

SUPPORTING ARTS & ACADEMICS: THE AAA CLUB

Drummond Schools Drummond, Wisconsin

Members of the Action Team of Drummond Schools are proud to see the results of their efforts in the formation of a new club to support student achievement. As part of a type six goal “Collaborating With the Community,” the initial idea for this booster club at Drummond Schools came from the recommendation of a parent member of the schools’ Action Team. The parent was aware of the successful accomplishments of the athletic booster club, as well as the high amount of recognition for athletics in the school, and suggested a club to support and promote excellence in arts and academics.

The Arts & Academic Achievement Club (AAA Club), comprised of community members, students and faculty, met for the first time in April 1998. Its mission statement dedicates it “to the promotion of the fine arts and academics for the students of our district (1 elementary school and 1 high school). The club’s purpose is to encourage exposure to, participation, appreciation and excellence in the arts and academics”.

Informal meetings are held monthly and are led by an elected chairperson—a community member elected for a one-year term. School Partnership Coordinators assist the Club by keeping minutes, encouraging staff input and involvement, and promoting the Club at other school functions.

This year the club had a priority goal to raise three \$500.00 scholarships for college-bound seniors, and to support special enrichment activities in the elementary grades. Fund raising efforts included a Fall Silent Art Auction—featuring donated artwork from area artists, Scholarship Donation Cans placed in area businesses, letters to class reunion alumni soliciting a scholarship donation, club buttons sold at school events, and concession stands and special foods served at school functions.

Although the Club got off to a typically slow start, with only a small core group of active members, and little staff involvement and input, by mid-year there were signs that it was making a worthwhile difference in the school. A display case that had been filled with past years’ sports trophies was designated as a showcase for student achievements in arts and academics. Students joined the club—some who had not been involved in school clubs before—and took responsibility for maintaining the display case. Student artwork, pictures of honor roll students, and awards from band, chorus, forensics, and math contests were featured this year.

The Club has acquired additional artwork to be displayed in the school, beginning this year with paintings on loan from a community member. The Club's goal for next year is to highlight more student art in the building and community, and there is discussion of a student mural project.

Another Club accomplishment was working with the principal of the high school to award Academic Letters for school jackets in recognition of students' academic achievements. To qualify, students in grades 9-12 must maintain an annual grade point average of 3.967. This year's qualifying students were awarded their Academic "D" Letters at a special recognition luncheon.

The AAA Club of Drummond Schools is attempting to attract local alumni to form a supporting branch of this club. Alumni organizations are typically good scholarship fund raisers, as well as a means for former students to keep in touch with, and have involvement in, their alma mater. The AAA Club has utilized the district newsletter, and sent mailings to this year's class reunion alumni to solicit memberships for both the Arts & Academic Achievement Club and an alumni club.

This type of booster club can be involved in many worthwhile enrichment projects and activities. The most entertaining part of the meetings are the brainstorming sessions. The best thing about the AAA Club is that it links students, parents, school staff, and members of the community in a collaborative effort to promote learning and foster mutual appreciation of the arts.

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