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## FLAMBEAU COMMUNITY EDUCATION

### School District of Flambeau

#### Tony, Wisconsin

The small school district of Flambeau is located in a rural, economically disadvantaged county in northwest Wisconsin. To enrich the education of its 690 students in pre-k to grade twelve, the Community Education Office initiates, creates, and implements a diverse array of collaborative partnerships at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels.

An Advisory Council of twelve to sixteen board members governs Community Education. Most of these members are community members, and some are teachers, school board members, and students. The Community Education Advisory Council initiates numerous school improvement initiatives, partnerships, community events, and community partnerships. For example, Flambeau established a partnership with the Institute of Entrepreneurship to help teachers develop school-run businesses. The Community Education Office also developed a mini-grant writing program for teachers to incorporate project-based, work-based, and place-based learning into their classrooms and organized community health and exercise activities. The Community Education Director oversees the workings of community education programs.

One community education program for high school students was an internship program with the Smithsonian Institute for its annual Folk Life Festival held on the National Mall in Washington, DC. This pilot program gave high school students hands-on, work-based, meaningful experiences sponsored by a renowned museum. The Smithsonian Institute sent two museum curators to Flambeau School for a weeklong training session with twelve high school students and a teacher. The Smithsonian and the school arranged transportation, housing, work-site mentors, and job placements for each student for the two-week Folk Life Festival. Contracts were made between the Institute and the students. Student experiences were integrated into the Work-Based Learning Curriculum through the School-To-Work program within the district. Employed by the Smithsonian Institute, the students served as stage crew assistants, retail assistant managers, security, volunteers and administration assistants, design assistants, and sales and fundraising assistants. These students will remember for the rest of their lives their work experience with the Smithsonian Institute and their experience at the Folk Life Festival as an enriching part of their high school curriculum.

The Flambeau Community Education Office also has taken on the role of change agent, reaching out to the world at large and helping bring in ideas, funds, and change through a grass-roots effort within the community. The Community Education team collaborates to handle the tasks of developing, writing, and evaluating the various programs that have been implemented within the district. The team employs a word-of-mouth and personal interaction approach to running the office so as to enhance their genuine partnerships with school, family, and community members.

All students within the district benefit from the numerous programs that fall under the umbrella of community education. From preschool to high school, programs have brought the world into classrooms and have sent the students out into the larger world beyond their small school district. Students' education has been greatly enriched. Family participation levels have risen through aggressive marketing of evening programs for parents, adult education classes, and senior citizen property tax relief programs. The district has reported a significant increase in facility usage both during the day and into the evening as a result of the Community Education Program.

With sincerest efforts, Flambeau is striving to create the best Community Education Program in the nation to affirm for students that leadership comes from actively participating in their school and community.

*Dave Johnson, Community Education Director*  
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