**Rho Kappa National Social Studies Honor Society Constitution**

**The Rho Kappa: The National Social Studies Honor Society**

Sponsored by National Council for the Social Studies

*Approved August 2011*

**Article 1 Name and Purpose**

**Section 1:**

The name of this organization shall be the Rho Kappa Social Studies Honor  
Society

**Section 2:**

The mission and the purposes of this organization shall be:

* to promote scholarship and to recognize academic excellence in social studies among high school students.
* to provide through its local chapters opportunities for exploration in the social studies in secondary school environments and the community.
* to encourage interest in, understanding of, and appreciation for the social studies

**Article 2 National Rho Kappa Advisory Council**

**Section 1:**

The oversight of this organization shall be with an Ad Hoc committee of 6  
members of the National Council for the Social Studies appointed by the NCSS  
president.

**Section 2:**

The NCSS Executive Director shall be an ex-officio voting member of the  
Advisory Council. A staff member from External Relations and Council  
Communications should be attendance to advise but not vote.

**Section 3:**

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

**Section 4:**

At least three of the appointed members of this body shall be full-time  
secondary school teachers with at least 5 years' experience whose primary  
teaching responsibilities are in the field of social studies.

**Section 5:**

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall be an official entity of NCSS  
and therefore all regulations, rules, and by-laws concerning representation  
and behavior pursuant to such committee will apply.

**Section 6:**

A Chair of Advisory Council shall be selected by the president in consultation  
with the group. The Chair shall serve a one-year term which can be renewable  
once.

**Section 7:**

The Chair of the Advisory Council shall preside at all meetings for this body  
and report annually to the Board of Directors of NCSS.

**Section 8:**

Members of the Advisory Council shall share the powers, duties, and  
responsibilities of the council except for those specifically stated  
otherwise. These obligations shall include but not be limited to:  
disseminating information to local chapters in their regions, encouraging and  
stimulating active chapters, and encouraging formation of new chapters, and  
serving in full capacity of the organization.

**Section 9:**

Rho Kappa Advisory Council meeting shall be held once a year at the NCSS  
national conference. All other meetings or correspondence are at the  
discretion of the members and the Chair of this council.

**Article 3 Committees**

**Section 1:**

The Rho Kappa Advisory Council may create committees as necessary as needed.

**Section 2:**

The Chair of the Advisory Council shall appoint the members of these  
committees.

**Section 3:**

The Chair shall be ex-officio member of all committees within the Advisory  
Council.

**Section 4:**

The committees shall report to the Advisory Council regarding the fulfillment  
of the charges given to them by the council.

**Article 4 Faculty Sponsor**

**Section 1:**

Each local chapter of Rho Kappa shall have a designated faculty sponsor  
approved by the high school principal and may serve consecutive terms.

**Section 2:**

The chapter sponsor will be responsible for the chapter's day-to-day  
activities, act as a supervisor over the chapter, and perform the duties of a  
liaison among administration, faculty, students, and community members.

**Section 3:**

The chapter sponsor has the responsibility for the maintenance of accurate and  
up-to-date files that consist of membership lists, financial transactions,  
chapter history, chapter activities, chapter publications and correspondence,  
and chapter by-laws.

**Section 4:**

The chapter sponsor shall regularly review each member to ensure membership in  
good standing as determined by the chapter's by-laws.

**Section 5:**

The chapter sponsor shall assist the chapter officers to understand and carry  
out their duties to the best of their abilities.

**Section 6:**

The chapter sponsor shall be a Rho Kappa honorary member .

**Section 7:**

The chapter sponsor shall be the main liaison between the local chapter and  
the national organization. This sponsor is responsible for submitting all  
membership lists and associated fees along with any other information  
requested by the Rho Kappa Advisory Council.

**Article 5 Local Chapters**

**Section 1:**

Any accredited public high school or non-public secondary school accredited or  
approved by a state department of education or by an accrediting agency is  
eligible to apply for a charter of a local chapter. Each high school shall  
have their own chapter unless there is not a faculty sponsor available. In  
such instances, one chapter may be shared as long as all other constitutional  
requirements are met and fulfilled.

**Section 2:**

Each chapter shall complete a charter application, supplied by the Rho Kappa  
Advisory Council and pay a chartering fee of $150

**Section 3:**

Each chapter shall pay an annual affiliation fee to the national organization  
of $75

**Section 4:**

Each chapter shall pay an annual induction fee of $5 per new inductee.

**Section 5:**

Local chapter membership dues, if any, shall be determined by the local  
chapter and shall be subject to the approval of the faculty advisor and the  
school administrator.

**Section 6:**

Local chapters shall adhere to this Rho Kappa national constitution and  
failure to do so may result in the loss of chapter membership.

**Section 7:**

Each chapter shall submit its current membership list and any associated fees  
or dues responsibilities to the National Advisory Council by October 1 each  
year.

**Section 8:**

Any chapter that does not submit annually (1) current membership list and (2)  
annual national affiliation fees shall be deemed inactive. After two years of  
inactive status, the chapter shall forfeit its charter. The chapter may apply  
for reinstatement upon resubmitting reactivation papers and fees to be  
determined by the National Advisory Council.

**Section 9:**

Local councils may be named in honor of an individual who has made  
contributions to the social studies or the local community.

**Article 6 Membership**

**Section 1:**

Membership in a local chapter is bestowed upon a student by that local  
chapter. A faculty selection committee assembled at the high school in which  
the chapter resides shall confer the memberships. The selection committee  
shall consist of the chapter faculty sponsor and other faculty members within  
the school. Membership is based upon academic achievement in courses within  
the field of social studies as well as overall academic GPA.

**Section 2:**

Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate high  
academic standards; including maintaining high grades in their social studies  
courses. Failure to do so will result in removal from the organization.

**Section 3:**

There are three types of membership: active, alumni, and honorary. The  
definitions are:

* Active members are current high school students and shall remain active members while they maintain the required GPA until their graduation, at which time they will become alumni members.
* Alumni members are members who have graduated with good standing within the organization and may be invited by the high school to attend or participate in chapter events; however, they have no voice and no vote in chapter affairs.
* Honorary memberships may be awarded by consent of the faculty sponsor and the high school faculty body, to school officials, principals, teachers, community members, and former graduates whose achievements in the advancement of social studies and related fields merit such recognition. Chapters may induct up to two honorary members per year. Honorary members have no voice and no vote in chapter affairs.

**Section 4:**

Active members shall demonstrate an ability to work with others, to conduct  
research and inquiry in the field of social studies and shall possess  
qualities of industry, initiative, and reliability as they pertain to academic  
excellence.

**Section 5:**

Active members shall also exhibit a genuine interest in, and enthusiasm for,  
social studies scholarship and topics.

**Section 6:**

Active members shall contribute service to the high school or the community in  
which the chapter resides at the direction and discretion of the school's  
principal and the chapter's sponsor.

**Section 7:**

Any current Rho Kappa member in good standing who transfers to another high  
school and brings a letter of verification from their former principal or  
chapter sponsor to the new school shall be automatically accepted as a member  
into the new school's chapter.

**Section 8:**

Selection into Rho Kappa shall not be based, in any way, on the basis of race,  
religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or  
physical or mental disabilities.

Article 7 Selection of Members

**Section 1:**

Each candidate for membership shall be selected to a designated chapter of Rho  
Kappa.

**Section 2:**

Candidates for membership must have been in attendance at the high school in  
which the chapter resides for the equivalent of one semester prior to being  
considered. If special or unique circumstances merit, the high school  
administration may waive the semester requirement, providing a letter of  
explanation to the National Advisory Council.

**Section 3:**

Candidates for membership must have completed two core courses in the field of  
social studies and be prepared to complete at least three core courses. The  
minimum grade point average for these courses is an unweighted 3.00 or the  
numerical equivalent

**Section 4:**

The candidate's overall cumulative high school GPA shall be a minimum of 3.00  
or the numerical equivalent. . Individual chapters may choose to increase the  
GPA requirements for their chapter but may not decrease them.

**Section 5:**

Candidates achieving the minimal GPA requirements may be invited to apply for  
membership into Rho Kappa. The application process will require candidates to  
show participation in activities that demonstrate civic engagement in school  
or community and their desire and aspiration to be a member of the  
organization. Applicants must have a letter of recommendation from a current  
faculty member.

**Section 6:**

The method of selection of eligible students and their election to the  
organization shall be determined by the faculty sponsor, the faculty selection  
committee, and the chapter's high school administration. The candidates must  
meet the GPA, and social studies course completion requirements and the  
application requirements listed in Section 5, but all other methods of  
selecting candidates shall be left up to the individual chapters.

**Section 7:**

Any members whose social studies grades drop below the chapter's minimum GPA  
requirement for two consecutive semesters shall be dismissed from Rho Kappa.  
Such members may reapply to the organization and can be readmitted when those  
requirements are met but the candidate is subject to selection from the  
faculty selection committee again.

**Section 8:**

A description of the selection procedures and the local chapter criteria shall  
be widely available in a timely fashion to all the school's administration,  
faculty, students, parents, and community members.

**Section 9:**

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall not review the judgment of the  
faculty selection committee regarding the selection of individual members to  
the local chapters.

**Article 8 Induction of New Members**

**Section 1:**

Each local chapter may design and execute an appropriate ceremony for the  
induction of its new members. The procedures and proceedings for this ceremony  
shall be determined by the local chapter, the chapter faculty sponsor, and the  
high school administration. Chapters are forbidden to initiate, haze,  
blackball, or do anything similar, as any part of the Rho Kappa process. Any  
chapter found engaged in any of these shall lose its charter. "Induction" is  
to be used in any reference to the induction of new members. Newly inducted  
members shall receive their membership certificates and any other appropriate  
Rho Kappa materials when their membership has been affirmed.

**Section 2:**

The date and time of the induction ceremony is at the discretion of the local  
chapter, the chapter faculty advisor, and the high school administration.

**Section 3:**

In an event that a particular individual qualifies for membership after the  
date of the induction ceremony, he or she may be inducted at a regular chapter  
meeting provided the membership forms and fees have already been submitted to  
the national Advisory Council.

**Article 9 Removal from Membership**

**Section 1:**

The procedure for removal shall be determined by the faculty sponsor, the  
school faculty selection committee, and the school administration and shall be  
in compliance with the rules and regulations stated by the National Advisory  
Council. A written description of these procedures and the removal process  
shall be available to all members at the time of their induction.

**Section 2:**

Members who fall below the required standards that were used as the basis of  
membership selection shall be provided one written warning from the chapter  
sponsor. The member shall have a reasonable amount of time to correct the  
deficiency prior to removal proceedings beginning.

**Section 3:**

In the event that a serious violation of school rules/policies or civil laws  
has occurred, the chapter sponsor and faculty selection committee may forgo  
the written warning.

**Section 4:**

In the case of impending removal proceedings, the member has the right to  
request a formal hearing before the chapter sponsor and the faculty selection  
committee. This request must be made in writing by the member in question two  
weeks prior to the hearing being set.

**Section 5:**

A removed member may be reinstated into the local chapter when the faculty  
sponsor and the faculty selection committee determine that the removed member  
qualifies for reinstatement. Such members must reapply and are subject to  
selection from the faculty selection committee again.

**Section 6:**

The chapter sponsor shall notify the National Rho Kappa Advisory Council  
promptly of any member dismissals and any member reinstatements.

**Section 7:**

The National Rho Kappa Advisory Council shall hear no appeals in the cases of  
membership removal and shall respect the decision of each local chapter  
regarding their membership.

**Article 10 Chapter Officers of Local Chapter**

**Section 1:**

The chapter officers, their corresponding duties, and their method of election  
shall be determined by each individual chapter with the approval of the  
faculty sponsor, the members of the local chapter, and the school  
administration.

**Section 2:**

New officers shall be elected each spring and shall assume office the first  
day of the following school year.

**Section 3:**

The chapter officers and the chapter sponsor shall have general supervision of  
the chapter affairs and business. They shall also conduct the regular business  
meetings, make recommendations to the chapter body, and determine and perform  
such other duties that are specified by the chapter bylaws. All actions and  
recommendations of these officers shall be subject to the review of the entire  
chapter membership.

**Section 4:**

The chapter officers shall have the responsibility of ensuring that the  
chapter activities, functions, and procedures follow school policy,  
regulations, and guidelines.

**Article 11 Meetings**

**Section 1:**

Each chapter shall hold regular meetings during the school year on days and  
times that are designated by the chapter officers and the chapter sponsor.  
These meetings shall be in accordance with the school policy and regulations  
for club and activities meetings.

**Section 2:**

The regularity of these meetings (i.e., weekly, bimonthly, monthly, etc.)  
shall be designated by the local chapter but shall occur no less than twice a  
semester.

**Section 3:**

Special meetings may be called by the chapter officers and the chapter sponsor  
as so needed.

**Section 4:**

Local chapters shall, in all points not expressly designated by this  
constitution or the local chapter's bylaws, conduct meetings according to  
Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

**Article 12 Activities**

**Section 1:**

Each local chapter shall determine, with the consent of the chapter  
membership, the chapter sponsor, and the school administration what activities  
are appropriate for each chapter to participate in.

**Section 2:**

These activities shall consist of the following criteria: They

* should fulfill a need within the school or community or provide a service to either group
* have the support of the faculty and the administration along with the membership body and the chapter sponsor
* are appropriately and educationally defensible
* are well planned and executed
* may or may not be directly related to the field of social studies but should honor the overall purpose, mission, and goals of such an organization

**Section 3:**

It is the responsibility of each chapter to represent the national Rho Kappa  
organization in a positive and suitable manner and the activities it engages  
in should be selected as such.

**Article 13 Official Insignia**

**Section 1:**

Rho Kappa shall have an official emblem selected by the Board of Directors of  
the National Council for the Social Studies. The National Advisory Council  
shall have the exclusive control of its use.

**Section 2:**

All Rho Kappa insignia must be procured from the Rho Kappa National Advisory  
Council and members and local chapters may not reproduce or substitute any  
officially designated insignia.

**Section 3:**

Only active, alumni, and honorary members are allowed to wear the official  
emblem.

**Section 4:**

Any member who resigns or is removed from membership shall not be permitted or  
entitled to wear the emblem.

**Section 5:**

The emblem shall bear the official name of the organization: Rho, meaning  
"resh" or "head" and Kappa, meaning "palm of the hand." These words together  
symbolize the purpose and mission of the organization which is knowledge and  
wisdom combined with service.

**Section 6:**

The official colors of the emblem shall be NCSS blue and white.

**Article 14 Awards and Recognitions**

**Section 1:**

Senior members who are in good standing with the organization at the time of  
graduation shall be given the opportunity to purchase honor chords.

**Section 2:**

The honor chord colors shall be the official color[s] of Rho Kappa.

**Article 15 Bylaws**

**Section 1:**

Each chapter shall write bylaws to execute the national organization's  
constitution and/or to further clarify the chapter's operating procedures.  
Bylaws for each local chapter do not need the approval of the National  
Advisory Council but must be consistent with and not be in conflict with the  
national constitution.

**Section 2:**

The chapter bylaws shall contain but is not limited to, the information  
concerning:

* membership selection criteria
* the scheduling of meetings
* the election, duties, and responsibilities of officers
* the chapter sponsor duties and responsibilities
* criteria and procedures for removal from an office
* filling vacancies of officer positions
* criteria and procedures for removal from membership
* 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 to the National Advisory Council any changes  
made to their bylaws after initial affiliation."

**Article 16 Amendments**

**Section 1:**

This Rho Kappa 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  
NCSS Executive Director.

**Section 2:**

Local chapters may petition to the National Advisory Council with recommended  
amendments to this constitution.

**Article 17 State and Regional Organizations**

**Section 1:**

Local chapters may organize state or regional Rho Kappa affiliations, the  
purpose of which is to sponsor events for the local chapters and to engage in  
projects at the state or regional level.

**Section 2:**

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation must conform to this constitution.

**Section 3:**

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation shall not in any way supersede  
local chapter authority as delegated by this constitution.

**Section 4:**

Any state or regional Rho Kappa affiliation may choose to write and implement  
its own bylaws but these must conform to all official documents prepared by  
the national Rho Kappa organization.

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Social Studies for institutionalizing the Rho Kappa honor society and  
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Kappa Honor Society will be founded. Lastly, NCSS would like to thank the NCTE  
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provided a model for national Rho Kappa Honor Society to follow.

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