

## SCARSDALE HIGH SCHOOL GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE

We, the community of Scarsdale High School, in order to establish a more perfect school government, do hereby declare and establish this Constitution to be incorporated as our document of governance.

This Constitution shall be implemented in accordance with the House Meeting format (herein described) through its elected officials, in order to enhance the quality of the school life through broader participation therein by the students and staff.

### THE HOUSE

#### Voting Membership

	<u># of People</u>
Student President elected by the entire school community	1
Student Vice-President elected by the entire school community	1
Student Treasurer elected by the entire school community	1
<i>The Treasurer also serves as the non-voting S.A.C. Representative to the House</i>	
Two Student Secretaries elected by the entire school community	2
"At large" House Representatives elected by each of the classes:	
Four each: Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors	16
Class Officer (selected by each class government) from each grade	4
Randomly selected Representative from each grade	4
Alternative School (A-School) Representative	1
J.U.S.T.I.C.E. Representative	1
Teachers selected by Department	7
Two Faculty Advisors to the House and S.A.C.	2
Department Chairperson or District Coordinator representing the Cabinet	1
Dean	1
P.T.A. Liaison, selected by the P.T.A.	1
Two Parents from the P.T.A. Compact Committee	2
Custodian	1
Secretarial Staff Representative	1
Aide	1
Assistant Principal for Student Services	1
Assistant Principal for Instruction	1
Total Voting Membership:	50

#### Non-Voting Membership

Principal	1
House Representative to the P.T.A.	1
Total Membership:	52

### DUTIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

#### A. The President

1. To conduct House meetings
2. To appoint members to the subcommittees of the House
3. To coordinate the various subcommittees of the House
4. To oversee the implementation of the House decisions
5. To represent the school community
6. To serve as President of S.A.C., voting in case of a tie
7. To oversee school elections and referenda

#### B. The Vice-President

1. To assist the President in running House meetings
2. To oversee the implementation of the House decisions
3. To oversee Forums
4. To serve as Chairperson of the Forum Leaders' Committee
5. To represent the school community
6. To serve as Vice-President of S.A.C. as a voting member
7. To oversee school elections and referenda

#### C. The Treasurer

1. To account for money spent and received by the House and its branches
2. To inform the House of all pertinent financial matters
3. To distribute money to various clubs as determined by S.A.C.
4. To serve as treasurer of S.A.C. as a voting member
5. To oversee school elections and referenda

#### D. The Two Secretaries

1. To take minutes at House meetings and distribute them to all House members
2. To record correspondence and events
3. To serve as secretaries of S.A.C. as voting members
4. To take minutes at S.A.C. meetings and distribute them to all S.A.C. members
5. To enforce the House attendance policy
6. To give notice of House meetings
7. To distribute agendas to all House members
8. To coordinate and assist in production of the House newsletter
9. To oversee school elections and referenda

#### E. Student Representatives

1. To represent their respective classes
2. To participate, when needed, on House subcommittees

#### F. Staff Representatives

1. To represent their respective constituent groups
2. To participate, when needed, on House subcommittees

### GUIDELINES

- A. House meetings shall be called to set policies and procedures that affect Scarsdale High School. The House recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for school policies and procedures rests with the principal.
- B. The House is the focal point for school decisions on the policies and procedures which relate to student life.
- C. All new school policies must be brought to the House or its officers prior to enactment.
- D. The House recognizes the legal implications of challenging the following areas, however, the House also recognizes its ability to challenge these areas if necessary:
  - 1. Local, state, and federal laws
  - 2. Collective bargaining agreements
  - 3. Administrative teacher evaluations
  - 4. Board of Education Policies
- E. After consultation with the Forum Leaders' Committee, the Steering Committee will present to the House for approval by simple majority of those present and voting, topics for the Forum agendas.

### PROCEDURES

- A. Subcommittees  
The House shall have the power to create and dissolve subcommittees. The President shall appoint the members of a subcommittee. If a student feels that he/she has been neglected by the President in choosing subcommittees, the issue will be put on the agenda for the next House meeting.
- B. Robert Rules of order shall form the general basis of the method in which House meetings are conducted.
- C. A quorum will consist of 50% of the student voting membership and 50% of the staff/P.T.A. voting membership.

### PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTING CHANGES

- A. Motions  
For rules, policy, and/or procedural changes, a simple majority of the House members present and voting in required to carry a vote
- B. School-wide Consultation  
By simple majority of those present and voting, the House can call for binding or non-binding referenda. Referenda shall be carried out through the Forums.
- C. Veto  
The principal will review all votes of the House affecting school policies and procedures and may veto any item within ten school days of the principle's receipt of the vote of the House, by notifying the members of the Steering Committee in writing. If the principal does not exercise the veto within ten school days, the change becomes effective.
- D. Veto Appeal  
Vetoed items may be reintroduced at the next House meeting. Three quarters of the House members present may vote to appeal the veto to the Superintendent of Schools who may rule on it or pass the matter to the Board of Education for final adjudication.

### E. Subcommittees

The House shall have the authority to create and dissolve subcommittees, with the exception of the following standing committees:

1. The Board of Education Committee
2. The Student Activities Committee
3. The Communications Committee
4. The Forum Leaders' Committee
5. The Elections Committee

The President shall be an ex-officer member of all House subcommittees.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

#### A. Composition

1. An Assistant Principal for Student Services
2. The House President
3. The House Vice-President
4. The House Secretaries
5. The House Treasurer
6. The Faculty Advisors to the House and the Student Activities Committee

#### B. Responsibilities

1. The Steering Committee will agree on an agenda for each House meeting.
2. The House Secretary will post and distribute the agenda for each House meeting 48 hours before the meeting.
3. The Steering Committee will propose to the House the agendas for the Forums.
4. The Steering Committee will allocate extracurricular funds provided by the Board of Education.
5. The Steering Committee will select two students to serve as assistant chairpersons of the Forum Leaders' Committee.

#### C. Call Out (when the Steering Committee withholds an agenda item)

1. By a simple majority of those present and voting, the House can place an item on the agenda.
2. Students and/or staff may present a petition with 50 signatures to either of the House secretaries to place an item on the agenda.

### FORUMS

#### A. Functions of Forums

1. To broaden and increase the school community's involvement in discussing, ratifying, and implementing House legislation.
2. To unify the school population.
3. To inform the school community about issues that directly affect life in Scarsdale High School and life in general.

#### B. Administration of Forums

1. The Vice-President will head the Forum Leaders' Committee.
2. The Forum Leaders' Committee will consist of the school officers, the faculty advisors to the House and the Student Activities Committee, and two additional students selected by the Steering Committee.
3. Responsibilities of the Leaders' Committee
  - a. To discuss issues, problems, ideas, activities, and plans for the Forums.
  - b. To improve and monitor Forum progress and the Forum leaders' progress
  - c. To recommend Forum agenda items to the Steering Committee
  - d. To contact the Forum leaders prior to each forum and educate them on the Forum topic.
  - e. To represent the school community.
4. President of the Leaders' Committee
  - a. The Vice-President of the House will serve as President of the Leaders' Committee.

b. Responsibilities

- (1). To lead Leaders' Committee meetings.
  - (2). To evaluate documents to be presented to the Forums.
  - (3). To serve as official liaison to the Steering Committee.
  - (4). To resolve any problems or crises which occur within or between Forums.
5. Issues of confidentiality will be managed within the Forums.
  6. The Forum Leaders' Committee shall establish and implement behavior and attendance policies for the Forums. Each Forums leader will be responsible for administering and enforcing this policy.
  7. Forums will remain intact from year to year; freshmen will be assigned to existing Forums. The House shall have the power to consolidate or alter Forums by a single majority vote.

C. Leaders of Forums

1. Leaders and alternate leaders must be from different grades.
2. The Forum Leaders' Committee will have discretion over the methods for selecting Forum leaders.
3. Only sophomores, juniors, and seniors shall be eligible to lead Forums.
4. Responsibilities of a Forum Leader
  - a. To lead group discussions.
  - b. To coordinate Forum activities.
  - c. To create group cohesiveness.
  - d. To implement decisions of the Forum Leaders' Committee.
  - e. To amass and disseminate appropriate documents regarding Forum discussions.
  - f. To attend all meetings scheduled by the Forum Leaders' Committee.
5. Responsibilities of Alternate Leader
  - a. To enforce Forum attendance policies
  - b. To record Forum discussions and present minutes to the Forum Leaders' Committee within three school days of the Forum.
  - c. To attend all meetings scheduled by the Forum Leaders' Committee.
  - d. To assist the Forum Leader during discussion.
6. Impeachment and Removal of a Forum Leader
  - a. A Forum may bring to the Leaders' Committee written charges against its leaders. The charge must be signed by at least two-thirds of the Forum members.
  - b. The person (or persons) who makes the charge should present the case at the Leaders' Committee meeting when the issue is discussed.
  - c. The Leaders' Committee may remove the Forum Leader by a simple majority vote.
  - d. The House Vice-President may remove a Forum Leader at any time; the removed leader may appeal the decision to the Forum Leaders' Committee, which may reinstate the removed leader by a two-thirds vote.

BOARD OF EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

A. Membership

1. At the beginning of each academic year, this subcommittee will be established according to the process outlined for forming subcommittees.
2. The Chairperson of the subcommittee will be appointed by the President of the House from among its members.
3. The President shall appoint the members of the subcommittees.

B. Responsibilities

1. To insure that the House is aware of all Board of Education policies.
2. To work in conjunction with the Board of Education as its members formulate policies.
3. To insure that the Board of Education is aware of School Governance activities and concerns.
4. To send a student to all Board of Education meetings.

### COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

#### A. Membership

1. One house faculty member, who will serve as advisor to the Committee.
2. The Two House Secretaries.
3. At least twelve students selected by the advisor and the House Secretaries.
4. A chairperson, appointed from among the House membership by the Committee advisor.

#### B. Responsibilities

1. To post the Absent Teachers list.
2. To inform the school community of school governance decisions and actions through printed matter at least once every other month.
3. To administer the House bulletin board.

### STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

#### A. Membership

Any member of the school community interested in participating in S.A.C. may do so, as long as that individual follows the guidelines of S.A.C. A member must attend three meetings before being eligible to vote. The president of S.A.C. can remove a member of S.A.C. if the president believes that the individual has not fulfilled his/her responsibilities. A S.A.C. member who believes that the president has unduly exercised this power can appeal the matter to the House. A simple majority of those present and voting can overrule the president's decision.

#### B. Functions of S.A.C.

1. To coordinate student activities.
2. To coordinate activities with other House committees and subcommittees.
3. To establish guidelines and assist other groups in the school in coordinating their own events.
4. To sanction clubs and organization in the school.
5. To evaluate clubs which exist nominally but are not functioning as intended, with the ultimate authority to remove the clubs' sanctions.
6. To distribute funds to clubs and organizations which operate within the school. S.A.C. may not authorize expenditures of more than \$500.00 at one time without House approval.
7. If approved by a simple majority of the House members present and voting, S.A.C. may expand its jurisdiction.

#### C. Administration

1. Executive Council
  - a. The officers of S.A.C. will elect an Executive Council.
  - b. The officers will have sole authority in delegating responsibilities to the Executive Council.
  - c. By a simple majority vote, the House Officers may remove a member of the Executive Council at any time.
2. Governance of Clubs
 

S.A.C. shall govern clubs according to the Club Policy set out by the House.

## IMPEACHMENT AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

A House member is subject to impeachment and removal from office for failure to perform his/her duties. Both school and class governments shall have the authority to set rules, by majority vote, relating to behavior and ensuing disciplinary action, less than impeachment, for the members of its body.

### A. Impeachment and Removal of a House Officer

1. A written complaint must be submitted to one of the faculty advisors to the House and S.A.C.
2. Any member of the Scarsdale High School community may submit a complaint.
  - a. Complaints must be signed by ten students at large, eight students House members, and four faculty House members.
  - b. The accusers have the right to remain anonymous until the trial.
  - c. Complaints may be withdrawn at any time before the initiation of the impeachment process.
3. Charges will be made known to the accused within one month of submission.
4. By a simple majority of members present and voting, The House may initiate a monitoring period of four school weeks during which attendance and performance of the accused will be monitored by the school government advisors.
5. After the monitoring period, all facts relevant to the case will be announced by one of the school government advisors at the House meeting, including the reading of the complaint with the accusers' names. The school government advisors will preside over the trial.
  - a. Three of the signers of the complaint and the appropriate House members must be present at the trial.
  - b. The accused has the right to defend himself/herself against all charges.
  - c. After all parties have spoken, the accused will leave the meeting at which time a secret ballot will be taken. A two-thirds majority is necessary to effect impeachment and removal.
6. A resignation may be accepted at any time, and the case will be dropped.

### B. Impeachment and Removal of a Student Representative to the House

1. A written complaint must be submitted to the faculty advisor to the House.
2. Any member of the Scarsdale High School community may submit a complaint.
  - a. A complaint submitted from a student's constituency must be signed by 25 students who are members of the accused's grade, three student House members, and two House faculty members.
  - b. A complaint from another House member must be signed by two student House members and one faculty member.
  - c. The accusers have the right to remain anonymous until the trial.
  - d. Complaints may be withdrawn at any time before the initiation of the impeachment process.
3. There will be a monitoring period of six school weeks during which attendance and performance of the accused will be monitored by the school government advisors. At the outset of the monitoring period, the accused must be made aware that he/she is being monitored.
4. After the monitoring period, all facts relevant to the case will be announced by one of the school government advisors at the House meeting, including the reading of the complaint with the accusers' names. The House President will preside over the trial.
  - a. The accusers must be present at the trial.
  - b. The accused has the right to defend himself/herself against all charges.
  - c. After all parties have spoken, the accused will leave the meeting at which time a secret ballot will be taken. A two-thirds majority is necessary to effect impeachment and removal.
5. A resignation may be accepted at any time, and the case will be dropped.

C. Impeachment and Removal of a Faculty Member of the House

1. (Same as B.1.)
2. (Same as B.2.)
  - a. A complaint from a House member must be signed by three student House members and two at large faculty members.
  - b. A complaint from a faculty member at large must be signed by three teachers at large, three student House members, and two faculty members.
3. (Same as B.3.)
4. (Same as B.4.)

D. In the event of an impeachment and removal from office, the House will establish procedures for filling the vacated office.

E. In the event a vacancy occurs in the House, the House officers will establish procedures for filling the vacated office.

A class officer is subject to impeachment and removal from officer for failure to perform his/her duties.

F. Impeachment and Removal of a Class Officer

1. A written complaint must be submitted to the class advisor.
2. Any member of the class may submit a complaint; only complaints from members of the accused officer's class may be submitted.
  - a. Complaints must be signed by either twenty-five students or two class officers.
  - b. The accusers have the right to remain anonymous until the hearing.
  - c. Complaints may be withdrawn at any time before the initiation of the impeachment process.
3. Complaints will be made known to the accused within one month of submission.
4. If he/she deems the charges to be of sufficient merit so as to warrant further investigation, the class advisor shall bring the complaints to the House advisor; all efforts to resolve the conflict within the class should be exhausted before the matter is presented to the House advisor.
5. By a simple majority of members present and voting, the House may initiate a monitoring period of four school weeks during which the attendance and performance of the accused will be monitored by the class advisor.
6. The House, upon hearing the charges, may by a simple majority vote, choose to delegate adjudication power to the Ad-Hoc Committee on Impeachments.
  - a. The Ad-Hoc Committee on Impeachments shall consist of the class advisor, three class officers appointed by the class advisor, and two student House members not from the same class as the accused and one House faculty member appointed by the school president.
  - b. The House advisor shall set the dates and times of the committee meetings, and one will preside over the committee as a non-voting member.
  - c. Meetings of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Impeachments shall be private.
  - d. After the monitoring period, all facts relevant to the case will be presented to the committee, including the reading of the complaint with the accusers' names.
  - e. Two of the signers of the complaint must present their case to the committee.
  - f. The accused has a right to defend himself/herself against all charges.
  - g. After all parties have spoken, the accused will leave the committee meeting at which time a secret ballot will be taken. A simple majority is necessary to effect impeachment and removal.
7. A resignation may be accepted at any time and the case will be dropped.



### SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Membership in the School Community and eligibility to vote in school elections shall include all of the following:

1. Students enrolled full-time or part-time at Scarsdale High School, with the exception of members of the senior class.
2. Seniors will be designated Members of the School Community, will not be eligible to vote in school elections, but will be able to vote in referendums.
3. All faculty members, secretaries, aides, custodians, and full-time employees of Scarsdale High School.
4. The P.T.A. President and up to four elected Compact Committee members.
5. The Principal, the Assistant Principal for Student Services, and the Assistant Principal for Instruction.

The following individuals are not designated Members of the School Community and are not eligible to vote under the terms of this document.

1. Athletic coaches and club advisors who do not meet one of the above criteria.
2. Parent and community volunteers not designated in section four above.
3. Employees of the Board of Education who are not full-time employees of Scarsdale High School, except as designated above.

### RANDOM REPRESENTATIVES

The method for selection for the random representatives from grade shall be determined by the House Officers, provided that a school alpha-list be used and the method be completely impartial and random. The House Officers shall select the random representatives at a time of their convenience, not to exceed eight school weeks from the time of their election.

### RATIFICATION OF AMENDMENTS

Ratification of amendments will require a period of voter education, the length of which will be determined by the House Offices and is not to exceed sixty days, during which the entire school will be informed of the proposal. A two-thirds majority of the voting membership of the House is required for ratification to be achieved.

