



## CONSTITUTION

*Amended August 13, 2015*

*Adopted August 31, 2015*

### ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be Student Government Association (SGA) of Miami Northwestern Senior High School. Student Government is the governing body for all clubs and organizations at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. The Royal Court referred to in this Constitution include all school royalty (kings and queens).

### ARTICLE II: OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Student Government Association shall be to:

1. Provide a democratic forum in which students can address school-related issues which affect their lives;
2. Maintain a continuous communication channel from students to both faculty and administration as well as among the students within the school;
3. Offer a year-long program of academic/social functions and community involvement projects for students;
4. Train students in the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship using the school environment as the primary training ground; and
5. Serve as a reference to anyone who questions the laws, rights, philosophy, or procedures of Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Miami Northwestern Senior High School.

### Section I: Executive Branch

#### ARTICLE III: MEMBERS

The **Executive Branch** of Student Government shall consist of a President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer elected by their peers. It shall also include an appointment cabinet which consists of five faculty advisors, historian/reporter, and two senators (hereinafter referred to as Top Senators) from each grade. Mr. and Miss Northwestern shall serve as honorary members of Student Government.

- a. The duties of the **President** shall be **a)** to preside over the Legislative Branch (voting only in case of a tie; **b)** preside over joint sessions; **c)** to act as the official representative of the student body to the administration; **d)** to represent the school at appropriate government functions; **e)** to set an example of good citizenship; **f)** to head all Student Government Elections with the cooperation of the Legislative Branch; **g)** attend district, state, and national Student Government

meetings/conventions; **h**) to preside during assemblies of the student body; and, **i**) to serve on the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC) Committee.

- b. The **Vice President** shall act as an assistant presiding officer. He/she shall serve as President if for any reason the President cannot fulfill his/her duties. The Vice President is the president of the Interclub Council which is comprised of all vice presidents/captains of clubs and organizations.
- c. The **Secretary** shall be a voting member of the Legislative Branch. The duties of the Secretary shall be to **a**) keep a register or roll of the members and to call roll when required; **b**) notify officers, committees, and delegates of their appointment; **d**) to sign with the President all orders on the treasurer authorized by the Student Government Association; **e**) keep one book in which the Constitution, By-Laws, rules of order, and standing rules should all be written leaving every other page blank; **e**) send out proper notices of all called meetings and other meetings when necessary; **f**) keep accurate minutes of all meetings and maintain the files for Student Government; and **g**) handle all correspondence.
- d. The **Treasurer** shall be a voting member of the Legislative Branch and keep the body informed of all financial affairs of Student Government.

#### FACULTY COUNCIL DESCRIPTIVE

- a. The principal shall appoint five voting faculty members (excluding members of the administrative team) to the Faculty Council in addition to the advisor; the advisor shall be a non-voting member of the Council.
- b. The term shall be for one school year; members may be appointed to consecutive terms.
- c. The Faculty Council shall meet at any time to review the procedures of Student Government, candidate applications, and to dismissal, other disciplinary actions, and warning cases.
- d. The Faculty Council will develop and revise, when necessary, all procedures for selection, discipline, and dismissal of all Student Government and class officers, Royal Court, all of which must remain in compliance with this Constitution and Student Government policies.
- e. The Faculty Council shall assist with the election and pageant process.

#### Section 2: Legislative Branch

The **Legislative Branch** of Student Government shall consist of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate shall consist of five representatives (this includes Top Senators) from each grade level appointed by the President, three Faculty Advisors, and the Director of Student Activities after all applications for the Senate have been processed.

- a. The Senate shall propose and adopt legislation.
- b. The President of Student Government shall be responsible for the operation of the Senate and preside over Senate Meetings.

#### Section 3: House of Representatives

The **House of Representatives** shall consist of one representative and one alternate representative from each homeroom. The House of Representatives shall serve as a liaison between Student Government and general student population.

- a. The House of Representatives shall propose legislation (enact laws) to the Senate.
- b. The Vice President of Student Government shall be responsible for the operation of the House of Representatives and will preside at House of Representatives Meetings.

#### **Section 4: Judicial Branch**

The **Judicial Branch** of Student Government shall be vested in one **Student Court**. The Court shall consist of a Chief Justice who only votes in cases of a tie. The Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Justices who only have one vote each; a Court Clerk who serves as a record keeper does not have voting power of any kind.

1. The **Chief Justice** shall be responsible for the operation of the Student Court and shall preside at all hearings. If the Chief Justice is not present at a hearing, the next highest ranking Justice shall preside.
2. Cases—The Student Court shall have the jurisdiction to hear any case which deals with grievances between students, students and teachers, or students and administration where both parties agree before the Court. At least three Justices shall hear each case with a majority vote needed for a decision.

### **ARTICLE IV: COMMITTEES**

The President shall establish a committee structure.

### **ARTICLE V: STUDENT GOVERNMENT, FEDERATIONS AND THE ROYAL COURT**

The advisor along with a majority vote of the Federation may have the power to fill any vacancies which may occur in the course of the administrative year.

### **ARTICLE V: IMPEACHMENT AND SUSPENSION**

Student Government, Federations, Royal Court, and Organizations

#### **Section 1: Impeachment**

The Executive Power of Student Government shall be vested in the President who is responsible for the operation of Student Government.

#### **Section 2: Vacancies**

The President shall **a)** have the power to fill any vacancies in which may occur during the course of the administrative year; **b)** upon the creation of a vacancy in the position of President, the Vice President shall assume all duties and responsibilities immediately; **c)** if both offices are vacated simultaneously, the club/organization shall open up nominations for both offices, first accepting nominations from among its membership and holding an

election within the organization then following a similar process to fill the position of Vice President; **d)** all vacancies in elected offices shall be filled within one (1) week by accepting nominations from members to decide upon the person to fill the vacancy; and **e)** any vacancies created by members changing positions through this procedure will be filled as stated in this Constitution. **f)** in the event a member of the Royal Court is impeached or leave the school, a school wide election must be held to fill the position.

### **Section 3: Presidential Absence**

In the case of removal of the President from office for his/her inability to fulfill his duties of said office, the Vice President shall fill the Office of President.

### **Section 4: Legislative Power**

The President has the power to propose legislation to the Senate.

### **Section 5: Veto Power**

The President may veto legislation of the Senate by providing reasons why the Legislation is unacceptable. The Senate may modify its Legislation or override the veto by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

The Senate shall try all impeachment charges at a special open impeachment meeting of the Student Court; the conviction must receive two-thirds (2/3) of the vote.

All impeach charges must be in writing and submitted to Student Government Association.

### **Section 6: Suspension**

The Faculty Advisors and the President of Student Government shall have the power to suspend from office an individual until official impeachment charges can be filed.

### **Section 7: Removal from Office and Filling Vacancies**

**Reasons for Removal:** Any Executive Officer, Class Officer, Legislative Branch member, House of Representative or Royal Court member may be removed for the following reasons:

1. Request from the officer
2. Failure to perform duties
3. Misses two meetings without presenting a reasonable excuse to the advisor.
4. Any disagreement between the member and the advisor over reasonableness of excuse will be decided by the Assembly.
5. Failure to attend scheduled meetings
6. Conduct that is harmful to the school
7. Failure to maintain a minimum 2.51 grade point average in academics and conduct
8. Excessive absences (excused or unexcused); members are allowed to miss 2.5 days per grading period.
9. Excessive tardies; members are allowed five (5) tardies per grading period

10. Failure to follow the rules and regulations established by Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Miami Northwestern Senior High School.

**DUE PROCESS**

<b>First Offense</b>	Verbal warning: protocol; expectations, review the Constitution
<b>Second Offense</b>	Suspension of Duties for a period not to exceed 30 days
<b>Third Offense</b>	Permanently relieved of all duties

**ARTICLE VI: ELECTIONS**

The offices of President, First and Second Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, advisor to the PTSA, the ESSAC, and advisor to the Executive Board of Student Government shall be elected by the general student population of Miami Northwestern Senior High School. If a majority is not reached, there will be a run-off between the top two candidates; the winner will be determined by the individual receiving a majority vote.

**Section 1: Eligibility/Qualifications for Candidacy**

The President and the First Vice Presidents of Student Government must be a senior during the time he/she holds office. However, the Vice President can be a junior during the time he/she holds office. All Executive Officers must have served at least one year on the Student Government Association at Miami Northwestern Senior High School before serving as an Executive Officer.

**Section 2: Election Committee/Chair**

Elections shall be conducted by the Election Committee which is chaired by the President of Student Government and shall consist of a minimum of six members with at least one Faculty Council member. The duties/responsibilities are as follows:

The **Election Committee** must possess good spelling and grammar skills and shall perform the following duties:

- Prepare and distribute applications
- Post eligibility list
- Approve all campaigning materials
- Prepare ballots
- Gather election material, locators, Ballots, pencils, folders, and other materials as needed
- Supervise Elections
- Train Poll Workers
- Assist advisor in counting Ballots
- Write announcement of election results
- Post the results of the election within 24 hours

- Be responsible for all publicity regarding campaigning
- Handle all Elections: Federations, Prom, Royal Court, Homecoming, Senior Superlatives, etc.

### **Section 3: Election Dates**

The date of Student Government Elections shall be set by the Senate and approved by the President and the advisor.

### **Section 4: Election Guidelines**

Rules for Elections shall be established by the Election Committee and approved by a majority vote in the Senate and the Director of Student Activities.

1. Any student seeking a leadership position at Miami Northwestern must have been enrolled as a student according to the following scale: Sophomore = enrolled one year; juniors = enrolled two years, and seniors = enrolled three years.
2. Students can only hold one title. Class officers of Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Federation or Miss Northwestern are not eligible to run for Homecoming Queen or Prom Queen or any other position on the Royal Court.
3. Officers of Student Government are not eligible to run for a Royal Court position.
4. Must submit a completed application with supporting documents. Late applications will not be accepted regardless of the circumstances.
5. Upon receipt of the application, the student hereinafter will be referred to as the candidate.
6. Candidates must meet the qualifications as outlined on the application or as stated in Student Government Constitution: application must be submitted by established deadline, a grade point average of 2.51 in academics and conduct, and cannot possess more than 10 excused and unexcused absences or 20 tardies.
7. There shall be one meeting to explain the Election criteria for all eligible candidates. Failure to attend the meeting may cause the candidate to be removed from the eligibility list. Student Government shall not be held liable for any information that may be missed due to absence from the meeting.
8. Upon approval, candidates MUST be interviewed by a panel and must receive a score of 70 percent in order to be qualified to run for a position. Student Government has the authority to adjust or eliminate the interview from the application process.
9. All voting will be made by a secret ballot as directed by Student Government. Only members of the Legislative Branch, Executive Officers, or authorized persons may work at Polls.
10. All Student Government Elections shall be held in the Student Union or a designation specified by Student Government Executive Officers.
11. The Poll hours will be determined by the Election Committee and approved by the Senate and the advisor.
12. Each candidate must select one person to observe the entire voting process (which includes the counting of votes). The candidate MUST notify the advisor who that person shall be at least 48 hours before the Election.
13. Candidates are not allowed to give out toys, money, candy, food, or T-shirts as

campaign materials.

14. Candidates may distribute buttons, flyers, and places posters (no larger than 11x17) around campus.
15. Candidates cannot at any time slander or alienate their opponents.
16. Neither candidates nor campaign workers are allowed to remove or deface the campaign materials of another candidate.
17. Neither Candidates nor campaign workers can loiter in front of or around the Polls, distribute campaign materials on Election Day. Campaigning must occur 1000 feet from the polls. Candidates who violate this rule are subject to be removed from the ballot.
18. Candidate shall cast his/her ballot and leave the vicinity of the Polls immediately.
19. All campaign materials MUST be removed the day before an Election.
20. It is the candidate's responsibility to check the Ballot before the Election to ensure the correct spelling of his/her name.
21. Winners shall be declared in the following manner: Interview score = 30%; Pageant score = 20%; popular votes = 50%. In the event of a tie, Student Government reserves the right to devise a system to determine the winner; i.e., runoff or eliminate the pageant score. Candidates will be notified in writing. It is the candidate's responsibility to keep parents apprised of the results and status of the Election.
22. A sole candidate running for a position must receive a minimum of 51 percent of the popular votes in addition to meeting all of the criteria outlined in this Constitution. If the candidate fail to earn 51 percent of the votes, the candidate will not be named as the winner; the position will be opened to the student body; the election process will begin anew to find a candidate to fill the position.
23. Pageant judges shall be selected by the Principal or his/her designee, Activities Director, and Student Government Faculty Council.
24. There shall be no more than 3 or 5 pageant judges.
25. The Tabulation Committee shall consist of the Principal or his/her designee and two faculty members.
26. The Tabulation Committee shall compile all Election and pageant.
27. Student Government has the authority to make adjustments to the voting process and shall notify all candidates in writing of the change(s). Changes to the voting process shall be posted on the school website.

#### **Section 5: Entertainment Committee Chair**

As the **Entertainment Committee Chair** one must perform all of the following duties: **a)** planned and unplanned pep rallies; **b)** recruit participants for entertainment (music, equipment, and other materials as needed); and **c)** communicate with coaches, band director, and the Student Government Advisor.

#### **Section 6: Social Committee Chair**

The duties of the **Social Committee Chairperson** shall be **a)** coordinate academic and social activities; **b)** create a calendar of events and submit for approval; **c)** create budgets for the events; **d)** find locations, music, and decorator; **e)** create ticket designs; **f)** submit all

purchase orders and bills to the treasurer; **g)** decide souvenirs/door prizes.

**Section 7: Community Service Committee Chair**

The **Community Service Chair** shall be held responsible for **a)** collection of items for special occasions (holidays, national disasters, etc); **b)** secure materials for baskets and decorate basket; **c)** have available community service packets; **d)** initiate a school wide community service project.

**Section 8: United Way Committee Chair**

The **United Way Chair** shall **a)** attend United Way Student Kick-Off Breakfast; **b)** propose fundraising activities; **c)** publicize United Way Campaign; **d)** Distribute supplies to homerooms; **e)** count all monies along with the treasurer and deposit into Internal Funds; **f)** attend all activities that relate to United Way.

**ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

**Section 1:** The Student Government Association shall meet for business at least once a week during the school year, unless the Assembly decides by a two-thirds vote to forego this schedule for a particular week. All meetings shall be held on campus at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. Meetings shall be conducted according to the *Robert Rules of Order*.

**Section 2:** Special Meetings can be called by the President, the Executive Committee, the advisor, the Principal, or by written request of ten (10) members. The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No previous notice is necessary if it is held during school. If held after school, at least one (1) days' notice is required.

**Section 3:** All legally elected representatives and officers may vote.

**Section 4:** A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 5:** Any member of the student body may attend and participate in discussions.

**ARTICLE VIII: ADMINISTRATOR'S YEARS**

The administrator's year of the Student Government Association Board shall be from the end of one school year to the end of the next school year.

**ARTICLE IX: RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution shall become effective upon two-thirds approval of the Senate and majority concurrence of the voting student body. This Constitution can be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and House of Representatives.

**ARTICLE X: INTERPRETATION**

Questions concerning the meaning of this Constitution shall be interpreted by the Student Court.