September 3, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Your student is currently enrolled in 12th Grade Government for the 2014-2015 school year. Government is a one semester course. Students will receive three report cards during the semester. Students must pass Government with a 65% average in order to graduate. If a student falls below a 65% they will need to repeat the course the following the semester.

Each marking period grade will consist of a number of assignments, quizzes, and tests. The final for the class will be counted as a 4th marking period. Because the final is counted as a 4th marking period, it is important to know that students who carry a 65 average for each of the three marking periods are in jeopardy of not passing the course. A student who receives a 65 for the three marking periods and then fails the final will not pass the course (see example). A student does not have to pass the final to pass the course, but does need to have an overall average of 65%.

|  |
| --- |
| Example  |
| Marking Period 1 | 65% |
| Marking Period 2 | 65% |
| Marking Period 3 | 65% |
| Final Exam | 50% |
| Final Average | 61% |

Please sign below to acknowledge you have received this letter along with the course syllabus. If you have questions or concerns, the best way to reach me is via email. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Halpin

Due 9/5/14

I have received the 2014-2015 Government Parent Letter & Syllabus detailing the course requirements and the grading procedures.

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Parent Signature Student Name

**Participation in Government - COURSE SYLLABUS (2014-2015)**

Mrs. Halpin

Email: shalpin@gstboces.org

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Welcome to Participation in Government. Government 12 is a half year course that is required by the State of New York. It is designed to be a culminating course of study that focuses on Social Studies Learning Standard 5; Civics, Citizenship, and Government. The course is designed to engage students in the analysis of public policies and issues that are relevant to individual students. Passing the class (average of at least 65%) is a requirement for graduation. **{You MUST pass this class in order to graduate from high school!}**

[Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/t/thomasjeff135369.html) ~Thomas Jefferson

**Course Description**:

The intent of this course is for students to:

\*Develop a better understanding of how local, state, federal governing organizations work

\*Examine the purpose of government and the role it plays in the lives of citizens

\*Understand how citizens directly and indirectly interact with government at all levels

\*Actively participate so students can become informed citizens in the US democracy

**How to succeed in this class:**

1. Bring a positive attitude to class

2. Maintain good attendance

3. Take good notes

4. Ask questions – this promotes discussion

5. Study for quizzes and tests

**Grading Scale:**

Grading is determined by a point system. The number of points earned divided by the number of points available through class assignments. Below are the categories for which students will earn points.

* Participation/Notebook checks
* Homework
* Quizzes
* Tests
* Essays
* Projects

**Classroom Rules**:

• We will follow all school rules and consequences for unacceptable behavior will be dealt with through the discipline procedure in the student handbook.

✓ The most important rule is: **RESPECT**

1. **Respect yourself**

2. **Respect your peers**

3. **Respect classroom guests & all adults present in the classroom**

4. **Respect the environment we all have to learn in (that means this classroom & this school)**

**Management Plan:**

* Students are expected to follow the classroom rules and the Code of Conduct. If students fail to do so, a write up will be issued.

**Attendance Policy:**

In order to receive credit for this class, you will only be able to miss 18 periods of class. Both “excused” and “unexcused” absences will count towards the total, but “educational excuses” i.e. field trips, lessons, will not count towards the total. If you miss more than 21 minutes in a period, this will count as an absence. If you are absent you will have five days to submit any work that was due while you were out or you will lose credit for the assignment. The attendance policy states that a student cannot miss more than 18 days for a semester course or they will lose credit and will have to re-take the course.

**Classroom Expectations:**

* Come to class on time and be prepared
* No cell phones or electronic devices allowed

**Writing Expectations:**

1. It will be the expectation that the writing builds from what the students were modeled and taught throughout their high school career. The following will also be reinforced:
	* + 1. Appropriate heading
			2. Complete Sentences
			3. Legible Writing
			4. Restate Question in Answer
			5. Appropriate Sentence Structure
2. **Appropriate spelling, capitalization, and spelling are used**
	1. This will be monitored throughout assignments, essays, tests, quizzes and homework.

**Supplies Needed**:

• **Three Ring Binder** (1” or larger)

✓ It will be collected from time to time as part of your grade

**• Notebook Paper**

**• Pen** or **Pencil** (A writing utensil will be needed every day!)

**Homework/Classwork:**

All homework will be collected the following day after it was assigned unless otherwise noted. Homework is due at the beginning of class. No late homework will be accepted unless you were absent the day the homework is due. You will use your notes and homework assignments to study for test, so you will want to do well on them and keep them.

**If you need to use the restroom:**

Do your best to use your time between classes wisely so you will not need to use the bathroom during class. Requests for excessive bathroom use will be denied.

**What We’ll Be Covering this Year:**

I. **Foundations of Government:**

Principles of Government, Origins of American Government, The Constitution, Federalism

II. **Political Behavior: Government by the People**

Political Parties, Voters and Voter Behavior, the Electoral Process, Masse Media & Public Opinion, Interest Groups

III. **Institutions of Government:**

Legislative – Congress, Executive – President, Judicial – Supreme Court

This is a tentative list – it is subject to change.