

CONSTITUTION

H.O.P.E. For Hidalgo County

PREAMBLE

The following Constitution, Statement of Faith and Bylaws constitute the guidelines, regulations, and procedures for operation and guidance of H.O.P.E. for Hidalgo County. The Constitution, Statement of Faith and Bylaws shall become effective as of the date of adoption by this organization and shall supersede all other regulations and procedures heretofore in existence.

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

A. The name of this organization shall be

Home Oriented Private Education (H.O.P.E.) for Hidalgo County
Promoting Christ-Centered Education -- Raising Men and Women of Godly Character

B. On all official correspondence, both Title and Subtitle shall be included.

ARTICLE 2 - GOVERNANCE

H.O.P.E. shall be governed in its operation by this Constitution, as well as by the H.O.P.E. Statement of Faith, Bylaws and Standing Rules. Business shall follow an informal order of meeting with the exception that the President may move with simple majority toward following Roberts Rules of Order.

- A. Statement of Faith -- H.O.P.E. is committed to a Christ-centered, biblically sound, home education. Members are requested to sign in agreement to the Statement of Faith. Associate H.O.P.E. members (those who do not sign the Statement of Faith) are required to read the Statement of Faith and must understand that though they may not agree on all points, nevertheless they must agree to support and not contradict the tenets of the Statement of Faith whenever participating in H.O.P.E. group activities. The statement is designed to provide agreement on basic core beliefs for Christians and is not intended to promote any particular denomination or group, nor shall members endeavor to promote, recruit for, or advocate any particular church or denomination at any H.O.P.E. function.
- B. Bylaws -- The Bylaws for H.O.P.E. stand as a body of secondary rules for the organization, subject to amendment by the membership as needed.
- C. Standing Rules -- The H.O.P.E. standing rules exist as those rules necessary for the day to day operation of the organization and are subject to amendment by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 3 -- PURPOSE

- A. To support and encourage families teaching at home in the raising of men and women of Godly character.

- B. To offer social, academic, sports and educational field trip opportunities for our children.
- C. To pool and share resources when opportunities arise.
- D. To establish a link in a chain for information to be passed between the individual home-school families, state-wide organizations and our local organization.

ARTICLE 4 -- OFFICERS

- A. The officers of the organization shall be: President, Vice-president, Treasurer and Secretary.
- B. Officers shall be held by husband and wife couples with both participating. In the case of a single parent, the parent shall be involved with the homeschooling of the child(ren).
- C. To qualify for nomination as an officer, the couple (or single parent) must have been a voting member of H.O.P.E. for Hidalgo County (as described in the Bylaws) for two consecutive years prior to nomination, have attended one business meeting in the previous twelve months, and have a good Christian testimony in the community. To qualify for nominations as chairman of a standing committee, the couple (or single parent) must have been a voting member of H.O.P.E. for Hidalgo County (as described in the Bylaws) for one year prior to nomination, have attended one business meeting in the previous twelve months, and have a good Christian testimony in the community.
- D. It is advisable, (though not mandatory) for the Presidential nominee to have been a member of a previous Executive Committee.
- E. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the organization and the Chairs of the Standing Committees.
- F. The Executive Committee shall have authorization to make decisions on behalf of the membership in cases where a decision is required sooner than it is possible to call a general meeting. Such decisions shall not involve the exchange of real property.

ARTICLE 5 -- ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- A. Election of officers and standing committee chairs will occur at the May business meeting.
- B. The term of office shall be from June first after election until May thirty-first of the following year.
- C. Each December via e-mail and/or the website the Secretary will publish a list of those members eligible to serve on the nominee screening committee. Eligibility requirements for membership on the nominee screening committee are the same as those for Standing Committee Chairs. The Secretary shall chair the nominee screening committee. Each year at the January business meeting the voting members will elect six additional individuals, not currently serving on the Executive Committee, to serve on the nominee

screening committee. That committee will then accept nominations for the various offices and standing committee chairs and shall interview all candidates for those offices. The committee will then publish a list of screened nominees in March and April via e-mail and/or the website. If any member has a concern over the eligibility of a nominee, he or she may bring that concern to the attention of the nominee screening committee prior to the May meeting. The membership will vote at the May meeting between those nominees remaining after screening by the nominee screening committee.

- D. Each officer shall hold office until his successor has been duly elected and qualified.
- E. Should the Presidential couple resign, be removed from office, be unwilling or unable to assume office after election, or at any time be unable or unwilling to perform the duties of the office, the vice-presidential couple will automatically become President. If for any reason both the Presidency and vice-presidency become vacant simultaneously, the first officer remaining from the following list will serve as acting President: Treasurer, Secretary, Standing Committee Chairs (in the order listed in the Bylaws). The acting-President must then call a special election within three (3) months to fill both spots. All other vacancies between elections shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Committee.
- F. Any officer of the Executive Committee can be removed from office for gross misconduct or other just cause. If one-third of the voting members sign an impeachment petition against any office, the highest ranking officer not under impeachment must call and preside over a special meeting for this purpose. The officer under impeachment shall then be removed from office if two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting vote to remove. At this meeting, the accused officer must be afforded the opportunity to present testimony and evidence on his or her own behalf.

ARTICLE 6 -- MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership is by family. To be a **Voting Member** a family must 1) be currently home-schooling one or more children in Hidalgo county and surrounding areas, 2) have submitted a completed membership application to the Secretary, 3) have paid their dues for the current year, and 4) have signed, in agreement with, the H.O.P.E. Statement of Faith. Only voting members will be eligible to vote, teach in Co-op, hold office or chair a committee. Each voting family constitutes one voting membership. To maintain voting membership status, attendance is required for a minimum of one meeting in the preceding twelve months.
- B. To be an **Associate Member** a family must 1) be currently home-schooling one or more children in Hidalgo county and surrounding areas, 2) have submitted a completed membership application to the Secretary, 3) have paid their dues for the current year, and 4) have read and agreed to support and not contradict the Statement of Faith in group activities. Associate member families may participate in all H.O.P.E. activities, with the exceptions of: teaching in Co-op, chairing a committee, holding office, and voting.
- C. Families or individuals not home-schooling, but desiring to support H.O.P.E. may participate as **Supportive Members**. Such membership is intended to be supportive of

H.O.P.E. and entitles the Supportive Member to all H.O.P.E. mailings and attendance at H.O.P.E. business meetings, banquets and dinners. It also allows participation in other H.O.P.E. activities such as Co-op, choir or sports with the approval of the Executive Committee and under the guidance of the appropriate officer or standing committee chair.

- D. Membership is renewed annually upon receipt of the member's dues and an updated membership form.
- E. It shall be the duty of voting and associate member families to serve the group in some function each year, whether in an office, assisting at events, serving on committees, etc. Families are expected to attend one business meeting per year.
- F. Membership may be terminated for just cause by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting membership present and voting at a called meeting.

ARTICLE 7 -- ADVISORY BOARD

- A. The Advisory Board shall consist of no more than eleven (11) members.
- B. Membership of the Board shall consist of members of the community who may or may not be members of H.O.P.E., but who support homeschooling and have signed in agreement to the Statement of Faith. The President and Vice-president couples also sit on the Advisory Board as non-voting members.
- C. The Advisory Board may place any item with their recommendation onto the agenda of the next general business meeting.
- D. Members of the Advisory Board serve two year terms, and may serve a maximum of two consecutive two year terms. They are appointed by the Executive Committee and approved by the general membership in the next regular business meeting. In the first year of its existence, half of those appointed to the board shall be appointed to one year terms.

ARTICLE 8 -- MEETINGS

- A. There shall be no fewer than three (3) regular business meetings per school year. One shall be in August or September at which time the Executive Committee shall present a proposed budget which has been prepared by the Treasurer and/or finance committee, and approved by the Executive Committee for the school year. Another shall be in January. Another shall be in May at which time officers and standing committee chairs will be elected.
- B. The presiding couple may schedule called business meetings as required through the year.
- C. All meetings, whether regular or called, must be announced to the membership by mail or newsletter at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

- D. Any vote will pass by simple majority of voting members present.
- E. A Parliamentarian may be elected from the voting membership by simple majority of voting members at the August or September business meeting. The Parliamentarian will serve only during business meetings for one year. The duties of the Parliamentarian shall be to ensure that proper parliamentary procedure is followed, if necessary.
- F. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called as needed by the President, with sufficient notice for all Committee members. A quorum for the Executive Committee shall consist of a majority of the offices and chairs sitting on the committee.

ARTICLE 9 -- DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the organization, the Executive Committee will distribute the assets to one or more Christian organizations classified exempt within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the IRS Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

ARTICLE 10 -- AMENDMENTS

- A. Proposed amendments to the Constitution of Statement of Faith must be presented by the Executive Committee to the membership at a regular business meeting and voted upon at the next regular business meeting. An amendment will not pass unless approved by three-fourths (3/4) of the voting membership.
- B. Proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be presented by the Executive Committee to the membership by mail or newsletter at least two (2) weeks prior to any regular or called meeting and may pass by simple majority of those voting members present at that meeting.
- C. Standing rules may be amended by majority vote of the Executive Committee. Any amendments made by the Executive Committee to the Standing Rules must then be presented to the membership at the next business meeting. At that time, the voting membership may override any such amendment by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of voting members present and voting.

ARTICLE 11 -- ADOPTION

This Constitution becomes effective immediately upon the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the Active members (as defined in the current Standing Rules in Article 5, D. dated June, 1996) voting by official ballot.

Statement of Faith

The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God and constitutes His completed and final revelation to man. The Bible, in its original autograph, is without error in whole and in part, including theological concepts as well as geographical and historical details. *2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 89:34; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Revelation 22:18-19*

God has existed from all eternity in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was God come in human flesh, virgin born, being fully God and fully man, except without sin. *Genesis 1:26; John 1:1-3, 14; Matthew 28:19; 1 John 5:7; Revelation 1:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Matthew 1:23*

All men are in violation of God's righteous requirements and His holy character both by nature and act, and are therefore under His wrath and just condemnation. *Romans 5:12*

The central purpose of the coming of Jesus Christ was to pay the penalty for man's sin through His substitutionary death on the cross, the successful accomplishment of which was attested to by His subsequent visible, bodily resurrection. *Romans 6:23; Romans 5:9; 1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:22; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6*

Salvation is offered as a gift, free to the sinner. This gift must be responded to in individual faith, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, but in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ alone. *Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; John 1:12*

God wonderfully and immutably created each person as biologically male or female at the time of conception. These two distinct, complimentary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. *Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 5:1-2; Psalm 139:13-15; Jeremiah 1:5*

God established systems of responsibility to maintain order in His Creation. Mankind benefits when individuals respect and uphold the institution of marriage between one man and one woman, and the authority of parents in the family. *Genesis 2:23-24; Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:1*

Bylaws

ARTICLE I -- DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. President - The Presiding couple shall serve the membership. They shall be the principal Executive Officer of the Organization. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee or the Membership. The President shall be an ex officio member of all committees. The President may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper Officer of the Organization authorized by the Executive Committee or Membership any deeds, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Executive Committee or Membership have authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by these bylaws or by statute to some other Officer or agent of the Organization. In general, the President shall perform all duties incident to the office of the President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee or Membership from time to time.
- B. Vice-president -- In the absence of the President or in the event of inability or refusal to serve, the Vice-president shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all of the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions bestowed upon the President. The Vice-president shall perform other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the President or Membership.

- C. Treasurer -- If required by the Executive Committee, the Treasurer shall be bonded for the faithful discharge of duties in such sum and with such surety or sureties as the Executive Committee shall determine. The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the Organization; the Treasurer shall receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the Organization from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such moneys in the name of the Organization in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws; and in general perform all of the duties incident to the office of the Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the Executive Committee.
- D. Secretary -- The Secretary shall keep the minutes of both Business meetings and Executive Committee meetings in a book or binder provided for that purpose; give all notices in accordance with the provisions of the Bylaws or as required by law; be the custodian of the organizational records, keep a register of the mailing address of each member which shall be furnished to the Secretary by each member and, in general, perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned by the President, Executive Committee or Membership.
- E. Executive Committee -- The Executive Committee shall consider the affairs of the Organization in accordance with the Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules and the policies laid down by the Organization from time to time. The Executive Committee has the authority to appoint trustees or other officers as may be required from time to time by law or government regulations.

ARTICLE II -- COMMITTEES AND COORDINATORS

- A. Each year the Executive Committee may designate and appoint committees, (other than Standing Committee Chairs) or coordinators (individuals) to organize and carry out the activities and programs of H.O.P.E. as deemed necessary.
- B. The Standing Committees shall consist of Co-op (co-operative teaching), Athletics, Student Council, Communications, and CRC (Community Resource Center). Each standing committee shall consist of at least three (3) voting members. Committee Chairs are elected in the May meeting. Standing committee chairs may select members for their committee from a list of members, provided by the Secretary.
- C. No Committee or Coordinator has the authority to bind the Organization, with the exception of the Executive Committee which has special authority as outlined in the Constitution and these Bylaws.

ARTICLE III -- THE SCHOOL YEAR

- A. Officers and standing committees will each prepare plans as pertain to their areas of responsibilities, and review these with the President and Executive Committee no later than the first school year meeting. The Executive Committee will prepare a calendar, budget and standing rules for presentation to the membership no later than the August or September meeting.

- B. Committees other than standing committees as well as coordinators and other interested parties may also submit items to the President and the Executive Committee in the preparation of the budget, calendar and standing rules for the year.

ARTICLE IV-- EXPENDITURES

- A. All expenditures must be approved by the Executive Committee, either by budget, or by special vote. Furthermore, proposed expenditures from regular dues, whether or not budgeted, in excess of \$1,000.00 must be approved by simple majority vote at a called or regular meeting of the membership.
- B. Any sale of real property should first be submitted to the Advisory Board and the President for their counsel.

ARTICLE V -- DUES

- A. The membership annual dues shall be established in the Standing Rules by the Executive Committee each year no later than July thirty-first (31). Dues amounts for voting members, associate members, and supportive members will be established.
- B. Dues for new members joining the Organization are payable with their application for membership. Dues collected after the May meeting are applied to the following school year.

ARTICLE VI -- STANDING RULES

Standing Rules as set yearly by the Executive Committee shall set dues amounts, due dates, and application forms for the three types of members; shall establish rules of conduct for field trips, sporting events, Co-op and other group activities; and may include a Student Handbook, guidelines for the Newsletter and other guidelines or policies, not in conflict with the Constitution, Statement of Faith or Bylaws, that the Executive Committee decides would be helpful to H.O.P.E. for Hidalgo County.