

# Rhinebeck High School Student Council Constitution

## I. STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council serves as the governing body for all students enrolled at Rhinebeck High School (hereinafter “RHS”). The Student Council shall act as a voice for the student body in meetings and other communications with the administration, faculty, and staff of RHS. Further, the Student Council shall reflect the interests of the student body consistent with the purpose of the Student Council (see Article II). The Student Council shall be composed of students of RHS, as defined in Article III.

## II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

The purpose of the Student Council is to represent and address the needs and interests of the student body at RHS. It shall strive to facilitate communications and interaction between the RHS students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community, and shall sponsor various educational and social activities that will further this purpose.

## III. OFFICERS

The Student Council Executive Officers shall be the President, the Vice President, the Treasurer, and the Secretary. Student Council Officers shall include the Presidents, the Vice Presidents, the Treasurers, and the Secretaries of each of the four RHS grades (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th). All

Officers shall serve a term of one year (e.g. first day of summer break 2020 through the last day of school 2021).

#### IV. VOTING PRIVILEGES

All Student Council Executive Officers, with the exception of the Student Council President, and the Presidents of the four grades (or their designated representatives) shall have full voting privileges on all Student Council affairs. In the case of a tie vote, the Student Council President must cast the deciding vote.

#### V. ELECTIONS

Student Council Officers shall be elected to office in the Spring (ideally, May) of the year preceding each officer's one-year term of service.

#### VI. COMMITTEES

The Student Council may create Ad Hoc Committees for special Student Body initiatives when necessary and are dissolved when their purpose has been achieved. Ad Hoc Committees must be approved by the Student Council.

The President may appoint any member of the Student Body to the position of Ad Hoc Committee Chair. A Chair may or may not be a student currently serving on the Student Council as an Officer. Student Council Officers may screen potential candidates as they see fit.

The Student Council may also have constituent members on the Building Level Planning Team (hereinafter “BLPT”) or any other administrative committee to which Student Council representation is invited. The Student Council President will appoint all Student Council representatives serving on said committees. They will communicate student concerns in these forums, and during the Student Council meeting after their various committee meetings, the representative will report back to the Student Council on the topics from the committee meetings.

## VII. STUDENT CLUBS

The Student Council may fund various student clubs that are approved by the RHS administration. All clubs must go through an official application and approval process and must follow all terms of funding, should funding be granted. Student Council Officers will be responsible for determining budget allocations for student club funding requests.

## VIII. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

All Student Council Officers shall share in the responsibility of ensuring adherence to the Student Council Constitution. Members shall also oversee the process of suggesting and approving amendments to the Constitution, as outlined below.

There are two ways to propose amendments to the Constitution. Amendments to this Constitution can be prepared by at least two officers of the Student

Council (or suggested in a motion that is seconded) OR submitted in a petition signed by 30 members of the Student Body to the Student Council President. To become effective, a proposed amendment must be approved by a 2/3 vote of all Officers of the Student Council. Any modification of this Constitution must be made known to the Student Body in a timely manner. The RHS Principal must approve all amendments.

## The Bylaws of the Constitution of the Student Body

### I. OFFICERSHIP

Officership may only be conveyed upon students who are enrolled as students at RHS. Officers shall receive all benefits of Student Body membership, including voting privileges.

### II. OFFICERS AND DUTIES

1. President: The President shall have the general responsibility for coordinating the activities of the Student Council and for directing and overseeing the response to the affairs of the Student Body. They shall preside at all Student Council meetings. The President shall not have voting privileges, except in the case of a tie vote, during which they must cast the deciding vote. The President shall be the lead representative of the Student Body in dealings with the RHS faculty and staff, and with the community. The President shall meet regularly with the Principal of RHS. It is the responsibility of the President to ensure all

Student Council Executive Officers are adhering to Student Council rules and responsibilities. The President shall set the agenda for all Student Council meetings.

2. Vice President: The Vice President shall share the duties and responsibilities of the President. They shall serve as the Parliamentarian of Student Council meetings and shall, in the absence of the President, preside at Student Council meetings. The Vice President shall also meet regularly with the Principal of RHS.
3. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Student Activity funds. They shall keep all financial records, disburse funds, and present monthly and annual accounts of financial status of Student Activity funds to the Student Council. The Treasurer will be responsible for communicating with all funding applicants and recipients to guide them through the application and/or reimbursement process. They are also the signing officer of all Student Council's budgetary expenses and reimbursements. The Treasurer works directly with the Rhinebeck Central School District Extra-classroom Treasurer. They shall preside at Student Council meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President.
4. Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for recording the minutes and acting as official timekeeper of all Student Council meetings. The Secretary shall be the recipient of agenda requests from students (including funding requests), faculty, staff and Student Council Officers. They shall prepare and disseminate meeting agendas to attendees prior

to the meeting. The Secretary shall maintain a public record of all meetings and ensure that copies of meeting minutes are distributed to the RHS community in a timely manner. They shall be responsible for internal communications within the Council, and will manage the Student Council email account, either responding to external requests or directing these requests to the appropriate Student Council Officer. The Secretary shall also be responsible for organizing and administering all regular and special Student Council elections, in coordination with the President and RHS Faculty Advisor. They shall preside at Student Council meetings in the absence of the President, Vice President, and the Treasurer. In the absence of the Secretary, the Student Council Treasurer will record minutes.

#### IV. ELECTIONS

1. The Officers of the Student Council are open to all students in good standing, as defined as: committed to honoring the RHS Student Code of Conduct and an enrolled student at RHS throughout their term of office.
2. Officers may hold only one position at a time.
3. The positions of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, may only be held by students entering into at least their Junior or Senior year of study.
4. Elections for the positions of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, shall be held each year in Spring (ideally, May).

5. The President and Vice President shall run together on a Presidential ticket for the academic year.
6. Polls for all elections shall be open for an amount of time that the Student Council determines will encourage the greatest voter participation practical under the circumstances.
7. Write-in candidates shall not be allowed for any position.
8. In the case of a tie, a runoff election will be held. The runoff election dates will be advertised no later than 3 days after the original election. The runoff election must be held no later than 14 days after the closing of the first round of elections.
9. If only one candidate stands for office, an election for that position shall still be held.
10. In the event that an elected council member terminates office before their term is started, Student Council will refer to the original election results to determine the candidate with the second-highest number of votes to fill that position. If there were no other candidates running for that office, the President, with the approval of the Student Council, shall appoint an interim to serve until the next election.
11. Voters of any year may vote for candidates running for Executive Officer positions. However, Voters may only vote for Class Officers of the Voter's respective Class (e.g. 9th grade students voting for 9th grade officers).

12. Once polls close, the Secretary will work to publish the following information to the Student Council social media site(s) and the student newspaper website:
  1. The total percentage of students who participated in the election of those who were eligible to vote
  2. The names of the candidates that received the most votes for each office
13. The Student Council will send an email to the RHS Principal's office notifying them of the election results. This email will announce the winning candidates for each position, as well as include links to the Student Council sites where further election results can be found.

#### V. STUDENT COUNCIL OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES AND REMOVAL

1. The Student Council consists of all Officers of the Student Body as listed in Article III of the Constitution.
2. In order to remove an Officer from their position, the following procedure must be adhered to:
  - a. Any Officer of the Student Council may be removed from their position if they fail to fulfill the duties of her/his office or carry out her/his duties in an improper manner, or abuse her/his position in the interest of personal advancement or to the detriment of the organization (i.e. chronic absenteeism from Student Council meetings).

- b. An Officer of the Student Council must contact the offending Officer, as well as another Officer, in writing and inform them of her/his intention. The RHS Principal and the President must be notified of any intention to remove an Officer. The RHS Principal and President shall engage in conversation to discuss next steps prior to any vote on the removal process. An Officer may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Student Council.
3. Voting and Meetings
- a. Unless stated otherwise, a Student Council motion requires a simple majority vote (5/8) to pass.
  - b. Members of the Student Body shall be encouraged to attend the weekly open meetings. However, members shall be entitled to representation by their elected Student Council Officers only, unless otherwise permitted by the Executive Officer presiding at the meeting. They may also be asked by the Student Council to withdraw from the meeting at any time.
  - c. At the first meeting of the school year in September, the parliamentary procedure of the Student Council meetings shall be established and followed.
  - d. Before each meeting, the Secretary shall issue a meeting agenda. Any member wishing to include a topic on the agenda must contact the Secretary at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

- e. Special meetings, i.e. meetings not regularly scheduled, may be called by the President or upon written or verbal request by at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Student Council.
- f. Student Council meetings shall be held on a regular basis. At a minimum, the Student Council will hold one open meeting per month. The Student Council meeting schedule shall be determined during the summer before each academic year, and shall be reviewed during the first meeting of the academic year.
- g. Two-thirds of Officers (6/8) in attendance shall constitute a quorum at Student Council meetings. This includes the President or presiding officer, even though they are not entitled to vote.
- h. Student Council Officers are expected to attend all Student Council Meetings and fulfill the responsibilities required of them at events. The unexcused absence of an Officer from three Student Council meetings or a lack of fulfillment of responsibilities at events shall be considered a failure to fulfill duties of their office and grounds for removal. An excused absence can be obtained by contacting the President or Secretary. After the first unexcused absence, the Officer will be given a verbal warning. After a second unexcused absence, a written warning will be served. A third and final unexcused absence may result in referral to the President and Vice President to determine a vote for removal from office.

## VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed in the same manner as the amendments to the Constitution of the Student Council. To become effective, the majority of Officers of the Student Council must approve a proposed amendment. Any modification of Bylaws must be made known to the Student Body in a timely manner. All amendments and modifications must also be approved by the RHS Principal. ■

Ratified on June 11, 2020  
Student Council Adviser: Gideon Moor  
Student Council President: Grace Ellis