

Introduction

The National Honor Society (NHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to honor those students who demonstrate excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since its beginning in 1921.

Today, it is estimated that more than one million students annually participate in activities of NHS and its middle level counterpart, the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS).

NHS chapters are found in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, many U.S. territories, and Canada. Chapter membership not only recognizes students for their accomplishments, but also challenges them to develop through involvement in school activities and community service. Both NHS and NJHS were founded by and are programs of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

History of the Organization

In 1921, NASSP officially established the National Honor Society. Though many local and regional honor societies existed prior to 1921, no nationwide organization had been founded. Under the leadership of Dr. Edward Rynearson, principal of the Fifth Avenue High School, Pittsburgh, the organization grew from the original Alpha Chapter at the Fifth Avenue School to more than 1,000 chapters by 1930. Equipped with a constitution, an emblem and motto, and a group of dedicated principals as coordinators, the new NHS organization quickly developed into one of the country's leading educational groups.

Four main purposes outlined in the NHS constitution have guided chapters from the beginning: "To create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, and to develop character in the students of secondary schools." These purposes also translate into the criteria used for membership selection in each local chapter.

In 1929, NASSP turned its attention to younger students and established the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS). With its own constitution and handbook, NJHS has established criteria that parallel the emphases found in NHS with one added purpose—to encourage citizenship.

Both NHS and NJHS are programs of NASSP, which appoints a National Council—the controlling body of NHS. In addition, National Council members serve as the selection committee for the prestigious NHS scholarship, which has been administered annually in schools with NHS chapters since 1946.

NASSP

NASSP is an important educational organization representing more than 30,000 school leaders, including principals and assistant principals in middle level and high schools. Since 1916, NASSP has demonstrated its commitment to addressing national school quality and providing professional leadership to meet the changing needs of our world.

NASSP administers NHS, NJHS, and the National Association of Student Councils, which sponsors the NASC National Conference each June and the LEAD conferences each spring.

In addition to the NHS Scholarship Program, NASSP administers other important student recognition programs including the Principal's Leadership Award (PLA), funded by Herff Jones Inc., and the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Information regarding these awards programs is sent to schools and is available on the Web site.

Schools affiliating with the national office receive a subscription to *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine for the chapter adviser. This award-winning monthly (September–May) magazine features articles on all areas of student activities with a special section for Honor Society news and project ideas.

The NHS catalog, containing information on a wide variety of insignia items and other resources available from NASSP, is sent to all affiliated schools each fall. Full online ordering capabilities are available via the Web site.

The Web site, www.nhs.us, is an important resource for all chapters, with information on all programs and activities. The Adviser Zone, a members-only section of the site, features chapter management tools created specifically for chapter advisers.

For more information about affiliating with the national office of NHS, establishing a chapter of NHS or NJHS in your school, or for assistance in developing the programs of your existing chapter, please contact:

NHS/NASSP

1904 Association Drive • Reston, VA 20191-1537

Phone: 703-860-0200 • Fax: 703-476-5432

Sales office: 866-647-7253 (toll free)

E-mail: nhs@nhs.us • Web site: www.nhs.us

All rights to the intellectual property contained herein including copyrights, trademarks, and service marks are reserved by NASSP.

For additional copies of this brochure, contact the NASSP Sales Office and request Publication# 6209904. Copies are sold in sets of 25 for \$16.50 (Non-member price is \$19.50), plus tax (where applicable) and shipping and handling. Note: Please have your school affiliation number available when placing this and all NHS orders.

©2007 NASSP (revised edition)



National Honor Society



National Honor Society® Established in 1921

The National Honor Society (NHS) is a program of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Selection Criteria

The NHS and NJHS National Council establishes the national standards for all NHS chapters. Local chapters create their own bylaws that are to be consistent and comply with the NHS national constitution.

Any student in grades 10-12 in a school that has both an official charter of and an up-to-date affiliation with the national office of the National Honor Society, is eligible for consideration for membership in NHS (instructions for obtaining a charter or affiliation are found in the pages that follow). *All membership selection is handled through the local school chapter.*

NHS is more than just academic recognition. The NHS chapter establishes guidelines for selection that are based upon a candidate's outstanding performance in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Scholarship: "Students who have a cumulative grade point average of 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or equivalent standard of excellence, or a higher cumulative average set by the local school's faculty council, meet the scholarship requirement for membership. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, and character." (NHS Constitution, Article IX, Section 2)

Service: This quality is defined as the voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, without direct financial or material compensation to the individual performing the service. Chapters may establish criteria that stipulate specific quantities of projects or service hours for candidates, as well as expectations of service obligations once a student is selected as a member.

Leadership: Student leaders are often viewed as those students who are resourceful, good problem solvers, involved in and promoters of school activities, idea contributors, dependable, and who are both organized and organizers. Experiences to be considered under the leadership criterion can include activities that originate in the school or community or both, as determined by the local chapter.

Character: The student of good character can be said to be one who upholds principles of morality and ethics; is cooperative and responsible; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and is a good citizen. Local chapters consider the values and traditions of both the local school and community when defining the character criterion.

Specific standards for these four criteria may vary from one school to the next. Such variations are acceptable as long as they do not fall outside the parameters set by the National Council of NHS. All chapters are required to record and publish the criteria and general procedures used in their local selection processes. Final selection is made by a vote of the five-member Faculty Council, a selection committee appointed by the principal. The NHS adviser supervises the selection process and maintains copies of the local procedures and has them available upon request.



Membership in NHS

Once selected, a student is awarded the privilege of membership in the local chapter at a special induction ceremony. With induction, each member assumes certain obligations as outlined by the chapter and the national constitution. The chapter must conduct a service project for the school or community and see to the development of an individual service project for each member. Chapters may choose to sponsor fundraising projects or otherwise involve themselves with the school to reach the chapter's goals. In addition, regular meetings of the chapter can be held to conduct chapter business. All chapters should delineate the full range of membership obligations and share them on a regular basis with all members and their parents. All active NHS chapter members are expected to fulfill these obligations and support chapter activities.

For additional information on selection criteria, membership obligations, and procedures of the chapter, please refer to the NHS Handbook (2005 edition). Copies of the handbook are available from the NASSP sales office or via online ordering at www.nhs.us.

State NHS and NJHS Organizations

Although local chapters are officially established through a charter with the national office, some chapters have organized state associations. Currently the following states host state meetings or maintain an organization of honor societies:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In addition, Puerto Rico maintains its own association.

Many of these organizations offer newsletters, conventions, and workshops to keep their members informed. Chapters in other states that are interested in creating a new state organization can contact the national office for assistance.

National Honor Society Programs

All schools that have or wish to have a chapter of NHS must maintain an annual affiliation with the national office. The national office administers a large variety of programs and activities. Once inducted, members are eligible to participate in these opportunities through NHS.

NHS and NJHS National Conference: Students and advisers are eligible to register for the annual NHS and NJHS National Conference. Nationally known speakers and presenters as well as delegates from around the country participate in this motivational weekend conference. The conference hosts the NHS Scholars' Bowl®, a unique academic competition for Honor Society members.

NHS Scholarship Program: Each chartered school can submit the names of two seniors to enter this national competition. Scholarship applications are distributed each fall to the local NHS chapter adviser.

Adviser Training and Resources

With affiliation, the principal identifies a member of the faculty to be the chapter adviser and to receive information from the national office. The publication for these advisers is *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, published monthly during the school year. In addition, during the year a variety of newsletters and publications are sent to affiliated schools. Additional information about all of these programs and publications is provided regularly to all advisers in *Leadership* magazine, in the NHS catalog, and through informative brochures.

The national office and some state associations provide professional development opportunities for chapter advisers. These services are available at the national conference and the LEAD conferences held each spring. CEUs and graduate credit are available for participants. Dates and sites of these annual programs, and a complete list of all of benefits for chapters, are available on the Web site.

