

## **NATIONAL ENGLISH HONOR SOCIETY**

### **About NEHS**

America's first honor society was founded in 1776, but high school students didn't have access to such organizations for another 150 years. Since then, high school honor societies have been developed in leadership, drama, journalism, French, Spanish, mathematics, the sciences, and in various other fields, but not in English.

Until now! As Joyce Carol Oates writes, "This is the time for which we have been waiting." Or perhaps it was Shakespeare: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer . . ."

The National English Honor Society (NEHS), founded and sponsored by Sigma Tau Delta, is the only national organization exclusively for high school students and faculty who, in the field of English, merit special note for past and current accomplishments. Individual high schools are invited to petition for a local chapter, through which individuals may be inducted into Society membership. Immediate benefits of affiliation will be national recognition, scholarship eligibility, and opportunities for national networking with others who share enthusiasm for, and accomplishment in, the language arts. Eventually NEHS will hold conferences and provide ways to link NEHS with other honor societies and with organizations related to the field of English.

### **SJHS Chapter Name: The Blue Stockings Society**

(The Saint Josph High School chapter is named after the intellectual discussion group that Lady Montague founded in early 1750s, which encouraged and promoted the education of women. With the approval of the Administration, students and the faculty advisory council chose this name because the goals of Lady Montague's society is a reflection of the school's mission: to foster "all which woman is capable.")

### **Mission and Purpose**

The mission and purpose of NEHS is literary and educational. NEHS strives to

1. Confer distinction upon secondary school students for high achievement in English language and literature;
2. Provide, through its local chapters, cultural stimulation in secondary school environments;
3. Encourage interest in the English language arts;
4. Promote exemplary character and good fellowship among its members; and
5. Serve society by fostering literacy.

### **Application Requirements**

Membership in NEHS is an honor bestowed on individuals selected for their accomplishments in the field of English and in overall academic achievement. Requirements for active membership are as follows:

1. Candidates for membership must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester prior to being considered.
2. Candidates must have completed the equivalent of two semesters of English prior to induction as members.
3. Candidates must have achieved a minimum overall grade point average of a 3.5 (on a 4.0 scale) prior to induction as members.
4. Candidates must have earned at least an A- in all her English classes (solid B for Honors or AP).
5. Candidates achieving the minimal requirements may be invited to apply for membership in NEHS. The application process will require candidates to demonstrate their desire to be a member of NEHS.

# Constitution of the National English Honor Society

## Adopted 6 November 2004

### **Article I**

#### **Name and Purpose**

**Section 1** The name of this organization shall be the National English Honor Society, hereafter known as NEHS.

**Section 2** The mission and purposes of this organization shall be literary and educational. NEHS shall strive to

- A. confer distinction upon secondary school students for high achievement in English language and literature;
- B. provide, through its local chapters, cultural stimulation in secondary school environments;
- C. encourage interest in the English language arts;
- D. promote exemplary character and good fellowship among its members; and
- E. serve society by fostering literacy.

**Section 3** NEHS shall be under the sponsorship and supervision of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society.

### **Article II**

#### **The National Advisory Council**

**Section 1** The oversight of this organization shall be vested in the National Advisory Council.

**Section 2** The Advisory Council shall consist of seven members appointed by the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors. Six of these shall be selected to represent the corresponding six Sigma Tau Delta Regions. The NEHS Executive Director shall be an ex-officio, voting member of the Advisory Council.

**Section 3** Each of the six appointed members shall serve a three-year term, renewable once.

**Section 4** Each of the six appointed members shall be tenured, full-time secondary school teachers or administrators whose primary teaching responsibilities are in the field of English.

**Section 5** The National Advisory Council shall be constituted in such a way that two of the six members will complete, and two begin, their three year terms each year, so that in the course of any one academic year at least four members will be in continuing terms of office. This does not apply to the Executive Director, who remains a permanent member of the Council.

**Section 6** Any National Advisory Council member may be removed for cause by a majority vote of the other Council members, provided that the Chair or Associate Chair shall have notified such Council member in writing at least thirty days prior to the hearing preceding such vote, specifying cause(s), or charge(s), or both.

**Section 7** In the event that a Council member is unable to serve, the Council shall identify a replacement, for the Sigma Tau Delta Board, to serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Section 8** Four members shall constitute a quorum of the National Advisory Council. Even in the absence of a quorum, motions may be made, but any such motion(s) shall then be submitted to a vote of record and, if passed by a majority of Council members, shall be considered binding.

**Section 9** Members of the Council shall share the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Council, except for those specifically designated otherwise. These obligations shall include, but not be limited to, disseminating information to local chapters in their regions, encouraging and stimulating

active chapters, encouraging the formation of new chapters, and serving on committees, taskforces, and the like.

**Section 10** National Advisory Council meetings shall be held at least once every year at a time and place selected by the Council. Additionally, a special meeting may be called by the Chair at his/her discretion or by written request of a majority of Council members.

### **Article III**

#### **Officers of the National Advisory Council**

**Section 1** The National Advisory Council shall select its leadership, who shall assume office at the conclusion of the meeting at which they were selected.

**Section 2** The leadership shall consist of a Chair and an Associate Chair. Along with the Executive Director they shall form the NEHS Executive Committee.

**Section 3** The Chair and Associate Chair shall serve two-year terms, renewable once.

**Section 4** In the event that the Chair or Associate Chair is unable to serve, the Council shall select a replacement.

**Section 5** The Executive Committee shall have all executive powers of the Council except those retained by the full Council.

**Section 6** The Executive Committee shall have the following duties:

A. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee and at the full Council meetings. S/he shall appoint committees, of which s/he shall be an ex officio member. S/he shall report annually, to the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors, NEHS's activities, developments, and concerns.

B. The Associate Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair and shall assume duties at the Chair's request.

C. The Associate Chair shall have primary responsibility for accurate minutes of Council meetings, and for their timely distribution.

### **Article IV**

#### **Executive Director**

**Section 1** The NEHS Executive Director shall be appointed by the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors and shall serve subject to a written contract setting forth the powers and duties of the position.

**Section 2** The Executive Director shall serve as the chief liaison between the National Advisory Council and the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors.

**Section 3** The Executive Director's contract may be renewed at the discretion of the Sigma Tau Delta Board.

**Section 4** In the event that the contract with the Executive Director is breached or is otherwise unfulfilled, the president of the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors and the National Advisory Council shall call upon the Board, within one month, to determine the method of selecting a successor.

**Section 5** The Executive Director is an ex officio voting member of the National Advisory Council.

### **Article V**

#### **Committees**

**Section 1** NEHS may create committees as necessary to do the work of the Council.

**Section 2** The Chair shall appoint the members of the committees.

**Section 3** The Chair shall be an ex officio member of all committees.

**Section 4** The committees shall report to the Council regarding the fulfillment of the charges given them by the Council.

#### **Article VI**

##### **Local Chapters**

**Section 1** Any high school is eligible to apply for a charter of a local chapter. Each school shall have its own chapter except in situations where a school's size precludes the formation of a full Faculty Advisory Council. In such cases a chapter can be shared as long as all other constitutional requirements can be met.

**Section 2** Each chapter shall complete a charter application, supplied by the National Office, and pay a chartering fee determined by the National Advisory Council.

**Section 3** Each chapter shall pay an annual affiliation fee determined by the National Advisory Council.

**Section 4** Local-chapter member dues, if any, shall be determined by the local chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the chapter's Faculty Advisory Council.

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

**Section 6** Each chapter shall submit annually its new-member list and associated fees.

**Section 7** Any chapter that fails to fulfill the provisions of this constitution and bylaws, or which conducts its affairs and business in such a way as to contradict or impede the progress and purposes of NEHS, shall forfeit its charter. In the event that a charter is to be canceled at the request of the local chapter the National Office will recognize and register such cancellation.

**Section 8** A chapter that does not submit annually its new-member information and fees, and its annual affiliation fee, shall be deemed inactive. After two years of inactive status, the chapter shall forfeit its charter. The chapter may be reinstated upon submitting reactivation papers and fees, as determined by the National Advisory Council.

#### **Article VII**

##### **The Principal**

**Section 1** The principal of a school at which a local chapter has been chartered shall reserve the right to approve all activities and decisions of that chapter.

**Section 2** The principal shall appoint one or more members of the faculty as chapter advisor(s), who may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 3** The principal shall receive appeals in cases of non-selection of member candidates or the dismissal of members.

#### **Article VIII**

##### **The Chapter Advisor**

**Section 1** The chapter advisor shall be a member of the English faculty, appointed by the principal, and may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 2** The chapter advisor shall be responsible for the direct, day-to-day supervision of the chapter and act as liaison among students, faculty, administration, and community.

**Section 3** The chapter advisor shall maintain files on membership, chapter history, activities, financial transactions, and the chapter bylaws.

**Section 4** The chapter advisor shall regularly review each member for compliance with Society standards and obligations.

**Section 5** The chapter advisor shall help the chapter officers understand and carry out their duties.

**Section 6** The chapter advisor shall be a voting member of the Faculty Advisory Council.

**Section 7** The chapter advisor shall be designated a NEHS honorary member, but will not pay the national induction fee.

**Section 8** The chapter advisor shall be the major liaison between the local chapter and the National Office, submitting the membership information and fees, and any other items requested by the National Advisory Council, and receiving for prompt distribution those items, pertaining to membership, sent by the National Office.

#### **Article IX**

##### **The Faculty Advisory Council**

**Section 1** The Faculty Advisory Council shall consist of no less than three English faculty members identified by, and including, the chapter advisor in consultation with the principal.

**Section 2** The term of the Faculty Advisory Council shall be one year; members may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 3** The Faculty Advisory Council shall meet at least once a year to review the procedures of the chapter, select members, consider dismissals, and/or for other related matters.

**Section 4** The Faculty Advisory Council shall develop and revise, when necessary, all chapter procedures for the selection and dismissal of members.

#### **Article X**

##### **Membership**

**Section 1** Membership in local chapters is an honor bestowed on a student. Selection for membership is by a Faculty Advisory Council and is based both on academic accomplishment in English and English-related courses, as well as on overall academic accomplishment. For the purposes of identifying "English," individual schools may use any courses which use the "English" designation on report cards or in fulfilling "English" requirements.

**Section 2** Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate high standards, including the maintenance of grades, in English. Failure to do so will result in removal from membership.

**Section 3** There are three types of membership: active, alumni, and honorary:

A. Active members are high school students and remain active members while they maintain the required GPA and until graduation, at which time they become alumni members.

B. Alumni members, in accordance with school policy, may be invited to participate in chapter events, but have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

C. Honorary membership may be awarded, by consent of the Faculty Advisory Council, to school officials, principals, teachers, adults and students whose achievements in English or NEHS-related activities merit special recognition. Chapters may induct up to four honorary members per year, and are responsible for induction fees for honorary members. Honorary members shall have no voice or vote in chapter affairs.

**Section 4** Any NEHS member who transfers to another school and brings a letter of verification from the former principal or chapter advisor to the new school NEHS chapter advisor shall be accepted automatically as a member in the new school's chapter.

**Section 5** Membership may not be determined, in any way, on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical (dis)ability.

**Section 6** Acceptance into NEHS membership does not preclude automatic acceptance into Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society.

#### **Article XI**

##### **Selection of Members**

**Section 1** Candidates for membership must have been in attendance at the school the equivalent of one semester prior to being considered. If special circumstances merit, the Faculty Advisory Council may waive the semester regulation.

**Section 2** Candidates must have completed the equivalent of two semesters of English prior to induction as members.

**Section 3** Candidates must have achieved a minimum overall grade point average of a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) prior to induction as members.

**Section 4** Candidates must have achieved a minimum English grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) prior to induction as members.

**Section 5** Candidates achieving the minimal requirements may be invited to apply for membership in NEHS. The application process will require candidates to demonstrate their desire to be a member of NEHS.

**Section 6** Faculty Advisory Councils may raise, but not lower, these criteria; criteria must be based solely on academic considerations.

**Section 7** Any member whose grades in English drop below the chapter's minimum admission requirement for two consecutive semesters shall be dismissed from NEHS membership. Such members may be readmitted when current minimum membership criteria are met.

**Section 8** The method of selection of eligible students and their election to membership shall be determined by the Faculty Advisory Council and shall be consistent with the rules and regulations of NEHS.

**Section 9** A description of the selection procedure and local chapter criteria shall be widely available in a timely fashion to all the school's students, faculty, and parents.

**Section 10** The National Advisory Council shall not review the judgment of the Faculty Advisory Council regarding selection of individual members to local chapters.

#### **Article XII**

##### **Induction**

**Section 1** Each local chapter may institute an appropriate ceremony for the induction of new members. The procedures for and nature of this ceremony shall be determined by the local chapter and its Faculty Advisory Council. Newly inducted members shall receive their membership certificates and other appropriate materials as their membership is affirmed.

**Section 2** In the event that an individual qualifies for membership after the date of the induction ceremony, s/he may be inducted at a regular chapter meeting provided the membership forms and fees already have been submitted to the National Office.

#### **Article XIII**

##### **Removal from Membership**

**Section 1** The procedure for removal from membership shall be determined by the Faculty Advisory Council in compliance with the rules and regulations of the National Advisory Council. A written description of the removal process shall be available to interested parties.

**Section 2** Members who fall below the standards that were the basis for the selection shall be warned promptly in writing by the chapter advisor and given a reasonable amount of time to correct the deficiency, except that in the case of flagrant violation of school rules or civil laws a member does not necessarily have to be warned.

**Section 3** In all cases of impending removal from membership, a member shall have the right to a hearing before the Faculty Advisory Council.

**Section 4** A member may be reinstated when the Faculty Advisory Council determines that the member is once again qualified for membership. All reinstatements must be reported promptly to the National Office.

**Section 5** The chapter advisor shall notify the National Office promptly of any chapter member dismissals.

**Section 6** The National Advisory Council and Sigma Tau Delta shall hear no appeals in cases of removal from membership.

#### **Article XIV**

##### **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 Advisory Council and the principal, and described in the chapter bylaws.

**Section 2** New officers shall be elected in the spring and installed at a special ceremony.

#### **Article XV**

##### **Executive Committee**

**Section 1** The chapter's executive committee shall consist of the chapter's officers and the chapter advisor.

**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.

#### **Article XVI**

##### **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, but they shall occur no less than once a semester.

**Section 3** Special meetings approved by the executive committee may be called by the chapter president or other designated student leader, in consultation with the chapter advisor.

**Section 4** Chapters shall, in all points not expressly provided for in this constitution or the chapter bylaws, conduct meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

#### **Article XVII**

##### **Activities**

**Section 1** Each chapter shall determine, in accordance with the chapter advisor, activities appropriate to the purposes of NEHS.

**Section 2** These activities shall have the following characteristics: fulfill a need within the school or community; have the support of the Faculty Advisory Council; be

appropriate and educationally defensible; and be well planned and executed.

These activities may or may not directly pertain to the discipline of English, but should in some ways reflect the activity's appropriateness for the goals and mission of NEHS.

**Section 3** Each chapter shall publicize its projects in a positive, responsible, and tasteful manner suitable for representing a national honor society such as NEHS.

#### **Article XVIII**

##### **Official Insignia**

**Section 1** NEHS shall have an official emblem selected by the National Advisory Council, who shall have the exclusive control of its use.

**Section 2** Only active, alumni, and honorary members shall be entitled to wear this emblem.

**Section 3** Any member who resigns or is removed from membership shall not be entitled to wear this emblem.

**Section 4** All Society insignia must be procured from the NEHS National Office; members and local chapters may not reproduce or substitute any officially designated insignia.

**Section 5** The motto of NEHS is "Gelast Seal Mid Are"—Old English for "duty goes with honor."

**Section 6** The official colors of NEHS are royal blue and gold.

**Section 7** The official flower of NEHS is the white carnation.

#### **Article XIX**

##### **Bylaws**

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

**Section 2** The chapter bylaws shall contain, but not be limited to, information concerning: membership selection criteria; the scheduling of meetings; the election, duties and responsibilities of officers; the chapter advisor; criteria for removal from office; filling of officers' vacancies; chapter dues (if any), and the method and procedure for ratification of the bylaws.

**Section 3** Each chapter must ensure that a copy of its bylaws is on file with the school.

**Section 4** Each local chapter shall submit annually, to the National Office, a copy of its most recently revised bylaws.

#### **Article XX**

##### **Amendments**

**Section 1** This constitution may be amended at any meeting of the National Advisory Council or by mail (electronic or otherwise) by a majority affirmative vote of the National Advisory Council and with the approval of the Sigma Tau Delta Board of Directors.

**Section 2** Local chapters may petition the National Advisory Council with recommended amendments to the constitution.

#### **Article XXI**

##### **State/Regional Organizations**

**Section 1** Local chapters may organize district, state, or regional NEHS associations, the purpose of which is to sponsor events for local chapter members and to engender projects at a state or regional level.

**Section 2** Any district, state, or regional NEHS associations shall conform to this constitution.

**Section 3** Any district, state, or regional NEHS associations shall not in any way supercede local chapter authority as delegated and defined in this constitution.

**Section 4** Any district, state, or regional associations shall prepare bylaws that conform to all official documents prepared by the NEHS.