



What to Expect ***Preparing Your School to Host a Chapter of the National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS)***

Dear Principal,

Thank you for committing to establish a chapter of the **National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS)** at your school. We are pleased and grateful that you have decided to bring this new national student recognition program to your students and staff. Starting with the 2008-2009 school year, you can look forward to annually acknowledging the achievements of your outstanding students through NEHS. In addition, through the projects, activities, and resources of the chapter, new motivation will come to all of your students and staff.

We have prepared this initial guide to assist principals and new chapter advisers as you begin setting up your chapter. Additional information will be sent to you *after July 1* signaling the beginning of Year 1 for all chapters. But to start, please carefully review the content below. If questions arise now or in the future, don't hesitate to call or email, PH: 866-599-6347 (*toll free*); Email: nehs@nehs.org.

Your school is among the first in the nation to establish an NEHS chapter. We hope that through this first year, the leadership of your chapter will share ideas and suggestions with the staff of the national office so that we can build upon your experiences to provide the best possible resources for all of the nation's elementary schools.

Wishing you all the best in this new endeavor,

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NEHS is a program of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP, www.principals.org), in cooperation with the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP, www.naesp.org).

Getting Your NEHS Chapter Set Up

As you begin planning for the 2008-2009 school year, with a new NEHS chapter in your building, it is helpful to think about the new organization in the following categories:

1. Personnel: Principal, chapter adviser, NEHS Faculty Council
2. Developing your local guidelines
3. Chapter organization and management
4. School calendar
5. Budget

In the pages that follow, we'll provide you some checkpoints to help you as you begin your planning. We are providing additional support documentation on www.nehs.org, some of which will be placed in a "Members Only" section beginning **July 1, 2008**. Additional clarification regarding policies and procedures will also be included in the *NEHS National Handbook*, scheduled to be in your hands for the beginning of the new school year.



1. Personnel

Any new program at your school will succeed best with competent guidance and ongoing support from key personnel from the staff. We believe that the educators assigned to work with and support the activities of your NEHS chapter will serve as essential guides for the outstanding students who participate.

a. Role of the Principal:

As the central educational and instructional leader of the school, the principal sets the tone for all activities by establishing meaningful goals for the staff and students of the school. By sharing with the school community how NEHS fits into the school's current goals, the administrator will help establish a relevant place for NEHS in the life of the school.

In addition, the principal is asked to share the purposes of NEHS with students, staff, and parents as the new program is announced. These purposes are identified in Article 1 of the NEHS National Constitution:

"The purpose of this organization shall be to recognize students for their outstanding academic achievement and demonstrated personal responsibility, to provide meaningful service to the school and community, and to develop essential leadership skills in the students of elementary schools."

The National Constitution (Article 4) also outlines several important functions for the administrator to fulfill on an annual basis. These include:

- Providing approval and maintaining authority for all activities and decisions of the chapter.
- Appointing a member of the faculty to serve as the chapter adviser
- Appointing an **NEHS Faculty Council** composed of at least two members of the school's faculty
- Receiving appeals in cases of nonselection of candidates, the disciplining or dismissal of members, and other questions arising concerning the management of the chapter at the school.
- The principal's support of the adviser, Faculty Council, and ultimately of the chapter and its membership is vital in promoting the initial development and later the ongoing work of any NEHS chapter.

b. Role of the Chapter Adviser(s)

In selecting a member of the faculty to serve as the chapter adviser, the principal identifies a staff member who not only possesses faith in the abilities of young people, but one who is willing to spend time with students to further develop their potential. In addition, as the primary contact for all activities of the new chapter, the adviser needs to familiarize him- or herself with the national guidelines and work with the Faculty Council to develop and later maintain the structure and calendar of the chapter.

The National Constitution (Article 5) outlines the specifics.

- The chapter adviser shall be a member of the faculty, appointed annually by the principal. Multiple advisers can be appointed to manage the chapter. However where multiple advisers are appointed, the school will be asked to designate one adviser as the official adviser of record for receiving communications from the national office. No principal or assistant principal may serve as the chapter adviser.

Role of the Chapter Adviser, continued.

- The chapter adviser shall be responsible for the ongoing administration and supervision of the chapter, its members and activities, and act as liaison with the faculty, administration, students, and community.
- The chapter adviser shall maintain records on membership, activities, and financial transactions.
- The chapter adviser shall regularly review each member for compliance with all standards and obligations
- The chapter adviser shall assist the chapter officers to understand and carry out their duties.
- The chapter adviser shall be a member and facilitator of the Faculty Council.
- And, the chapter adviser shall send the annual report to the national office.

It is anticipated that the chapter adviser, particularly in the first years of operation of the new NEHS chapter, will conference regularly with the principal to keep the administration informed and up-to-date on all chapter activities. With the support and resources of the national office at hand, the hope is that the adviser will value a long-term commitment to providing leadership for the new NEHS chapter at your school.

c. Role of the NEHS Faculty Council (minimum 2 additional staff)

The NEHS Faculty Council (FC) plays an essential role in the operations of the chapter. Any member of the school's professional staff can be considered when selecting these individuals for service to the chapter.

Article 6 of the *NEHS National Constitution* delineates the duties as follows:

- The Faculty Council shall meet at least once a year to review the procedures of the chapter, select members, and to consider nonselection, member discipline, or chapter management actions. If your NEHS elects to conduct the selection/induction procedures more frequently, as allowed in the national guidelines, the expectations of involvement for the Faculty Council will increase.
- The Faculty Council will develop and revise, when necessary, all chapter procedures for selection and discipline of members, all of which must remain in compliance with all national guidelines. In essence, the Faculty Council will be very involved in the first year(s) as they develop the new chapter guidelines.

While the formal membership of the Faculty Council is made up of at least two staff members with the chapter adviser as the facilitator of all council meetings, additional input from other concerned staff of the school is allowed during all aspects of the fulfillment of FC duties. Guidance counselors and other professional staff may provide important professional input regarding the ongoing work of the council and the chapter. It is expected that the total Faculty will support the actions and decisions of the Faculty Council as the chapter develops.



2. Developing your local membership guidelines

Student members of NEHS are selected based on their records of academic excellence (a.k.a., *Scholarship*) and *Responsibility*. For *Scholarship*, the national guidelines establish a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or 85%, or B—depending on the method of grade reporting you use. Grade reports used are from 4th, 5th, and 6th—although some 3rd grade reports may be needed when selecting 4th graders. Guidance on how to implement this standard, particularly for schools with alternative grading practices, will be available online and in the national handbook.

Responsibility, comprised of aspects of good character and good citizenship, will focus on behavior at home, at school, and in the community as communicated to you by the students and their parents. Professional input from faculty is permissible. Schools can also include school conduct and disciplinary records when considering students as candidates for membership.

Leadership and *Service*, the two remaining criteria, come into play as functions of the chapter once students are selected—enhancing a student's experience at school by focusing on these two important elements.

Using the National Constitution as a guide, each chapter will develop the following:

- a. Local selection procedures, including clarification of eligibility requirements and membership criteria. Forms can include: Candidate's Form, Faculty Evaluation Form, and notification letters (selection and nonselection).
- b. Chapter bylaws including delineation of membership obligations and policies relating to chapter discipline
- c. An Induction Ceremony complete with a script and planning guide
- d. A method of collecting and retaining chapter files, data, forms, etc.

The Web site, www.nehs.org, provides significant elaboration on all of these chapter components, both in the Membership section and the Adviser Zone.



3. Organization and Management

Once the personnel are in place and guidelines for membership established,, the work begins to create the new chapter, planning out its activities for the year and developing methods for managing the ongoing responsibilities that come with sponsoring an NEHS chapter.

a. Chapter meetings

Regular meetings of the chapter can fulfill many objectives. They provide a great opportunity for the efficient sharing of information, plans, and news to chapter members. They create a venue for sharing ideas in an environment where positive peer pressure can be experienced. Meetings build a sense of community and teamwork as members learn about each other. Meetings can teach many leadership lessons and assist the chapter adviser in monitoring the development of all chapter members.

The schedule for meetings is developed by the adviser and staff and it is hoped that chapters will meet at least quarterly to fulfill the purposes of the chapter. Ideas and resources for meetings will be highlighted in the *NEHS National Handbook* and online.

b. Member Obligations

It is helpful to provide students and their parents with indications of what is expected of them as members of NEHS. This information should be shared with all candidates for membership and provided to inducted members regularly. A copy of the Membership Obligations would make an excellent item to include in a Member Handbook, a sample outline for which is available at www.nehs.org/resources.

c. Insignia and supplies

Once members are inducted and the chapter is underway, consider what insignia you will provide for your new members. Membership pins, cards, and certificates along with other chapter supplies will be available from www.nehs.org/store starting **July 1, 2008**, with new items under development all the time. Take time to consider whether these insignia will be funded by the school or whether individual students/families will be asked to pay for these items.

d. Chapter projects and activities

The National Constitution calls upon all NEHS chapters to organize and carry out a minimum of four (4) activities during the year. Some of these activities or projects can be fulfilled at the regular meetings of the chapter. Resources for project ideas and lesson plans for service-learning and leadership development are an important part of the “Resources” section of the Web site, www.nehs.org/resources.

e. Communications: Internal and External

NEHS is a new organization. Nothing quite like it has emerged in the elementary education community before. While similar in nature to the recognition programs currently found in the nation’s high schools (National Honor Society) and middle level schools (National Junior Honor Society), NEHS has unique components that bear explanation to students, staff and others. As the year proceeds, you are encouraged to develop a communications plan so that important, new information can be shared on the following topics:

- Establishing the chapter
- What it takes to become a member
- What the chapter will do at school
- Reporting on the growth and development of the chapter and its outstanding membership

Three additional topics remain for your consideration as your chapter is developed.

1. Will there be chapter **officers** or other student leadership positions established for the chapter? What duties will these leaders have? What roles will they play throughout the year?
2. How will the **recordkeeping/files** for the chapter be maintained? Where will this be stored?
3. Are there any relevant **local or state policies** regarding the administration of a school organization in your building that need to be reviewed? *Source:* Principal or Central Office staff.

Additional guidance for the organization and management of the chapter is available online and coming soon in the *NEHS National Handbook*.



4. School Calendar

With members to select and induct and projects to plan, the leadership of the chapter should develop and maintain a calendar of all chapter activities. To determine the initial dates for your new chapter, a copy of the official school calendar should be consulted. Let's look at the essential activities that should be included:

1. The selection and induction schedule for your school

Many chapters will select to hold only one induction of new members per year. School identifies whether this will occur in fall, winter, or spring (or summer if on a year-round schedule). We recommend 'backwards planning' by first picking *when* you'd like to have your formal, public induction ceremony (All school assembly? After school activity? Evening session?) and *where* this would ideally fall on the school calendar. With the date in mind, please visit www.nehs.org/inductions for a detailed script and planning guide for your chapter.

It is important to take into consideration such matters as testing schedules and holidays. Your school and its unique population may dictate longer or shorter intervals for every step in the process.

Additional models can be developed for semester or quarterly-based induction ceremonies. With greater frequency of selection, the quantity of students being considered for each round of selection will be smaller, thus making it possible to shorten the time period between some of the steps for the chapter adviser.

Chapters are encouraged to develop a schedule, use it, and then carefully evaluate the process following your first round of selection. It may not be "rocket science" for many, but going through the entire process for the first time is always a learning experience, even for the most-experienced of educators.

2. Projects and activities planning

Once you've determined when your new members will be selected and inducted, then it is necessary to plan out the quarterly activities for the new NEHS chapter. We suggest the following steps as you begin this scheduling process:

Step 1: Review the master school calendars

Resource 1: School system official calendar, July – June

Resource 2: Local school calendar, July – June. Be sure to include state testing dates, PTA schedule, etc.

Step 2: Map out the Selection/Induction process on the calendar as determined by the process outlined in section 1

Step 3: The national guidelines require that each NEHS chapter engage in four (4) projects per year, preferably one each quarter. Such projects can include leadership development or service activities conducted as part of the agenda of regular chapter meetings, as well as the Induction Ceremony itself, presuming that some educational components are incorporated into the program through such components as an informative a speaker or audio-visual presentation.

Advisers will need to consult their teaching calendars as well so as to avoid conflicts with field trips, major projects, etc. that are currently scheduled. Major activities planned by relevant grade level teachers (4th, 5th, or 6th) or other resource teachers on campus (Art, Music, PE, etc.) will also need to be taken into consideration.

To include these projects on the Master Calendar, it will be important to

a. Determine when the chapter members will meet on a regular basis. Will they meet weekly? Monthly? Quarterly? Where will they meet and for how long?

b. Determine what service-learning activities you would like to see the chapter engaged in.

Note: After the first year, these decisions may come from the students themselves as a result of goal-setting and chapter planning activities. Chapters are encouraged to include a school-based service activity as one project (developed to support the administrative goals set for this school year), and as an additional project, a service activity directed to provide service or raise funds for a community, state, national, or international organization. Your local United Way office, faith-based community representatives, or social services offices can assist in identifying needs for which age-appropriate service activities can be developed.

Finally, other celebrations during the year (holidays, American Education week, Character Counts! week, Music in Our Schools Month, Women's History Month, etc.) may fit in well to the purposes and projects that you define for NEHS in your building. Having the younger students in your school see the older students participate in and value these special celebrations can expand their interest and improve their engagement in school.



5. Budget: Chartering and affiliation fees

Two primary financial obligations exist for your NEHS Chapter.

1. Chartering fee: The chartering fee submitted recently with your charter application establishes an official NEHS chapter for your school. The fee also covers the affiliation of your chapter with the national organization through **June 30, 2009**. In the coming months, you will be provided with the following items:

- a. The *NEHS National Handbook*, the official guide to all policies and procedures of the Honor Society.
- b. Your official charter, the formal document testifying to the establishment of an NEHS chapter at your school
- c. A “Guide for New Advisers” email series, set to commence in early August, designed to provide a complete overview of the responsibilities of running a chapter.
- d. All of the benefits of affiliation (outlined below) for Year 1 of NEHS (2008-2009).

2. Affiliation fee. Planning ahead, in the spring of 2009, a renewal invoice will be mailed to the attention of the principal. Payment on that invoice will be due by June 30 to cover the 2009-2010 school year’s affiliation. This process will be repeated on an annual basis.

The annual affiliation fee provides your school with the following:

- a. Official status as an active chapter of NEHS and the authority to select and induct students as members
- b. A quarterly newsletter for the chapter adviser containing lessons and activities to share with your chapter
- c. Electronic newsletters for the adviser with updates on activities, links to new content on the Web site and more
- d. A catalog, mailed to the chapter each fall, containing official insignia, publications and supplies for the chapter
- e. Access to the “members only” sections of the Web site, www.nehs.org.
- f. Adviser ID card (mailed to the adviser each fall)
- g. An annual Certificate of Affiliation (mailed to the principal each fall)
- h. Member-only pricing and special discounts on products offered through the online store at www.nehs.org

Note: There are no individual student fees charged under the current structure for NEHS. While there is no formal obligation to provide insignia to students, items including membership cards, certificates, and other insignia items are offered for sale through the NEHS Catalog and the online store.

3. Some Additional Budget/Financial considerations for the local school:

- Staff compensation, as determined by contractual arrangements with staff, and funding for professional development experiences for the chapter adviser.
- Planning for activities: Custodial assistance? Building use?

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That’s it for now. Just enough information to get you started.

In coming months, you will receive your *NEHS National Handbook* and other resources to expand upon the outline of information presented in this guide. Principals and advisers are encouraged to check regularly on www.nehs.org for updates.

Best of luck with your new chapter and with identifying those outstanding students at your school being recognized as new members of the National Elementary Honor Society!

For more information contact us at:

National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS)
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