

Class Government Handbook

by John P. Sadowski

“In order to better represent the interests of the Student Body, to ensure certain rights for the members of the Classes, and to explicitly describe the processes by which the Class Governments shall conduct their business, affairs, and elections, we the Student Body of North Shore High School do hereby establish and ordain this Constitution.”

-- Preamble to the Class Constitution

Introduction. The Class Constitution was passed on April 6, 2001 after two years of work and became effective on May 31, 2001. The Constitution is meant to be used as a guide to the Class Advisors, Officers, and Representatives to run an efficient and productive Class Government. This handbook is an overview of the procedures outlined in and mandated by the Constitution.

Remember, though, that this handbook only outlines the most important points of the Constitution. Simply reading this handbook is no substitute of a familiarity with the actual text of the Constitution. Also, not that it is the Constitution itself which is binding, and not this handbook. This handbook is only meant to summarize some of the major points of the Constitution for quick reference and for readability.

The Class Council. The primary unit of the Class Government is the ten-member Class Council. The Council consists of the four Class Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and six other Class Representatives elected by the entire Class. These ten members also serve as SGO Representatives, the Class' delegation to the SGO Council.

The President presides over all Class Council meetings, *but is not entitled to vote on Class matters*. This is because the President is supposed to be an impartial arbitrator and organizer. However, the President is entitled to break all tie votes, even if he/she is not present at that meeting. This is the only time the President may vote. Otherwise, the duties of the four Officers are clearly laid out in the Constitution. The other six Representatives make up the remainder of the Class Council.

The quorum for official business to take place is five voting members, which must include at least one Officer. In case the President is absent, the Vice President presides over the meeting, and the line of succession continues down to Secretary and then Treasurer. The presiding officer is still entitled to a vote in this case, since the President will still break tie votes even if he/she is not present.

The votes themselves are to be recorded by the Class Secretary and made publicly available to the general Student Body. If the Class Council

wishes to keep the vote secret, however, they may vote to do so. Any Class member may attend the meeting, but only the Class Council may vote on Class matters.

Salient points:

- The Class Council consists of the four Officers and six Representatives.
- The Class Council members are also the Class' SGO Representatives.
- The President may not vote on Class matters, but may break a tie.
- All votes are to be made public knowledge.

For further information, see Articles I and II of the Class Constitution.

Elections. Of course, all ten members of the Class Council are elected by the general Student Body of their Class. The Class Elections must take place between the first Monday of May and the first Monday of June, but Class Elections cannot be held before the SGO Elections.

In order to run for an Office, a Class member must not be academically ineligible (meaning that they cannot be failing two or more classes). Candidates of the Class Presidency may not be failing any classes. Furthermore, if a candidate has served as an Officer in the year preceding that of the Election, he/she must submit proof (through attendance records) that he/she has attended at least one SGO meeting a month or ten in that entire year, and the same for Class Council meetings.

Each Officer must present a petition containing signatures of at least one-fifth (20%) of the members of that Class by the fourth Tuesday of April. However, any Class member may sign only one petition per office, and duplicate signatures must be stricken from both petitions. Additionally, each candidate must deliver a speech at one of the Supercommons. A candidate may also hang up posters, and those posters may stay up until and including the day of the election.

The actual vote must be taken in the voting booths. *No paper ballots are allowed.* The exception to this is the case of absentee ballots, which must be received on the following day. At the voting booths, there must be a list of all the Class members' names; upon voting, each Class member must sign next to his/her name. If there are more votes shown on any Election in the voting booth than there are signatures, the results must be thrown out and a whole new Election held.

In the case of a tie, there will be a "runoff," or re-Election between the candidates involved in the tie. *Allowing them to serve as co-Officers is not*

permitted. In any case, the exact numbers of the Election results of their respective Offices must be disclosed to the candidates upon their request. The victor in the Election, however, may not know the exact numbers. The exact numbers may not be disclosed to the general Student Body unless all candidates unanimously agree to it.

Representatives are elected in the same way, except that they do not need petitions and they are not required to make speeches.

Salient Points:

- Candidates must not be academically ineligible; Presidential candidates must be failing no classes.
- If an Officer in the precious year, must show that he/she has attended meetings.
- No paper ballots for Elections -- only voting booths.
- No co-Officers are allowed in the case of a tie. There must be a runoff.
- All candidates except the victor may know the exact numbers

For further information, see Articles III and IV of the Class Constitution

Amendments. Any part of the Class Constitution may be amended in any way, provided that the amendment does not conflict with the SGO Constitution. There are two types of amendment procedures. A Section 2 Amendment will only change your individual class' constitution and will not affect any other present or future class governments. An amendment passed under Section 2 must be proposed by a two-thirds vote of the Class Council or by a petition of one-third of the Student Body of that Class. The amendment must then be affirmed by a majority vote of the general Student Body before it can become part of the Constitution.

A Section 3 Amendment modifies the base Constitution inherited by all incoming freshman classes, and also binds all four classes. A Section 3 Amendment must again be proposed by two-thirds vote of the Class Council or by a petition of one-third of the Student Body of a Class. Then, the proposed amendment must be ratified by two-thirds vote of each Class Council, with Classes not voting within 15 days of the proposition vote losing their right to vote. If the amendment is voted down by any of the Classes it may be instead offered as a Section 2 Amendment. The last step for a Section 3 Amendment is again affirmation by majority vote of the entire school.

Salient Points:

- Section 2 Amendments only affect the Class that passed them.
- Section 2 Amendments are proposed by either the Class Council or by petition; they are affirmed by general vote.
- Section 3 Amendments affect all present and future Class Governments.
- Section 3 Amendments may be proposed by either a Class Council or by petition; they must be ratified by all four Class Councils; they are affirmed by general vote.
- If a Class Council does not vote to ratify a Section 3 Amendment within 15 days of its proposition, they cede the right to vote on it.

For further information, see Article IX of the Class Constitution

Read the Constitution! Remember, this is only a common-language overview of the Class Constitution; you will not have the full story unless you actually read the text of the Constitution. More information may also be available at the Constitutions section of the SGO Website at <http://www.NorthShoreSGO.com> .