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## MAINTAINING STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ON ACTION TEAM

### Glenmary School

#### Peace River, Alberta, Canada

School, family, and community partnership programs are designed to support student success, and at Glenmary School students play a key role in that design. Glenmary School's Action Team for Partnerships successfully achieves its program goals in part because of its excellent commitment to student involvement on the team.

Glenmary's Action Team presently has six student members, five of whom have been on the team for two years, which will be part of the team for 2002-2003. The full Action Team for Partnerships, adults included, meets at 4:30 p.m. The students receive a reminder and the agenda for the meeting two days before the meeting is to take place. Students often stay at school and do homework until it is time for the meeting to begin. This start time eliminates the issue of transportation. Also, meetings begin and end on time, so students are aware of the time commitment expected of them. Snacks are provided at each meeting. It is important to feed these students, especially after school. They really look forward to this part of the meeting!

Consideration is given to extra-curricular activities. Students who play on sports teams are encouraged to attend practices and games even if they conflict with Action Team meetings. Students are kept up-to-date on what is happening at Action Team meetings and attend regularly when possible.

The Action Team makes sure that students understand they are a vital part of the team. The students take part in all discussions, and all members of the team respect their opinions. Students are encouraged to offer input on issues that are under discussion and are active participants, especially in small group work. They are often given jobs to do during the meetings such as recording ideas, reporting for their group, and other tasks.

The students see their ideas and suggestions incorporated into the team's strategies. For example, when the Action Team decided to host a Grade 7 Open House before school last year, the planning for the day was turned over to the students on the Action Team. They decided what should be included in the afternoon, designed the invitations, and acted as hosts and

hostesses for the event. This year they are taking more of a leadership role by organizing another group of students to serve as hosts and hostesses.

Students are encouraged to get involved in the strategies and to involve other students as well. The Action Team hosted a Community Appreciation Breakfast. The students volunteered to help with different tasks that needed to be done and were encouraged to invite students who were not part of the team to get involved. Students from the Action Team helped make decorations, faxed invitations, cooked, and helped serve breakfast. They were successful in including other students in many of these tasks, and a total of 30 students helped with the event.

Students receive certificates of recognition for their contributions to the Action Team. These certificates become part of their portfolios and are a record of their leadership and willingness to volunteer. Their portfolios are used to write resumes and apply for scholarships.

A student wrote at the last Action Team meeting this year, “I have really enjoyed this year. AISI has been kind of weird because I’m working with adults to make decisions about what is going to happen. Taking part in the team has been a lot of fun. It feels good to show up at things and know I’ve been chosen to participate, even if it is signing people in at 7:15 in the morning. I really think the Grade 7 Open House and the Volunteer Breakfast were really good. Next year I hope to get more of my friends involved.”

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