

Student Government Constitution & Bylaws

Checklist and Suggestions

	Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Preamble – usually a mission statement or general goals ❑ Establishment of the student government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Name and membership ❑ Affiliations (county/state/national organizations) ❑ Powers and Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Legislative bodies ❑ Advisor (may define role, also) ❑ Administration (as final authority – veto power) ❑ Organizational or legislative structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ General Assembly – membership composition ❑ Executive Cabinet – membership composition ❑ Leadership Class (optional at high school) ❑ Council of Clubs (structure of a governing body comprised of leaders from all school clubs and organizations) ❑ Standing Committees (general) ❑ Finances of the Organization (optional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ May include stipulations on spending (i.e. – cannot spend more than 10% of the budget without general assembly approval) ❑ Where the organization’s funds originate (percentage of proceeds from PTA drive, homecoming, fundraisers, etc.) ❑ Qualifications and Terms of Office – general (elected and appointed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Academic standards (Board of Education Policy/Regulation) ❑ Academic ethics (reflective of school expectations/character program) ❑ Behavioral standards (reflective of code of conduct/school expectations) ❑ Any additional county policies/regulations that may apply (stated generally) ❑ When service begins (July 1 – June 30; following school year; etc.) ❑ Duties and Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ List specific offices – list elected offices first ❑ May include succession order ❑ List appointed positions (general chairperson of a standing committee – list specific committees in the bylaws) 	

Elections

- ❑ Majority or popular vote
- ❑ Time of year
- ❑ General process
- ❑ Who votes for which positions (grade level, class, entire student body, etc.)
- ❑ Spell out specifics in the bylaws
- ❑ Impeachment and Succession
 - ❑ Impeachment – who may bring charges and for what reasons (describe general procedures and list specifics in the bylaws)
 - ❑ How to fill vacancies (resigning or impeached) – be specific on timing whether elections are held or officer is appointed with simple vote of affirmation by executive cabinet or general assembly
 - ❑ Consider when a president resigns or is impeached that the vice president becomes president and a new vice president is elected/appointed (may help with smoother continuity of organization)
- ❑ Ratification and Amendments to Constitution (process)
 - ❑ Advance notice to membership
 - ❑ Votes needed (3/4 or 2/3)
 - ❑ When it takes effect (immediately or the next school year, etc.)
 - ❑ How often a formal review should take place (often the responsibility of a parliamentarian – every other year, etc.)

Comments

Bylaws

Bylaws should be no more restrictive or detailed than is necessary – language should be clear and precise

- ❑ Quorum of the general assembly, executive cabinet, committees, etc.
- ❑ Meetings
 - ❑ Meeting rules of order (*Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* is the standard)
 - ❑ Frequency of meetings (general assembly, executive cabinet, committees)
- ❑ Standing Committees
 - ❑ List specific traditional committees
 - ❑ May list specifications for ad hoc committees

- Election Procedures
 - Spell-out a few more specifics – petitions, letter of recommendations, signed agreement (academic ethics/code of conduct), etc.
 - Recommended - a clear statement that election rules, timeline, balloting, etc. would be written and distributed to all candidates before the elections.¹ Be sure the principal approves all rules
- Impeachment Specifications
 - Recommended that a select committee comprised of a few executive members and general assembly members hear impeachment charges to determine validity before bringing charges before a general assembly
 - In middle school – recommended that the impeachment trial not be the entire general assembly (a select committee can make the recommendation and send their decision to the advisor and principal for approval/veto²)
- Amendments to the bylaws – procedures, required votes, which legislative body

Comments

General Comments:

¹ Sample Election Rules

- Campaign guidelines including expenses, placement of materials, ownership, responsibility, etc.
- Sample of ballot (for majority votes in offices with more than two candidates, preferential balloting is the preferred method to allow a clear majority with a second ballot) – who counts the ballots - how counted...
- State whether election vote counts will be publicly announced (or not announced even individually)

² Principal Veto – students should be reminded that they have the right to appeal the decision of the principal (specific procedures are outlines in Regulation JFA-RA *Student Rights and Responsibilities*)