

TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL



2017-2018 DRILL TEAM CONSTITUTION

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HIGHSTEPPER DRILL TEAM CONSTITUTION**

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the varsity drill team is to promote spirit and sportsmanship at school functions and to serve as a performing group representing the high school throughout the community, state, and nation.

Instructional and performance activities are affirmatively directed toward development of individual member improvement, resulting in a highly skilled performance group. Each student selected must be cognizant of the time commitment and individual dedication demanded in striving for personal improvement and teamwork through responsibility and discipline.

Students are exposed to teaching, practice, and performance opportunities that result in the development of responsibility, self-respect, and that encourage honest effort in striving for excellence. These opportunities also develop character, teamwork, and pride in quality performance and physical fitness by emphasizing the maintenance of high standards.

DEFINITION

Drill Team year: The rules and procedures outlined in this constitution are in effect from the time the student is selected to the drill team squad until the tryout the next school year. This does not include the academic guidelines. Because of TEA rules, the academic policies are in effect for a school year.

TRYOUTS/SELECTIONS

Students wishing to try out for the THS HighSteppers Drill Team will need to follow the information listed.

- The director will be responsible for the preparation and distribution of a packet of information to be made available to all candidates in February/March. This information will include specific tryout dates, times, attire, and procedures. This information must be approved by the Texas High School principal prior to distribution. Candidates and parents must sign a form stating that they understand and will comply with all information in the packet before the student is allowed to participate in the tryout process.
- The Texarkana Independent School District will hold a centralized tryout for the selection of the Texas HighSteppers Drill Team line members. The tryouts will be held on a date in February/March to be determined by the principals and Drill Team Director. The date will not be during the week of STAAR or EOC testing. Every student wishing to audition must do so on this date with no exceptions.
- Any student who arrives at the tryout site after the tryouts for that campus have started will not be allowed to try out.
- There will be no application fees or tryout fees for students trying out for drill team.
- The school district will bring in judges to assist in the selection process that are not affiliated with Texas High and are qualified to judge. The HighStepper Director and Campus Principal will have final approval of judges. There will be a three-member judging panel that will score candidates from each school.
- Scores given to a student by an individual judge will not be changed by anyone handling the scores, the principal, or the HighStepper Director.

- Parents will **not** be allowed in the building during any phase of the tryouts. In addition, a campus administrator will be present to serve as a neutral observer.
- Tryouts will be closed to everyone except judges, directors, principals, and principals' designees. Out-going seniors and officers will be allowed to assist with music, and door operations, they will not be involved in the collection or tabulation of scores.
- Any deviation by the candidates from the tryout requirements may result in the disqualification of the candidate.
- Students who are selected will have their numbers posted after tryouts have concluded and the judges have been dismissed.
- The number of candidates selected each year will be based upon the talent level and qualifications of the candidates. In order to try out, a student must be at least a freshman and meet all state, TEA, and TISD requirements.
- Anyone transferring from one campus to another during the current year will forfeit his/her position on the team. If a student wishes to join the drill team at the new school of attendance, that student must wait for the scheduled yearly tryout to audition.
- Once the team has been selected, no others will be added.
- Candidates selected to be a member of the drill team are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full year. Any drill team member who voluntarily quits the team before the end of the school year will not be allowed to tryout at the next tryout session unless he/she has had prior approval from the principal and director.
- Highstepper Drill Team candidates are required to submit the Medical Release form prior to tryouts. The form releases Texas High School, the Highsteppers organization, and the Highsteppers directors from responsibility of any injury during the tryout process.
- To be eligible for tryouts, students must:
 - be enrolled or transferring to Texas High School for the performing year. Transfers must provide approved transfer information upon completion.
 - not have been suspended, expelled, or placed in DAEP during the 2016-2017 school year.
 - turn in a completed Application Packet to the Director, signed by the parent/guardian.
 - not owe any debts to TISD or the HighSteppers Program.
 - complete the entire tryout process – see tryout packet.
 - be passing **all** classes for the 4th six weeks and have an overall average of 2.0 for the 1st semester.
- Questions or concerns regarding the tryout process should be directed in advance to the Drill Team Director.
- Any appeals will be directed to Mr. Bailey at the request of Drill Team Director.
- All current drill team members will be required to try-out each year.
- Members who have completed 3 years as a HighStepper, with no academic or discipline issues, will automatically be placed on the team for their senior year.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To be eligible for tryouts, candidates must complete each of the following:

- Attend the required parent meeting. Dates for the meeting will be designated by the director and principal approximately one month prior to tryout week.

- Complete the application packet
 - Application form
 - Permission form
 - Constitution Agreement
 - Financial Agreement
 - Report Card showing SM1 and the 6-weeks prior to tryouts
- Attend all of the tryout practices, mock auditions, and auditions. Any excused absences must be approved by Mrs. Reynolds prior to the start of tryout week.
- Candidates who are chosen for the HighSteppers will be required to attend the new team meeting after school, the week following tryouts. At the meeting, candidates and parents must be prepared to begin paying towards the following year.
- Candidates will be notified by TISD website at www.txkisd.net, on the Texas High page, by applicant number after scores are verified. Approximately 10pm the night of tryouts.

INJURY AND USE OF VIDEO

- In the case of physical injury prior to the tryout, the HighStepper Director must be notified for permission to have any deviations in the tryout procedure.
- A video can only be used after notification of the HighStepper Director, and only in the case of an injury that impairs a student from participating in a “specific skill” of the tryout. If a video is used, only a small segment of the video that shows the “specific skill” done by the student prior to the tryout may be judged.
- A medical doctor's note indicating the specific skill the student is incapable of performing will be required prior to video use. If no medical doctor’s note is turned in, the candidate will not be allowed to audition via video.

VIDEO USAGE GUIDELINES

(Directors will make these guidelines available to judges if a video is used for tryout.)

- The judges shall be instructed to consider "absence of pressure," lack of physical/respiratory exertion, and note if a dancer is using a hard or spring floor when performing specific skills" on video.
- The candidate must perform each individual “specific skill” required in the tryout to receive credit/points. No score reduction or credit shall be exercised due to the claimed injury. However, in light of the above considerations, a perfect score for any “specific skill” or category should be rare.

JUDGES

- The judging panels will consist of three (3) judges who are not employed by Texarkana Independent School District.
- No director will judge his/her own campus.
- Judges will be selected from qualified professionals and can include directors from high school and/or college campuses.
- Every attempt should be made to hire outside judges who have not worked with students in the Texarkana area. However, with the hundreds of camps in the state of Texas, attended by thousands of drill team members and taught by hundreds of instructors, it

may be possible at some time that a member of the judging panel may have had some contact with a candidate who is trying out.

- Professional judges with outstanding credential and references will be hired for all tryouts. They will be instructed to judge the candidates based only on the mastery of the skills that they see demonstrated during the tryouts.
- Tryout results will not be challenged because of prior knowledge of judges and candidates.

TABULATION OF SCORES

- Each of the three judges will complete a score sheet, and a tabulator will enter each candidate's scores into an Excel spreadsheet.
- The selection of the team will be based on the "natural break" in the scores.
- Scores given to a student by an individual judge will not be changed by a director, principal, or the HighStepper Director. Complaints about any aspect of the tryout process should be directed to the Drill Team Director or the THS Principal.

JUDGING CRITERIA FOR DRILL TEAM TRYOUTS

Jazz Routine (30) - Will incorporate pirouettes, grande jetes, sissons, grande battements, and other technical skills.

Kick Combo (30) Executing the walking kick combination across the floor.

Right and left split (10)

Appearance/Fitness Level (5)

Memory (15)

Showmanship (10)

The highest possible score is 100 points per judge.

OFFICER TRYOUTS/SELECTIONS

Students wishing to try out for HighStepper Officer will need to fulfill the following criteria:

- Have served 2 years as a HighStepper line member or Social Officer
- Be going in to the Junior or Senior year
- Must be academically eligible, passing all classes for the 6 weeks prior to auditions
- Must be in good standing with director and Texas High School Administration
- Must complete officer tryout packet to its entirety. The officer packet is subject to change each year based on what the director deems is necessary.

OFFICER TRYOUT PACKET

The officer tryout packet can include, but is not limited to:

- Officer candidate information
- "Why I want to serve as an officer" essay
- Officer candidate permission form
- Sample judges interview questions
- Officer contract & agreement
- Director's Evaluation
- Plans/ideas/suggestions for the following school year

- Any extra assignment deemed necessary by the director

OFFICER TRYOUT JUDGES

- The judging panels will consist of three (3) judges who are not employed by Texarkana Independent School District.
- Judges will be selected from qualified professionals and can include directors from high school and/or college campuses.
- Every attempt should be made to hire outside judges who have not worked with students in the Texarkana area. However, with the hundreds of camps in the state of Texas, attended by thousands of drill team members and taught by hundreds of instructors, it may be possible at some time that a member of the judging panel may have had some contact with a candidate who is trying out.
- Professional judges with outstanding credential and references will be hired for all tryouts. They will be instructed to judge the candidates based only on the mastery of the skills that they see demonstrated during the tryouts.
- Tryout results will not be challenged because of prior knowledge of judges and candidates.
- A team vote will be considered, but will not be a part of the final decision.

SOCIAL OFFICER TRYOUTS/SELECTIONS

Students wishing to try out for HighStepper Social Officer will need to fulfill the following:

- Have served 1 year as a HighStepper line member or Social Officer
- Must be in good standing with director and Texas High School Administration
- Must complete officer tryout packet to it's entirety. The officer packet is subject to change each year based on what the director deems is necessary.
- Must be academically eligible, passing all classes for the 6 weeks prior to auditions.

Social Officer auditions will be held the day before officer tryouts. Candidates must be present in order to be considered for the position. On the day of social officer auditions, candidates must make a presentation to the team campaigning for their position. Candidates must also complete a social officer audition notebook which can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Candidate Information
- Social Officer Tryout agreement and contract
- Audition questions
- Samples of presented ideas

There will be a team and director vote, which will decide the number and positions of Social Officers.

MANAGER SELECTIONS

Students wanting to be considered for HighSteppers Team Manager will be responsible for picking up an audition packet and turning in the following:

- Candidate Information
- Manager contract/permission form
- 3 Teacher Evaluations
- Report card showing 1st-4th 6 weeks

Candidates will schedule an interview with Mrs. Reynolds the week of line auditions, and a decision will be made by Mrs. Reynolds. Candidates will be notified by TISD website at www.txkisd.net, on the Texas High page, by applicant number after scores are verified. Approximately 10pm the night of tryouts.

ELIGIBILITY AND MAINTENANCE

- To be eligible at the beginning of the school year, students must have earned the accumulated number of credits in state approved courses indicated below:
 - Beginning of the tenth grade year — at least 6 credits toward graduation.
 - Beginning of the eleventh grade year — at least 12 credits toward
 - Beginning of the twelfth grade year — at least 18 credits toward graduation
- In order to be eligible for any six-week period following the initial six-week period of a school year, a student shall not have a recorded grade average lower than 70 on a scale of 0-100 in any course for the preceding six-week period. To be eligible to participate in the six-week periods following the initial six-week period of a school year, a student must not have a recorded grade average lower than a 70 in any course for that preceding six-week period. This will not include the courses designated in board policy as exempt from the ineligibility rule.
- A student whose recorded six-week grade average in any course is lower than a 70 at the end of a six-week period shall be suspended from competition or performance. A suspension continues for at least three weeks and is not removed during the school year until the student is passing all subjects taken. This suspension shall become effective seven calendar days after the last day of the six-week period during which the grade lower than 70 was earned.
- A student who regains eligibility at the end of a six-week or three-week grading period shall not become eligible until the end of the school day seven calendar days later.
- Students on academic probation must continue to attend classes and all practices, must sit out of all performances, and may not sit with or ride with the team to appearances or performances. Students on probation are not allowed to wear the team pep rally or performance uniform. This state policy does not apply to social activities.
- A drill team member who becomes academically ineligible two times during a school year will be removed from the team.

CONDUCT

Standards of Conduct

- Members are expected to uphold a high standard of behavior that is necessary for the integrity and reputation of the organization. Members should be leaders in the school and should set a good example at all times. Members are expected to have and maintain a character above reproach.
- Proper manners should be used at all times to address adults and officers. Mutual respect and politeness toward fellow members within the group are basic elements that contribute to the total success of the team.

- The following are expressly forbidden: assault or harassment of director or team members, theft of team or individual property. At the first infraction of either of these rules, the student will be removed from the team.
- The possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are forbidden and will not be tolerated. Any infraction, on or off campus, will result in a principal/director/parent/student review. Dismissal from the team may result from this review. A second infraction will result in the immediate dismissal from the drill team.
- Drill team members will wear practice and performance uniforms as designated by the director.
- No visible tattoos or body piercings will be allowing during any drill team function/activity. Failure to abide by this policy will result in point deductions for insubordination.
- Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include ensuring that drill team members' websites are appropriate. The internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Any communication such as MySpace, Facebook, Instagram or photo sharing, etc. appearing on the internet is public domain even if it is marked private. Drill team members are responsible for their personal websites and postings as well as for postings on other students' websites. The area of appropriateness will include, but are not limited to, language (abbreviated or alluding to), pictures, suggestive poses, nudity, clothing, reference to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Any question of appropriateness will be decided by the principal and director.
- Director is not required to respond to "anonymous" information. However if the director is approached with a screen shot of any text messages, social media posts, etc. that include any of the above, a meeting with the director, parents, student, and administrator will be required and possible removal from the team.

PROBATION AND REMOVAL

A. Probation—Academic

A drill team member may be placed on *academic* probation for academic/citizenship reasons as stated in the TEA/TISD policies. If a member is placed on academic probation, that member will also be on probation regarding the **specialty groups** and may not audition for or perform with such groups for the remainder of the academic probation term. Students who are placed on academic probation twice in one year will automatically be on probation with regard to **specialty groups** for the remainder of the school year.

B. Probation—Disciplinary

A drill team member may be placed on *disciplinary probation* for indicated periods of time as described in the **Regulations/Policies** and **Attendance** sections of this document.

A drill team member on disciplinary probation will not be allowed to participate in auditions or performances of the team, or of specialty groups, as defined in the **specialty groups** section of this constitution. A drill team member on disciplinary probation will not be allowed to travel with the team for any reason. The member will not be allowed to wear the uniform. During the probationary period, the student must attend classes, work periods and practices as scheduled during and before/after school hours.

C. Removal

A drill team member may be removed from the drill team or placed on disciplinary probation by the drill team director and principal for violation of the **Standards of Conduct** or **Regulations and Policies** sections of this constitution.

- A drill team member will be removed from the team after two disciplinary probation periods in one year. Removal occurs once point deductions reach 3 strikes. If the student progresses to 3 strikes without having served other disciplinary actions, or during a disciplinary term, removal is still the result, and will be immediate.
- If a member of the team suffers loss of credit for the drill team course for excessive absences, he/she may be removed from the team subject to principal/director review.
- A drill team member who is placed in ISS more than one time during the drill team year will be subject to a principal/director review which may result in removal from the squad.
- A drill team member who is placed in DAEP will be removed from the team, effective on the date of placement.
- A drill team member who is suspended from school will have a principal/director/parent/student review and may be removed from the team.
- A drill team member who is expelled from school will be removed from the team.
- If a drill team member misses more than ten (10) practices in one term, he/she will be subject to director/principal review which could result in removal.
- Students who have been removed and those who voluntarily quit retain no rights to team awards, recognitions, etc., which are received after dismissal, although they may have accrued over the duration of the school term. They lose all privileges associated with drill team membership, including attending drill team-only events, using drill team facilities, and wearing drill team attire.
- Any student removed from the drill team must also be removed from the class.
- A drill team member who has been removed from the squad on any TISD campus will not be eligible to participate in the next tryouts without approval from the principal and director. Areas to be reviewed will include but not be limited to the reasons for the referrals, academic grades, other discipline records, student attitude, and any other factors deemed relevant by the principal and director.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

- Discipline will be recorded with a “marks and strikes” system. Every infraction carries an equal weight (the only exception is missing a practice/performance without being excused). Each infraction equals one (1) mark on their record. After five (5) marks, the student receives a strike and is benched from a routine/performance. The next five (5) marks receives a strike #2 resulting in being benched from a routine/performance. Another five (5) marks receives strike #3, and removal from the team immediately.
- Missing a practice or performance without an excused reason results in an immediate “strike” and removal from a routine.
- The following are considered rule infractions. When being graded, each “mark” will result in -20pts. on a daily grade.
- Marks are acknowledged for one school year, and at the beginning at the next school year, each member’s record is cleared. The only exception is if a disciplinary action (benching, probation) has been determined in the previous year but not yet activated. In this case, the disciplinary action will become active on the first day of school of the next year, and then that student’s record will be cleared.
 - **Benching:** Member attends functions in uniform but will not take part in the team performance. With regard to football or basketball games, the member may perform in the stands with the team but may not perform in pre-game, half-time, or post-game performances or festivities.
 - **Probation:** Member is not allowed to participate in auditions or performances of the team or of specialty groups. The member is not allowed to travel with the team for any reason. Member may not wear the drill team uniform. Member must continue to attend classes, work periods, and practices as scheduled during and before/after school hours.

Accumulation of three or more benching(s) may result in a principal/director review.

Incorrect uniform
Not returning/turning in any item with a due date
Not following instructions for stands behavior
Failure of student to dress out for practice
Inappropriate behavior in uniform
Wearing nail polish to a performance
Unexcused tardy to practice, performance, or function
Wearing inappropriate jewelry during practice.
Wearing any jewelry to a performance.
Lending uniform, sweats, t-shirts, or jackets to non-drill team members
Wearing uniform to non-drill team function
Failing to bring all required items to a performance
Leaving any drill team activity without permission from director
Insubordination
Violating school rules, dress code, policies

Letting a non-member into locker room without director's permission
Non-compliance with drill team standards of conduct. (Example: lying to director, public displays of inappropriate conduct, cursing, etc.)
Unexcused absence from drill team class, practice outside school hours, or required function
Failing to respect all teachers and staff
Office referral
ISS - Strike

MERITS

The director may choose to offer merits for services deemed appropriate. The rewards for such earned merits are also at the director's discretion.

DRILL TEAM PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCES

- Drill team members must attend practice sessions as determined by the director. Absence from practice may result in a missed performance if the director determines that the absence has hindered the ability of the team to practice productively.
- Activities and practice time must be in accordance with TEA guidelines. Practices must be limited to a total of eight hours per school week outside the school day. A school week is determined as from Monday 12:00 a.m. to the end of the school day on Friday.
- Students should use discretion in his/her commitments to multiple extracurricular activities.
- There will be tryouts for each performance. Officers will assist the director in watching the tryouts, however the director has the final decision on all weekly tryouts. Factors such as attitude, manners, and effort will be taken into consideration as well as ability. Students unable to execute the routine to the expected standard or who have exhibited excessive negativity regarding practices will not be chosen to perform.
- Formations will be based on what is best for the designated routine. The director has final discretion for all routine placement.
- Members should strive to maintain a reasonable level of fitness including a reasonable weight.
- If a member is removed from the performance due to tryouts, absences, illness, or injury, that member must continue to attend practices and team performances in uniform unless the illness or injury prohibits him/her from doing so.
- A student may only perform if in correct and complete uniform at the time of performance.
- Drill team members who have auditioned and passed on the current week's routine will not be disciplined for making mistakes that were clearly unintentional during performance.

ATTENDANCE:

Absences (these rules govern all practices, including those not during school hours)

- Attendance at all drill team activities and practices is mandatory.
- An absence is recorded if more than 20 minutes late.
- Absences are excused for: major personal illness, death in family, illness in family that requires out-of-town travel, mandatory court appearance, and religious holidays.
- Absence from practice will result in student being benched from the next performance if the director determines the student's absence hindered the ability of the team to practice efficiently for that performance.
- Any absence approved by the administration for other school activities including religious holidays will not be recorded as an absence.
- Members must call ahead or email the director and their officer squad leader if they are going to be absent. Failure to do so results in point deductions and removal from a performance.
- Upon return from any absence, members must bring a note from a parent or physician explaining their absence. Failure to do so results in point deductions and removal from a performance.
- Outside employment is not an excuse to miss any part of drill team activities. Doing so constitutes an unexcused absence, results in point deductions and removal from a performance.
- Students who are absent from school on a performance day for more than half a day are ineligible to perform. (exception: school field trips, religious holidays)

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- Because drill team is an extra-curricular activity, there are both financial and time commitments involved in being a part of a successful drill team. These commitments are spelled out clearly for each school in the packets that are distributed prior to tryouts. It is critical that students and parents understand the financial obligations of the organization and the timeline for submitting payments due for materials and/or activities before the student decides to try out for the team.
- Any student who fails to make a payment on time will not be allowed to perform with the organization until such time that the financial obligation is satisfied.
- Any funds that are paid to the HighSteppers organization are not refundable under any circumstances.
- Any drill team member who has not met their financial obligation for the current school year will not be allowed to try out for the next school year.

LETTERMAN JACKETS

- A HighStepper will receive a letter and jacket, once they have participated for two full years on the drill team. After two completed years, members will receive a letter and a jacket the following semester.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, it will be the responsibility of the drill team director, in collaboration with the building principal, to make the decision to leave the event. The decision will be based on what is in the best interests of the students and their health and welfare. If a parent or student voluntarily leaves a drill team event, they will be subject to the penalties as outlined in the drill team constitution.

SPECIALTY GROUPS

- It is up to the discretion of each school to decide whether to offer specialty groups such as elite dance teams and kick lines.
- Any member is eligible to audition for specialty groups such as: kick lines, elite dance teams, contest teams, officers, squad leaders, etc., unless on academic or disciplinary probation.

COST COVERED BY TISD

- TISD will provide field uniform pieces excluding hats, boots, body suits, and tights. Members are required to return the district-provided uniform pieces upon leaving the team. They must be returned in good condition, or additional repair fees may be charged as determined by the director. As these uniform pieces are TISD property, failure to return them will result in disciplinary action by school administration.
- TISD will provide a supply budget for Drill Team.
- A record of all uniforms and equipment issued to members will be kept. Students will be assessed the replacement cost of items not returned. Items with excessive abuse and/or items deemed unusable or destroyed must also be replaced at the student's expense.

Quick Reference Guide for Disciplinary Matters

Academic Probation:

Failure to earn the required amount of credit units per year:

Ineligible for the first six weeks of the next school year

Fail a (or more than one) non-exempt course:

Ineligible to perform, travel, or wear uniforms until eligibility is regained.

Also may not perform with or audition for specialty groups until eligibility is regained.

Fail twice in one school year:

May not perform with or audition for specialty groups for the remainder of the school year.

Disciplinary Benching/Probation:

Accumulation of 6 marks (strike 1): benched from next performance

Accumulation of 11 marks (strike 2): benched from next performance

Accumulation of 16 marks (strike 3): removal

Director reserves right to bench a team member from any performance based on discipline or attitude.

Removal:

Any of the following will result in removal:

- **Second academic failure in one school year**
- **Assault or harassment of director or team members**
- **Theft of individual or team property**
- **Participation in illegal activities as determined by school code of conduct**
- **Violating Standard of Conduct and/or Regulations and Policies of constitution**
- **Accumulation of 3 strikes (16 marks)**
- **Reassignment placement more than once in a school year**
- **Placement in Alternative School**
- **Expulsion from school**
- **Suspension from school**
- **Missing more than 10 practices/performances in one term/semester**
- **Loss of Credit for the drill team course due to excessive absences**
- **Alcohol, illegal drugs**
- **Other Serious Infractions deemed inappropriate by the Drill Team Director and Campus Principal.**

TISD HighStepper Drill Team Constitution

I have read the rules and regulations presented in the TISD 2017-2018 HighStepper Drill Team Constitution and understand them as they apply to my daughter.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date_____

I have read the rules and regulations presented in the TISD 2016-2018 HighStepper Drill Team Constitution understand them as they apply to me.

HighStepper Member Signature_____

Date_____