

Fernley High School

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts regarding a possible district policy for selecting students for Leadership. I understand the importance of making sure students feel that opportunities are available to them and that selection processes are fair and transparent. At the same time, I believe it is important to recognize what goes into building and maintaining a successful Leadership program at each individual school.

At Fernley High School, Leadership is not a traditional elective. My students are responsible for helping create the culture of our school. Throughout the year, they plan activities, organize Homecoming, run lunchtime events, recognize students and staff, participate in community service, work with other schools, support schoolwide initiatives, promote events, and help create opportunities for students to feel connected to FHS. Much of this work happens behind the scenes. Students have deadlines. They have committees and individual responsibilities. They have to communicate with teachers, administrators, community members, businesses, and other students. They set up events, clean up afterward, solve problems when plans change, and sometimes give up their lunch, evenings, or time outside of class to make an activity successful. Because of that, I have to look at more than whether a student wants to be in Leadership.

I need students who will come to school consistently, follow through when they are given a responsibility, work with people outside of their friend groups, behave appropriately, communicate, accept feedback, and be willing to do the work that isn't always fun or visible. I also want students who are willing to grow. A student does not have to walk into Leadership already knowing how to be a great leader, but they do need to be willing to learn, participate, and take responsibility.

Our constitution gives our program structure and helps guide how our Student Council operates. I believe that constitution, along with input from the advisor and school administration, should continue to guide how students are selected for our program.

Our program also operates within expectations that extend beyond Fernley High School. We participate in the Nevada Association of Student Councils (NASC), which provides another layer of standards, expectations, and accountability for student leadership programs. Our students attend regional and state conferences, participate in leadership development, and are expected to meet guidelines associated with those opportunities.

Student Leadership also functions in many ways similarly to other competitive and extracurricular programs recognized within Nevada's school activity structure. Just as students participating in athletics and other school activities have expectations for eligibility, conduct, attendance, participation, and representation of their school, our Leadership students are also representing Fernley High School when they attend regional and state events. They are expected to meet not only our school's standards but also the guidelines established for participation at those events.

This is important because Leadership does not operate without structure or accountability. We already have multiple layers guiding our program-our school expectations, our constitution, our

administration, NASC expectations, and the requirements associated with regional and state participation. Before adding another district-wide layer that determines how students must be selected, I believe we should recognize and respect the systems that are already in place.

One of my concerns with creating one district policy is that Leadership looks different at every school. Fernley High School has its own enrollment, traditions, activities, student needs, campus culture, and expectations. What works for our program may not be what works at Dayton, Yerington, Silver Stage, Smith Valley, or another school in our district. I believe that difference is okay. In fact, I think it is one of the strengths of student leadership.

I also think we need to separate student voice from enrollment in a Leadership class. Every student should have opportunities to be heard, participate, volunteer, suggest ideas, attend activities, serve their school, and contribute to school culture. I strongly support creating more of those opportunities. However, being able to participate in your school community is different from being selected for a class that has limited space and significant responsibilities.

There are many programs throughout our schools where there are expectations for participation or where space is limited. Different programs use different criteria because they serve different purposes. I would be concerned about taking away the ability of advisors, teachers, counselors, and administrators to determine what their particular program needs in order to be successful.

I also want to protect something that is extremely important in Leadership: student ownership. Our students should have a voice in the direction of their program. They should learn how constitutions work, how decisions are made, how officers are selected, how expectations are established, and how an organization holds its members accountable. Those experiences are part of teaching leadership. If too many decisions about how a student council must operate are made outside of the individual school, we risk taking some of that ownership away from the students we are trying to teach to lead.

My goal is not to create a Leadership program made up of "perfect" students. Leadership should include different personalities, strengths, backgrounds, and leadership styles. I want students who have the potential and desire to grow. At the same time, students need to understand that being part of Leadership comes with expectations and responsibilities.

I would support district guidance that encourages schools to have a clearly written selection process, communicate expectations to students, regularly review their constitutions, and provide meaningful opportunities for student involvement. I would prefer, however, that the specific selection process remain a school-level decision so each Leadership program can respond to the needs of its students and campus.

Leadership is ultimately about teaching students to take ownership of their school and understand that their actions can make a difference. I want to continue building a program at Fernley High School where students aren't just members of Leadership—they are actively learning how to lead.

Thank you for allowing advisors to be part of this conversation and for considering the needs of each individual school's Leadership program.

Sincerely, Jackie Kingston Leadership Advisor Fernley High School

1. The number of Leadership/Student Government sections currently offered. 1

2. Current enrollment in each section and the maximum enrollment/capacity of each section. 45-50 are enrolled and that is our Maximum enrollment. We also add spots for our special needs students who are recommended.

3. The number of students who applied for or requested enrollment for the current school year and, if available, the number who were not admitted. 15 students applied 4 were not admitted.

4. A description of the process used to select students for admission when the number of interested students exceeds available seats. Discussion between administrators, our counselor, and both advisors and teachers from FIS and SMS. We may also take other teacher perspectives into consideration if necessary.

5. The specific criteria used to evaluate applicants, including any scoring rubric, application, interview questions, teacher recommendations, prior participation requirements, or other factors considered. Students can pick up an application in the office and return to the office by the due date. We have a constitution that has by-laws that we may refer to.

6. Who participates in evaluating applicants and who makes the final admission decision. It is a team effort amongst administrators, counselor, and advisors. Our by laws also state that executive council members may also provide their perspectives as well if necessary.

7. Whether the selection criteria and process are provided to students and families in advance of application or registration. If a student or their families ask, it will be answered. We can be more transparent about the selection process in the future though.

8. Copies of any written application materials, selection rubrics, procedures, guidelines, or other documents currently used in the selection process. We have an application that students can pick up in the office when available. We have a constitution that may be used in the selection process.

9. Whether students who are not selected are provided a reason, feedback, or any opportunity for review or reconsideration. Students are told why they did not earn a spot in our course if they choose to ask. They do have an opportunity to fix behaviors, fix attendance, etc and try again in the future.

10. Whether enrollment in Leadership/Student Government is required before a student may become a candidate for any elected student-government office. If so, please identify

which offices and when that requirement must be satisfied. Leadership is a mandatory requirement for ALL executive board member positions, however, there are positions within class council that do not require previous leadership experience.

11. Whether students elected to office are required to enroll in or participate in Leadership/Student Government during their term of office. It is a requirement.

12. What other formal student leadership opportunities are available to students who are not enrolled in the Leadership/Student Government class. Students may consider National Honor Society, join the yearbook club, they may volunteer their time with their classmates at any school sponsored event to earn leadership experience, We encourage students who wish to volunteer or participate with us to join in on any opportunities that we offer.

Dayton High School

1. The number of Leadership/Student Government sections currently offered. DHS currently has 1 section of leadership. Some years we have had two sections, depending upon enrollment. When this has occurred, Leadership 1 is one class and Leadership 2-4 are a second class.

2. Current enrollment in each section and the maximum enrollment/capacity of each section. We currently have 46 students enrolled in one section. We base the capacity off of what the teacher feels is manageable. Our teacher has a larger room with space for students to spread out and this load is currently manageable for her. If this was a traditional classroom space, we would look at adding a second section.

3. The number of students who applied for or requested enrollment for the current school year and, if available, the number who were not admitted. I believe that all students who signed up were admitted as long as it worked within their schedule.

4. A description of the process used to select students for admission when the number of interested students exceeds available seats. In some years we have looked at previous performance in leadership classes (attendance at required events, participation in classes and activities, previous leadership grades). My first reaction is not to cut kids. I would rather add a second section first. If we exceeded two sections then we would utilize an application process that includes teacher references and academic progress measures like GPA.

5. The specific criteria used to evaluate applicants, including any scoring rubric, application, interview questions, teacher recommendations, prior participation requirements, or other factors considered. We currently have an open enrollment in the class.

6. Who participates in evaluating applicants and who makes the final admission decision. The only experience I have had with that is the removal of students once they are in the class. That is done in collaboration with the leadership teacher, the student, parents, and principal.

7. Whether the selection criteria and process are provided to students and families in advance of application or registration. For students running for a class office position or students council position, yes, those are available. We do not currently utilize anything for leadership class because we have open enrollment.

8. Copies of any written application materials, selection rubrics, procedures, guidelines, or other documents currently used in the selection process. We don't currently use anything for the leadership class, however, we do have our student council/class officer intent to run for office form that I can share if needed.

9. Whether students who are not selected are provided a reason, feedback, or any opportunity for review or reconsideration. If we are in the position where we need to remove someone, yes there is a meeting held with parents, teacher, and principal to discuss the need for removal and why.

10. Whether enrollment in Leadership/Student Government is required before a student may become a candidate for any elected student-government office. If so, please identify which offices and when that requirement must be satisfied. No, this is not a requirement at DHS.

11. Whether students elected to office are required to enroll in or participate in Leadership/Student Government during their term of office. We encourage it, however, it is not required to be in leadership to hold a position. Many students have class conflicts with other electives, CTE pathways, jump start, etc. that we can't mandate it.

12. What other formal student leadership opportunities are available to students who are not enrolled in the Leadership/Student Government class. We currently have FBLA, NHS, JAG, Hope Squad and Key Club that have a formal leadership structure. Students also have opportunities to demonstrate leadership through athletics, theater, music, and our Big Brothers/Sisters program with DES. If a student wants to start a new club and be a leader, we work with them to develop that as well. If a student wants to be involved in developing their leadership capacity, we work with them to find opportunities for this.

Smith Valley High School

1. The number of Leadership/Student Government sections currently offered. Zero

2. Current enrollment in each section and the maximum enrollment/capacity of each section. Zero

3. The number of students who applied for or requested enrollment for the current school year and, if available, the number who were not admitted. Zero

4. A description of the process used to select students for admission when the number of interested students exceeds available seats. Class not offered, therefore no rubric has been created.

- 5. The specific criteria used to evaluate applicants, including any scoring rubric, application, interview questions, teacher recommendations, prior participation requirements, or other factors considered. As above.**
- 6. Who participates in evaluating applicants and who makes the final admission decision.**
N/A
- 7. Whether the selection criteria and process are provided to students and families in advance of application or registration.** N/A
- 8. Copies of any written application materials, selection rubrics, procedures, guidelines, or other documents currently used in the selection process.** N/A
- 9. Whether students who are not selected are provided a reason, feedback, or any opportunity for review or reconsideration.** N/A
- 10. Whether enrollment in Leadership/Student Government is required before a student may become a candidate for any elected student-government office. If so, please identify which offices and when that requirement must be satisfied.** Student council is made up of all of the presidents of all other school clubs/organizations and classes. President, VP, treasurer, secretary, spirit coordinator, and historian are elected offices in that group. Elections happen at the end of the year for the following year. 2.5 GPA, petition signed by 10 student body members, approval of counselor and advisor (verify GPA and behavior logs)
- 11. Whether students elected to office are required to enroll in or participate in Leadership/Student Government during their term of office.** No
- 12. What other formal student leadership opportunities are available to students who are not enrolled in the Leadership/Student Government class.** Student Council, NHS, FFA, CTE student led businesses

Silver Stage High School

Dear Trustee Farr,

Thank you for your email providing context and for asking for advisor feedback before moving a policy forward. We do also appreciate the intent behind wanting clear and equitable processes for students. However, we do have concerns about creating a district-wide policy that dictates how schools must select students for limited-enrollment courses and programs such as leadership.

At SSHS we have already adopted a constitution and we do have a selection process for our leadership classes. That selection process is implemented in collaboration with our administration, counselors, and both leadership advisors. This joint process allows us to consider the students who are best suited for the responsibilities and expectations of the program. We also wholeheartedly believe that decisions about who is appropriate for a particular course are best

made at the school level by the educators and administrators who actually know the students and have established relationships with these students.

A larger concern is the precedent this policy could establish within Lyon County School District. Leadership is not the only course with more interested students than available seats. For example, all weightlifting classes are full every semester. Yearbook class is full. Guitar class is full. Our CTE classes are bursting at their seams. If the district establishes requirements for how leadership must select students, it raises the question of whether those same requirements will apply to every limited-enrollment class.

There are already processes in place at SSHS to determine appropriate candidates for each of our programs. These processes may look different because the expectations and responsibilities of each program are different. Our processes may be different than Yerington's, Smith Valley's, Dayton's or Fernley's but we all do what we need to do at our own school sites to run a successful program. A one-size-fits-all district policy would intentionally remove the professional judgment and decision-making of our already highly effective staff that work tirelessly for these programs to function effectively.

We also think there is an important distinction between ensuring that students have opportunities to participate in school leadership and determining who is admitted to a particular class. While all students can be involved with our school community, student council members are direct representatives of each school for the student body, the staff, and the community. They understand that they must not only present themselves as individuals in ways that best represent the school, but they must also be active leaders, planners, and organizers.

At SSHS, every discussion we hold about events, initiatives, and ideas are held and voted on during the leadership class period. Because of this, it is absolutely imperative that our student council members are enrolled and present in leadership. This process was designed through trial and error, as students who are enrolled in other classes during the leadership class period cannot be involved in the discussion and voting process.

Furthermore, Silver Stage High School (and many if not all other LCSD schools) report to NASC, the statewide organization that facilitates goal making, developing leadership, and connecting student councils in Nevada. This organization requires us to submit charitable financial contributions, community service initiatives, activities with middle School and/elementary school students, connections with a sister school, tracks school involvement such as spirit activities, staff recognition/appreciation, student recognition/appreciation, school service/beautification, leadership lessons/trainings, campus wide educational programs, and requires a constitution and written evidence that our Council's constitution has been reviewed within that academic school year. In addition to this, we also are required to participate in state and regional conferences. This is a lot of work. We need the students who are willing to put in that work, who do not let their behaviors get in the way of our goals, who do not let their attendance get in the way of their own journey as leaders, and students who have the courage to step up and run for office to ensure that we can show NASC and all schools in Nevada that we are a great school with great leaders.

Lastly, in the letter to principals it mentions that some sort of governance is requested because “access to a limited educational opportunity is at stake.” Before we focus on who gains access to a limited opportunity, we should be asking a more fundamental question of why are so many educational opportunities unavailable to our students in the first place? When we talk about equal access to educational opportunities, we must first look at whether all Lyon County students are actually being given access to a broad range of educational opportunities. Educational opportunities are limited on a daily basis at SSHS by the courses that simply are not available to us due to having a smaller enrollment, limited degrees of teachers, and fewer resources. We do not have Culinary Arts. We do not have Welding. We do not have EMT courses. We do not have Business & Marketing, Accounting & Finance, or Agriculture & Animal Science. We do not even have Art. Outside of the classroom, we do not have the opportunity to host night football games because we have no lights on our field. We are receiving donations of hand-me-down weights equipment and a second-hand machine that we got for free off Facebook Marketplace while other schools are getting all new equipment.

Before we spend our energy governing who gets access to limited opportunities, we should first make sure we are not limiting the opportunities available to students simply because of the school they attend. Equity should not be about deciding who gets access to the few opportunities we offer; it should be about making sure we offer meaningful opportunities to every student, at every school.

Thank you for your time,

Ashlee Cross, Advisor

Georgia Ward, Advisor

Amber Cross, Principal

To address the questions posed at the end of the email:

1. The number of Leadership/Student Government sections currently offered. 1
2. Current enrollment in each section and the maximum enrollment/capacity of each section. 30 are enrolled and that is our Maximum enrollment.
3. The number of students who applied for or requested enrollment for the current school year and, if available, the number who were not admitted. As new advisors we can only speak on this year and last year. We do not have previous data. However, this has been a non-issue at SSHS.
4. A description of the process used to select students for admission when the number of interested students exceeds available seats. Discussion between administrators, our counselor, and both advisors. We may also take other teacher perspectives into consideration if necessary.
5. The specific criteria used to evaluate applicants, including any scoring rubric, application, interview questions, teacher recommendations, prior participation requirements, or other factors considered. We have a constitution that has by-laws that we may refer to.

6. Who participates in evaluating applicants and who makes the final admission decision. It is a team effort amongst administrators, our counselor, and both advisors. Our bylaws also state that executive council members may also provide their perspectives as well if necessary.

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8. Copies of any written application materials, selection rubrics, procedures, guidelines, or other documents currently used in the selection process. We have a constitution that may be used in the selection process.

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10. Whether enrollment in Leadership/Student Government is required before a student may become a candidate for any elected student-government office. If so, please identify which offices and when that requirement must be satisfied. Leadership is a mandatory requirement for ALL executive board member positions, however, there are positions within class council that do not require previous leadership experience.

11. Whether students elected to office are required to enroll in or participate in Leadership/Student Government during their term of office. It is a requirement.

12. What other formal student leadership opportunities are available to students who are not enrolled in the Leadership/Student Government class. Students may consider National Honor Society, join the yearbook club, they may volunteer their time with their classmates at any school sponsored event to earn leadership experience, they may volunteer their time peer-tutoring at our daily tutoring sessions, and more. We would love to have more kids help set up dances, decorate our hallways, prepare homecoming floats, participate in after school activities and events, they may volunteer ANYWHERE around town and log it as experience in SchoolLinks such as the animal shelter, senior center, their church, local businesses, etc. Leadership does not just happen during class time. It is every single day and most times outside of school hours.

Yerington High School

We don't have a leadership class, so some of these questions I can't answer. Any of our students can be in Student Senate and run for an office. We require passing grades. The students are elected by our student body. We do have information to share with the students and parents so everyone is aware of the required grades and additional time students will devote to Student Senate. We have other student leadership opportunities like President of National Honor Society and Officers in FFA. I hope this helps.