

Introduction

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding middle level students. More than just an honor roll, NJHS serves to honor those students who demonstrate excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship, and character. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since its beginning in 1929.

Today, it is estimated that more than one million students participate in activities of the NJHS and its high school counterpart, the National Honor Society (NHS).

NJHS chapters are found in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, many U.S. territories, and Canada. Chapter membership not only recognizes students for their accomplishments, but also challenges them to develop further through active involvement in school activities and community service. Both NJHS and NHS were founded and are programs of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

History of the Organization

In 1929, NASSP officially established the National Junior Honor Society. Based on the success of the National Honor Society, the principals' association recognized the need for honoring outstanding students in the early years of their secondary education. Under the leadership of NASSP members Edward Rynearson, Merle Prunty, and L. W. Brooks, committees were formed to establish a new organization. Formal approval from NASSP was granted on February 24, 1929, at the NASSP National Convention in St. Louis, MO.

Equipped with a constitution, an emblem and motto, and a group of dedicated principals as coordinators, the new NJHS organization quickly developed into one of the country's leading educational groups. The first chapter to organize was in the lower grades of the high school in Webster Groves, MO, which received Charter Number One on December 6, 1929. The first charter to a junior high school was granted in March 1930 to Clarinda (IA) Junior High School.

Five main purposes outlined in the NJHS constitution have guided chapters from the beginning: "To create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, to develop worthy school and community citizenship, and to develop character in the students of secondary schools." These purposes also translate into the criteria used for membership selection in each local chapter. The official motto of NJHS is, "Light is the Symbol of Truth."

Both NJHS and NHS are programs of NASSP, which appoints a National Council, the controlling body of NJHS.

NASSP

NASSP is an important educational organization representing more than 30,000 school leaders, including principals and assistant principals in middle level and high schools. Since 1916, the association has demonstrated its commitment to addressing national school quality and providing professional leadership to meet the changing needs of our world.



The NASSP Student Activities department is given the responsibility of administering NJHS, NHS, and the National Association of Student Councils (NASC), which sponsors the NASC National Conference each June and the LEAD conferences each spring.

The NASSP Student Activities department administers important student recognition programs including the NHS National Scholarship, the Principal's Leadership Award (PLA), funded by Herff Jones Inc., and the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. Information regarding these awards programs is sent to schools during the school year.

Schools affiliating with the national office receive a subscription to *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine for the chapter adviser. This award-winning monthly (September–May) magazine features articles on all areas of student activities with a special section for Honor Society news and project ideas. Periodically, advisers also receive publications that address topics relevant to student leaders and student activities.

The NJHS catalog, containing information on a wide variety of insignia items and other resources available from the national office, is sent to affiliated schools each fall. Full online ordering capabilities are available as well via the national Web site.

The national Web site, www.njhs.us, is an important resource for all chapters, with information on all programs and resources. The Adviser Zone, a members-only section of the site, features chapter management tools created specifically for chapter advisers.

For more information about the benefits of affiliating with NJHS, establishing a chapter of NHS or NJHS in your school, or for assistance in developing the programs of your existing chapter, please contact:

NJHS/NASSP

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National Junior Honor Society



National Junior Honor Society® Established in 1929

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is a program of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP).

Selection Criteria

The NHS and NJHS National Council establishes the national standards for all NJHS chapters. Local chapters create their own bylaws that must be consistent with and comply with the NJHS national constitution.

Any student in the second semester of the sixth grade or grades 7 through 9 in a school with both an official charter of the National Junior Honor Society and an up-to-date affiliation with the NJHS national office is eligible for consideration for membership in NJHS (instructions for obtaining a charter and/or affiliation are found on the pages that follow). *All membership selection is handled through the local school chapter.*

NJHS is more than just academic recognition. The NJHS chapter establishes guidelines for selection that are based upon a student's outstanding performance in the areas of scholarship, service, leadership, citizenship, and character.

Scholarship: "Students who have a cumulative grade point average of 85%, B, 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or equivalent standard of excellence, or a higher cumulative average set by the local school's faculty council, meet the scholarship requirement for membership. These students are then eligible for consideration on the basis of service, leadership, citizenship, and character." (NJHS Constitution, Article IX, Section 2)

Service: This quality is defined as the voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, without direct financial or material compensation to the individual performing the service. Chapters may establish criteria that stipulate specific quantities of projects or service hours for candidates, as well as expectations of service obligations once a student is selected as a member.

Leadership: Student leaders are often viewed as those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, involved in and promoters of school activities, idea contributors, dependable, and persons who are both organized and good organizers. Experiences to be considered under the Leadership criterion can include activities that originate in the school or community or both, as determined by the local chapter.

Citizenship: The student who demonstrates citizenship understands the importance of civic involvement; has a high regard for freedom, justice, and democracy; and demonstrates mature participation and responsibility through involvement in activities such as scouting, community organizations, or school clubs.

Character: The student of good character can be said to be one who upholds principles of morality and ethics; is cooperative and responsible; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and generally maintains a positive outlook on life. Chapters consider the values and traditions of both the local school and community when defining the character criterion.

Specific standards for these five criteria may vary from one school to the next. Such variations are acceptable as long as they do not fall outside the standards set by the National Council of NJHS. All chapters are required to record and publish the criteria and general procedures used in their local selection processes. Final selection is made by a vote of the five-member Faculty Council, a selection committee appointed by the principal. The NJHS adviser supervises the selection process and maintains copies of the local procedures and has them available upon request.



Membership in NJHS

Once selected, a student is awarded the privilege of membership in the local chapter at a special induction ceremony. With induction, each member assumes certain obligations as outlined by the chapter and the national constitution. The chapter must conduct a service project for the school or community and see to the development of an individual service project for each member. Chapters may choose to sponsor fundraising projects or otherwise involve themselves with the school to reach the chapter's goals. In addition, regular meetings of the chapter can be held to conduct chapter business. It is recommended that all chapters delineate the full range of membership obligations and share them on a regular basis with all members and their parents. All active NJHS chapter members are expected to fulfill these obligations and support chapter activities.

For additional information on selection criteria, membership obligations, and procedures of the chapter, please refer to the *NJHS Handbook* (2005 edition). Copies of the handbook are available from the NASSP sales office or via online ordering at www.njhs.us.

State NHS and NJHS Organizations

Although local chapters are officially established through a charter with the national office, some chapters have organized state associations. Currently, the following states sponsor state meetings or maintain an organization of honor societies:

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. In addition, Puerto Rico maintains its own association.

Many of these organizations offer newsletters, conventions, and workshops to keep their members informed. Chapters in other states that are interested in creating a new state organization can also contact the national office for assistance.

National Junior Honor Society Programs

All schools that have or wish to have chapters of NJHS must maintain a paid membership with the national office. The national office administers a large variety of programs and activities. Once inducted, members are eligible to participate in this new world of opportunities through NJHS.

NHS and NJHS National Conference: NJHS members and advisers are eligible to register for the annual NHS and NJHS National Conference. Nationally known speakers and presenters as well as delegates from around the country participate in this motivational weekend conference.

Adviser Training and Resources

With affiliation, the principal identifies a member of the faculty to be the chapter adviser and to receive information from the national office. The essential publication for these advisers is *Leadership for Student Activities* magazine, published monthly during the school year. In addition, during the year, a variety of newsletters and publications are sent to affiliated schools. Additional information about all of these programs and publications is provided regularly to all advisers in *Leadership* magazine, in the NHS and NJHS catalogs, and through informative brochures that are available from the national office or on the Web site.

The national office and some state associations provide professional development opportunities for chapter advisers. These services are available at the national conference and the LEAD conferences held each spring. CEUs and graduate credit are available for participants. Dates and sites of annual programs are available in *Leadership* magazine and on the Web site.

