

CONSTITUTION OF THE ROCKPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL

I. Purpose of the Student Council

The Rockport Student Council is a body of students elected by their peers to represent and work towards the interests of the student body within Rockport High School. The Student Council will strive to represent the diversity of Rockport High School's students.

The Student Council's primary responsibility is to serve as an intermediary between the student body and the High School faculty and administration by representing student interests in administrative decision making, and keeping students informed of pertinent administrative processes.

The Student Council also works to bring students, faculty, and administration together, and exists as a venue for seeking mutual understanding, cooperation, and compromise on issues of contention between students and faculty or administration.

Beyond its representative intermediary role, the Student Council will work in any feasible capacity to serve the interests of the Rockport student body, the Rockport Public Schools, and the greater Rockport community.

II. Election Process

The Rockport High School Student Council members shall be elected, as described below, by the students of Rockport High School.

Section 1: Composition of the Council

The Rockport High School Student Council will consist of two (2) representatives per U-Block class. One representative must be from either 9th or 10th grade and the other representative must be from either 11th or 12th grade. If more than 75% of a U-Block class is from one of these these categories, then both representatives may, but do not have to, come from that category.

Section 2: Election Date

The election will be held before the third week of September each year, on a date chosen by the Administration, and the Student Council will take their positions and have their first meeting before the first week of October.

Section 3: Eligibility

All students enrolled and in good standing in Rockport High School are eligible to run for office and all students enrolled in Rockport High School are eligible to vote. A student will be considered to be in good standing if that student is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities as described in the handbook of Rockport High School, including all academic and behavioral requirements.

Section 4: Election Process

Any student interested in running for the Student Council must notify their U-Block teacher in writing, either physical or digital, at least 2 days before the elections are to be held. On the day of U-Block Representative elections, students running may make short speeches. After all students running for U-Block Representative have been given a chance to speak, the students of the U-Block will vote for their top two (2) candidates. The U-Block teacher will count the votes, and the two candidates receiving the most votes will become the U-Block Representatives. In the event of a tie, the candidates who tied will be given the opportunity to briefly readdress their arguments, and then the U-Block students will each vote for one (1) candidate for the remaining position or positions. The U-Block teacher will announce the winners to the U-Block, but not the vote count, and will notify the Student Council Advisor. If fewer than two students from a U-Block run, then the U-Block will have fewer than two representatives in the Student Council. No compensations will be made for U-Blocks in which fewer than two students run, or in which one or more representatives resigns from their position. Mail-in votes will not be permitted, but a candidate may give their speech, in writing, either physical or digital, to their U-Block teacher and have it read on their behalf in the event of their absence.

III. U-Block Representatives

Section 1: Definition

A U-Block Representative, also referred to as a “Representative” or simply a “Rep”, is the representative of a U-Block class. Each U-Block shall elect two Representatives, and each Representative shall have one vote in the Student Council.

Section 2: Duties

The Representatives will seek ways to improve students’ experience and education at school. In order to do this, Representatives will:

1. Seek student and faculty opinions about important school issues and bring concerns to the Student Council
2. Report of the actions of the Student Council to their U-Blocks
3. Attend the meetings of the Student Council regularly, and at a minimum, attend no less than 75% of the meetings during a quarter
4. Complete the tasks assigned to them by the Student Council, within reason, and communicate their progress to the Student Council in a timely manner

Section 3: Rights, Limitations

1. Each Representative has equal voice and all votes count equally. The decisions are made by the majority of the Representatives present. Votes by proxy will be permitted if two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the Representatives present vote to permit it for a certain vote. The faculty Advisor may express his or her opinion in the meeting, but must address the Chairperson, as described in Article IV, in the appropriate manner and does not have a vote.

Section 4: Removal of U-Block Representatives

If a U-Block Representative falls short of their duties or intentionally violates this Constitution, the three (3) Student Council Officers and the Student Council Advisor will vote as to whether the Representative shall be removed. After discussion of these four (4) people, a vote will be taken, and the Representative will be removed with a vote in favor of removal of at least three (3) out of these four (4) people. The Representative may appeal the decision. If an appeal is made, the Student Council will be informed of the situation, and a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote will overturn the decision of the Officers and Advisor, and the Representative will be readmitted. If a Representative is removed, no replacement will be appointed until regular elections in the next school year.

IV. Officers

Section 1: Election of Officers

At the first Student Council meeting of the school year, which will be held as soon as is reasonable after the elections, Officers will be elected by the U-Block Representatives. All Officers will be current U-Block Representatives, and no person who is not a current U-Block Representative will serve as an Officer. At such a meeting, each Representative who would like to run for an Officer position will give a brief speech. The Student Council Advisor will keep a list of those who are running. After each candidate has spoken, the Advisor will write the name of each position, and under each position, the list of students running for it. Each Representative of the Student Council will then have the opportunity to ask questions of any of the candidates. After all questions have been asked, or at a time decided by the Advisor, the Representatives will be given the opportunity to vote, by ballot, for up to one (1) candidate for each of the Officer positions. All Representatives of the Student Council are eligible to run and vote for Officer positions. The only exception is that members of the Student Advisory Committee are ineligible to run for the position of President of Student Council. All Officers shall be familiar with this Constitution and uphold its doctrines. Officers shall also be familiar with the Constitution of the Student Advisory Committee.

Section 2: Duties of Officers

Subsection 1: President

1. Lead meetings of the Student Council, acting as Chairperson
2. In collaboration with the other Officers, prepare agendas for upcoming Student Council meetings
3. Meet with faculty, staff, and School Administrators in order to inform them of the activities of the student body and the Student Council, and to gather their suggestions and reactions
4. Maintain relations between the Student Council and any other appropriate organizations
5. Act as the official representative of the Student Council
6. Ensure that Student Council projects are completed in a timely manner
7. Be a non-voting ex-officio member of the Student Advisory Committee, and give the Student Advisory Committee reports about the actions and decisions of the Student Council

Subsection 2: Vice President

1. Assist the President in his or her duties
2. Maintain primary responsibility for coordinating school wide events, including student forums
3. Act as a Treasurer by keeping financial records, giving financial reports to the Student Council, and leading fundraising efforts
4. Act as Chairperson in the absence of the President

Subsection 3: Secretary

1. Keep appropriate minutes and other records of the activities of the Student Council
2. Keep attendance records of U-Block Representatives
3. Coordinate correspondence of the Student Council with external groups, including reports to the general school body and the community
4. Act as Chairperson in the absence of the President and Vice President

Section 3: Impeachment

Officers may be impeached and removed by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of Student Council. The decision may be appealed to a committee consisting of the Student Advisory Committee and the Principal of Rockport High School. If the Officer is also a member of the Student Advisory Committee, they will not be a part of such an appeal committee, but the Student Advisory Committee will choose another student to be a full member of the appeal committee. This student will be chosen by unanimous decision of the remaining Student Advisory Committee members. In the case that a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the Student Advisory Committee will forfeit this member, and the appeal committee will only consist of the remaining four (4) members of the Student Advisory Committee and the Principal of Rockport High School. The removal will be overturned by a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of such a committee. Impeachment of Officers should only be used in cases of disloyalty to the Student Council or intentful violation of this Constitution. If an Officer is impeached and removed, they lose all status and duties associated with their position as an Officer and will no longer be a U-Block Representative. If the Officer is a member of the Student Advisory Committee, the Student Advisory Committee will take action as it deems fit, but the member will not be automatically removed. If the President of the Student Council is impeached, he or she will lose his or her status as an ex-officio member of the Student Advisory Committee. If an Officer is removed from office, the Student Council will hold another election as soon as possible to fill the position. During the vacancy, the other Officers will complete the duties of the vacant officer.

V. Advisor

Section 1: Appointment of the Advisor

The Advisor of the Student Council will be appointed each year by the Principal of Rockport High School according to the procedures described in the Rockport Teachers' Association Agreement. During the process of choosing the Advisor, if there is more than one applicant, the Principal will meet at least once with the Student Advisory Committee, in a closed meeting, in order to gain input and advice on the decision.

Section 2: Duties of the Advisor

The Advisor will help to guide the actions of the Student Council. The Advisor will:

1. Ensure that the Student Council follows all applicable laws and school rules
2. Help to inform the Student Council of staff perspectives
3. Be familiar with and uphold this Constitution and the Constitution of the Student Advisory Committee

Section 3: Right and Limitation of the Advisor

The Advisor has the following rights and limitations:

1. The Advisor will not be removed from their position except by voluntary departure, extended absence of more than two (2) months, or decision of the Principal
2. The Advisor will not have the right to vote during Student Council meetings, unless specifically stated within this Constitution
3. The Advisor will be familiar with this Constitution and work to ensure that it is followed by the Student Council

VI. Meetings

Section 1: Required Meeting Frequency

The Student Council shall hold regular meetings at least twice per month from October through May, and shall post their meeting times outside the main High School Office at least 48 hours prior.

Section 2: Open Meetings

Meetings of the Student Council shall be open whenever possible, but may decide to close their meetings with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Representatives present in order to discuss matters described under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. CH 30A § 18-25. If the Student Council goes to a closed meeting, the Student Council Advisor will not be allowed to be in attendance. The Advisor may be permitted to remain with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Student Council.

Section 3: Public Comment

Each regular meeting of the Student Council shall have a designated time for any public comment, as described in the Open Meeting Law.

Section 4: Emergency Meetings

Emergency meetings may be called by any Officer of the Student Council, or by the Advisor. In such a case, the Officer or Advisor initiating the emergency meeting shall inform all members of the purpose of the meeting and the desired time for the meeting. The President and the Secretary will post the meeting time and its purpose outside the High School Main Office as soon as possible following the calling of the emergency meeting.

Section 5: Meeting Locations

Meetings, whenever possible, will be held within the Rockport High School. In the event that the meeting cannot be held in the Rockport High School, the meeting must be held in another public building, and the time and location shall be announced at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Section 6: Rules of Order

The Student Council will act as an open forum led by the Chairperson. No meetings will be held if all three (3) Officers are absent, except for hearings about the Officers or the Officer positions, including, but not limited to impeachment hearings and Officer elections. If deemed necessary, the Chairperson may decide at his or her discretion to suspend open forum and follow *Robert's Rules of Order*.

VII. Powers and Responsibilities of the Student Council

Section 1: School Development

The Student Council should be actively involved in High School improvement. This may take, but is not limited to the following forms:

1. Working with teachers to improve students' classroom experience through constructive feedback on curriculum and teaching styles
2. Making recommendations to the administration and Student Advisory Committee regarding the improvement of the high school

Section 2: Student Government

The Student Council shall act as a unified High School Student Government, and therefore should make decisions and recommendations on behalf of the high school student body. This may take, but is not limited to, the following forms:

1. Informing the student body of the actions of the Student Government and of pertinent issues in debate, and gathering feedback from the student body
2. Acting as the student voice in the decision making of the High School Administration and Staff
3. Making reports and recommendations to other parts of the schools' governance in order to inform them of the interests and concerns of the High School student body

Section 3: Student Led Events

The Student Council may initiate and plan events, such as fundraisers, community service projects, and assist charities, in order to promote interaction with the community.

Section 4: Class Officers

The Student Council will not interfere with the duties and responsibilities of the Officers of each graduating class, such as planning dances and class fundraisers.

Section 5: Elections of the Student Advisory Committee

In years in which fewer than five (5) eligible students run for the Student Advisory Committee, it is the responsibility of the Student Council, in partnership with the High School Administration, to fill the positions through the procedure in Article II, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Rockport Public Schools Student Advisory Committee to the Rockport Public Schools School Committee.

VIII. Amendment

Section 1: Amendment by the Student Council

This Constitution of the Student Council may be amended by a vote of at least two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) of Representatives. The Student Advisory Committee or the Principal of the High School may veto amendments. If an amendment is vetoed, it will be put before the high school student body, and will be adopted with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of all High School students, teachers with at least one (1) High School class, and support faculty and staff who work solely at the high school level. Each Rockport High School student, high school staff member, or high school faculty, will have one (1) vote of equal weight.

Section 2: Amendment by Referendum

The general student body may request for a referendum to amend this Constitution. A referendum will be taken with the following procedure:

1. Students of Rockport High School interested in amending this Constitution will clearly lay out their amendments, in writing, either physical or digital, and present them to the Administration of the High School, the Student Council, and the Student Advisory Committee
2. After the Administration has been notified, the students must gain 50 signatures in support of the amendment, and present the signatures to the Administration
3. After the Administration has verified the signatures, the Principal or his or her designee shall choose a date on which a student body debate, moderated by the Principal, will be held on the issue of the proposed amendment
4. After debate has closed, the High School student body will vote and the Constitution will be amended with a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) majority of all students who vote

IX. Adoption

Section 1: This Constitution for the Student Council will be adopted and ratified with a majority vote of the High School student body, teachers with at least one (1) High School class, and faculty and staff working solely at the High School level. Each Rockport High School student, high school staff member, or high school faculty, will have one (1) vote of equal weight. The Principal may reject the adoption of the Constitution, in which case the School Committee will decide whether to approve or reject the Constitution.

X. General Recommendations

Section 1: First Meeting of the Year

During the first meeting of the Student Council each year, the members should have a workshop, of approximately an hour, in which they:

1. Familiarize new members with the school and the Student Council, including the provisions of this Constitution
2. Review and adopt development goals made at the end of the previous school year by the previous Student Council for the upcoming school year in collaboration with the Student Advisory Committee, including a development plan for the High School, to be presented to the Principal by the Officers and to be incorporated into the Student Advisory Committee's district development plan

Section 2: Last Meeting of the Year

During the last Student Council meeting of the school year, the Student Council should vote to formally recommend development goals for the following school year, to be approved or amended by the following year's Student Council, as described in Section 1 of this Article. These development goals should be worked on throughout the year, and clearly enumerated during the spring.

Section 3: Purpose of Meetings

During regular meetings, the members of the Student Council should discuss various recent events in the high school, student concerns, hear reports from the Student Advisory Committee if applicable, and make decisions in an effort to improve the school. The Student Council should also make periodic written recommendations to the Student Advisory Committee.

Section 4: Open Forums

The Student Council should hold periodic open forums, at least once per school quarter, for the purpose of reporting to students, faculty, administration, parents and other interested persons the activities of the Student Council, and in order to answer questions and receive input about the Council's activities.

Section 5: Guest Speakers at Student Council Meetings

The Student Council should invite various guests to attend its meetings. The Student Council should make an effort to hear a report from the leader of each extracurricular activity in the High School at least once per school year. The Student Council should also make an effort to invite faculty, staff, and administration to speak before its members.

Section 6: Relationship to the Student Advisory Committee

The Student Council should maintain close relations to the Student Advisory Committee, and should allow the Chairperson of the Student Advisory Committee to present at any meeting, after first notifying the Secretary of the Student Council, and requesting an agenda item. The President of the Student Council should also report on the Student Council's decisions and activities at Student Advisory Committee meetings.