How to Create a Constitution and By-laws

Useful Definitions

Constitution: A constitution is a written document that sets forth the fundamental governing laws or principles under which the council is organized and operates.

By-laws: By-laws are rules adopted by a group for its own meetings or affairs. They may not contradict or negate any part of the constitution.

Ratification: Acceptance of a new constitution by the student body (Note: New schools will have to write their own constitutions)

Amendments: A change to the constitution. In order to amend a student body constitution, the following steps must be taken:
   a. A student, faculty-member, or a school administrator must propose the amendment.
   b. The proposed amendment must be approved by the general assembly.
   c. The majority of the student body must approve the proposed amendment.
   d. The school principal must approve the proposed amendment.
   (Note: The school administration and/or the School Board of Broward County, Florida may amend Student Body Constitutions.)

Format of a Constitution
(Note: The following topics are the articles of a constitution)

1. Name: Name of the organization
2. Objectives/purpose: The objectives/purpose of the group
3. Authority: States the source and limitations of the organization
4. Organization Membership: Definition of membership for the group. Qualifications and duties of the members
5. Officers and representatives: Names the titles of the officers.
6. Duties and responsibilities of officers and representatives: General responsibilities of all officers.
7. Elections:
   a. Standards set by the county should be included along with individual school’s options.
   b. Term of office should be included and should state the beginning and end time of term.
   c. All candidate applications, used ballots, and tally sheets should be retained and secured for a period of one year.
8. Meetings: General provisions for SGA meetings including but not limited to:
   a. What constitutes a quorum?
   b. Who has the right to vote?
   c. Who may call a special meeting?
9. Executive Board:
   a. Who makes up the executive board?
   b. The responsibilities of the executive board
10. **Standing Committees:** Description of standing committees and provisions for formations of special committees.

11. **Removal from office:**
   a. Policies and procedures must be included regarding removal from office.
   b. Disciplinary actions should be included in your by-laws.

12. **Parliamentary Authority:** The procedure that will be used to conduct all meetings.

13. **Amendments:** The entire school population should be given the right to vote on any amendments to the school Student Government Association constitution.

**By-laws may include such items as:**

1. Specific dates and times for general assembly meetings.
2. Officer tasks unique to your school.
3. Procedures for electing Homecoming Court.
4. Etc.