

Michigan Honor Societies...Uncovered!

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We were getting calls every week it seemed. Someone wanted to know what “other” NHS chapters were doing. What were their grade point averages? How many service hours did they require? How big was their chapter? In the midst of all the questions, one school district was going through some struggles as they attempted to raise the bar for their chapter. Michigan schools needed information. In November of 2004, the Michigan Association of Honor Societies conducted a state-wide survey of some of its members. After collecting data from 105 schools (89% of those were high schools), the results proved that Michigan chapters set high standards for their students. This survey is now used to help new advisers see where their chapter stands among other Michigan NHS groups. It’s reassuring, comforting and challenging all at once!

Based on the results that came in, the most common GPA in the surveyed schools was a 3.5, both at the high school and middle school levels. Thirty-five percent of the schools in our data hold their students to this minimum, which is 0.5 points higher than the National Constitution’s minimum requirement (3.0). An average of 3.3 was the second most-used minimum GPA based on our schools; 24% responded with this as their minimum. In comparing the school enrollment to GPA size, it was found that as the schools got larger, the GPA got higher. Most of the schools with less than 250 students kept their GPA minimum in line with the National minimum of 3.0. The majority of schools with 251-1,000 students placed a 3.3 minimum on their students. It should be noted that in that same enrollment category, the schools that didn’t have the 3.3 minimum were more likely to have a *higher* minimum than a lower one. A 3.4 and 3.5 were the next two most common GPA’s in that grouping. In the schools with over 1,000 students, the most common GPA was clearly a 3.5 minimum. It might be fair to interpret from this set of data that the larger schools, in order to limit their chapter size, raise the bar a little higher when it comes to GPA.

The second set of data compared school enrollment to actual chapter size. When looking at the actual graphed data, we can certainly see a linear result. As enrollment in the school increases, the size of the chapter increases. Based on what we stated above (larger schools raise their GPA to *limit* their chapter size), this *sounds* like it might be inaccurate, yet in thinking about it and truly looking at the numbers, it is an obvious result. The larger schools do have larger chapters, yet proportionately they are the same as the smaller schools. A school of 250 students that has 15 NHS students reflects an NHS population of 6%. A school of 1,500 students with 90 NHS members also reflects an NHS population of 6%.

The data collected has helped many schools in Michigan make that jump since 2004 to a higher GPA. A five-year follow-up survey of Michigan chapters is in the works for 2009.