.)
 - 3. Pursuant to the selection procedures adopted by the Riverview Board of Education, the faculty council has determined that you did not meet all of the eligibility requirements for character, leadership, or service. Assuming you are not a senior, you may consider applying again provided you meet the GPA requirements.

6. The identity of the five (5) member faculty council shall remain anonymous.

IV. INELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

(Adopted by NHS Faculty Council – January 31, 1996)

- 1. Negative evaluations in either of the categories of service, leadership or character from two or more teachers of the current school year supported by written documentation, descriptive, negative comments.

Negative evaluation/comments of teachers of a previous school year do not by themselves exclude a student from consideration.

- 2. Suspensions from during the current trimester and the last two previous trimesters.
- 3. Documented cheating incidents during the current trimester and the last two previous trimesters.

V. GOOD STANDING REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Service Hours
 - i. Students will take part in a minimum of twenty (20) community service hours for a year-long membership. A total of five (5) hours must be part of an NHS sanctioned activity including: elementary school events, tutoring, blood drive, 5th grade camp, etc. These hours must be signed for by an advisor. Students who do not meet this requirement will be placed on a probationary period for the first trimester of the following year and will be required to make up all missing hours. If the hours are not made up in the first trimester, that student shall lose his or her NHS membership for the remainder of his or her high school years. Seniors will be required to

complete hours previous to graduation in order to be recognized as an NHS member at the ceremony.

2. Membership Dues

- i. All NHS members shall pay \$20.00 annual dues. Dues are required to be paid before the end of the first trimester for the current year's membership. Newly inducted members are required to pay the annual due at the first general membership meeting following the induction ceremony.

3. Member Conduct

- i. Any NHS member who receives an Out-of-School suspension for any serious Code of Conduct violation or is found in violation of any civil law will immediately lose his or her NHS membership for the remainder of his or her high school years

VI. **APPEAL PROCESS**

1. All appeals are to be made to the principal.
2. The principal will listen to the concerns presented and will re-explain the appropriate procedural points of the eligibility and selection process.
3. If the principal believes a procedural error exists, the principal can request the faculty council to reconvene to address the issue.
4. Recognizing that the evaluation of a student's leadership, service, and character categories is subjective in nature, the principal or faculty council will not release specific staff member comments or ratings to the student or parent. They may share a compilation of the rating for a specific student in question but without identifying the specific staff members who provided the ratings.
5. Concerns brought to the superintendent and/or Board of Education will be referred to the high school principal and handled through the NHS appeal process.
6. The courts have ruled that membership in the NHS is not an "entitlement interest", but rather something one might have an "abstract need or desire for it". Therefore, from a legal standpoint, a student and/or parent of a student is not entitled to a formal hearing or other kind of due process. The *Karnstein v. Pewaukee School Board* (U.S.D.E.D. of Wisconsin; 1983); 557 F. Supp. 565 is the controlling case and has been appealed to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals for the United States, where it was affirmed without opinion.