

199 REPORTER

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS | WINTER 2019

ISD 199 Behavior Practices Build Core Life Skills for Lifelong Success

Inver Grove Heights Schools is committed to providing a safe, caring, and positive learning environment for students that supports their social development and academic success. Creating that environment starts with relationships. Students who feel connected to school are more likely to succeed. They have better school attendance, grades, and test scores, and they stay in school longer. Building relationships between students and their peers and between students and staff requires embracing positive attitudes and beliefs, understanding the needs and experiences of students, and teaching students the tools and expectations that will help them foster positive relationships.

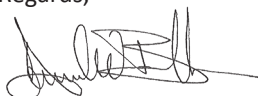
Relationships are a significant component of our strategic plan. Students learn core life skills that support adaptive and positive behaviors that help them work with others and effectively handle everyday challenges. Core life skills benchmarks span preschool through high school and focus on four areas: interpersonal skills, problem solving and decision making, technology and digital citizenship, and self-management and coping strategies. Students learn these skills through programs like PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), which recognizes students for positive behaviors, and classes like AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) which teaches secondary students self-management skills. Additionally, each building is staffed with a full-time licensed school social worker, and mental health professionals are available to all students.

Our staff also works to teach and reinforce positive behaviors directly. This practice

includes determining consequences for inappropriate behaviors and choices that do not support a safe and caring learning environment. While some behaviors require immediate suspension and consideration for expulsion, administrators have the discretion to provide alternatives that are age appropriate and designed to address and correct the student's misbehavior.

The ultimate goal of school discipline is to help students learn from their mistakes, take responsibility for their behavior, and gain skills from the experience so that it does not happen again. This is different from the concept of zero tolerance, which carries the same punishment for every action related to a specific rule. It does not allow administrators the discretion to adjust punishments to fit the circumstances. Zero tolerance requires a predetermined punishment regardless of the intent, circumstances, or history. Research shows that it does not effectively improve student behavior, school climate, or safety. Many times, zero tolerance policies create unintended negative repercussions for students, families, and communities. The ISD 199 discipline policies are based on research regarding what is working well across the country. Our most important responsibility is to support the success of all of our students while they are in school and to prepare them for successful lives after graduation.

Regards,



Dave

District Beliefs About Behavior

We must teach, grow, and enhance our students' experiences in four main areas: academic achievement, connection to school and community, social-emotional learning, and career and college readiness. With this in mind, we will:

- Have consistent schoolwide expectations and make sure students and adults know them.
- Teach and encourage desired behaviors so students know what is expected of them.
- Focus on positive behavior rather than just punishing negative actions.
- Create expectations and rules that address the diverse cultural needs of our students and staff members.
- Promote equitable actions and always look for ways to be more responsive to the cultures of our students.
- Understand all viewpoints when responding.
- Build stronger relationships between students and their classmates, and between students and school staff.
- Include students instead of excluding.
- Restore and repair relationships when needed.

- Excerpted from ISD 199's handbook, *Student Expectations*, which can be found at www.isd199.org/students/handbooks

INSPIRE. INNOVATE. EXCEL.

199 REPORTER

Inver Grove Heights Schools

2990 80th Street East
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The 199 Reporter is a quarterly publication that is mailed to every household in School District 199 to inform the community and parents about district news and events.

If you have questions about this publication, please contact:

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Incumbents, Clardy Selected for ISD 199 School Board



On November 5, voters selected Mary Frances Clardy, Rachel Hanson, Matt Schaefer, and Sherry Warrick for the ISD 199 School Board. Their terms will begin in January 2020. Next year will be Clardy's first year on the school board.

All three incumbents, Hanson, Schaefer, and Warrick, have served on the board since 2016. Hanson is currently serving as board clerk, Schaefer is currently serving as board chair, and Warrick has served as board clerk in previous years.

Clardy will take the seat of Sue Gliva, a board member of four years who decided not to run for another term. Visit the Board Election webpage, www.isd199.org/district/board_elections for more information about the 2020 school board members.

Simley Students Build Little Libraries for Friends of Inver Glen



This fall, Simley High School woodworking students built Free Little Libraries for the Friends of the Inver Glen Library. The Free Little Libraries, which are outdoor stands that offer books for community members to borrow, were made to celebrate the Friends of the Inver Glen Library's 20th Anniversary. Students designed, constructed, and decorated the custom Little Libraries. The students' projects will be placed around Inver Grove Heights by the Friends for all residents to enjoy and use to share books.

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GET INVOLVED

ISD 199 is seeking community members for district-level committees and advisory councils. Provide perspective and feedback on decisions to help the school district move forward. If interested, please visit www.isd199.org/community/give and, in the sidebar, click "Committee Signup."

Inver Grove Heights Schools does not discriminate in employment or in any of its programs and activities, including vocational opportunities, on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age. Inver Grove Heights Schools provides equal access to designated youth groups. Student-related inquiries about non-discrimination policies should be sent to Mary Garrison at 2990 80th Street East in Inver Grove Heights, GarrisonM@isd199.org, or 651-306-7827. More information is available at www.isd199.org/nondiscrimination.

ISD 199 Awarded for Financial Reporting Excellence for 14th Time



The Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International presents the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting to school districts that meet or exceed the organization's high standards for accountability. ASBO recently awarded the certificate to Inver Grove Heights Schools for its 2017-2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial

Report. This is the 14th year in a row that the district has earned the recognition.

To determine award winners, a team of professional auditors reviews each district's submitted financial reports. The team provides feedback to every district that submits its reports in order to improve future documents. To be considered for the Certificate of Excellence program, ISD 199 had to incorporate ASBO's feedback from the previous year. The process helps the district continually improve its reporting and transparency.

Kindergarten Registration on January 6, 2020



Hilltop Elementary School, Pine Bend Elementary School, and Salem Hills Elementary School will hold Kindergarten Registration on **Monday, January 6, 2020, from 4:30-6:30 PM**. Incoming kindergarten families in the district should receive an enrollment packet in the mail in the coming weeks. Families can also get enrollment information on the district website at www.isd199.org/enroll under "Kindergarten Registration," pick up a packet at the ISD 199 District Office (2990 80th Street East), or call 651-306-7825. If your child needs an early childhood screening, call 651-306-7520.

Pine Bend Garden Club Cooks Up Fresh Treats for the School



Pine Bend Elementary School's Garden Club works together each spring and summer to tend to the school gardens. They plant, weed, water, and prune each garden box to allow fresh herbs and produce to grow for the fall. In the first month of school, Garden Club was able to harvest tomatoes, basil, corn, and kale to make salsa, pesto, and kale chips for the whole school. Students followed recipes, chopped vegetables and herbs, and measured spices to create their snacks. They also taste-tested the final product in order to balance the flavors. The dishes were served in the cafeteria the next day for all students to try.

Extended Learning Days to Help Keep School Year on Track Despite Winter Weather

The state of Minnesota decides the minimum amount of time students must be in school each year. School cancellations caused by severe weather make it challenging to meet the state's requirements. In 2017, the state legislature amended its state statute on school year requirements to allow schools to use "e-learning days" when faced with dangerous winter weather. Schools can use these e-learning days, known as Extended Learning Days in Inver Grove Heights Schools, for up to five days per school year when schools close due to inclement weather. Each Extended Learning Day that schools use counts as a full school day to keep student learning on track and alleviate the need to add makeup days at the end of the school year.

Extended Learning Days will be used after two Snow or Cold Days cancel school. On the third day, families will receive an automated call that will state the reason that school will be canceled and that it is an Extended Learning Day.

Extended Learning Day Assignments

Once an Extended Learning Day is announced, assignments will be sent to preschool and elementary parents and secondary students through email, Seesaw for younger students, or Schoology for older

students. Assignments will also be available on the district website, www.isd199.org.

Many assignments, especially for younger students, do not require a device and can easily be done at home or in child care. With Extended Learning Day assignments, students still have an opportunity to get in-class help and access to any resources they may not have at home. Preschool through middle school students have one week from the day the Extended Learning Day is declared to turn in their assignments. Similar to work assigned when they are absent, high school students have two days to complete Extended Learning Day assignments.

Extended Learning Day Resources

Students will have access to teachers for any questions on Extended Learning Days. Teachers will be available by email during regular school hours on the Extended Learning Day. Many preschool and elementary teachers will also be available through Seesaw, and many middle school and high school teachers will be available to students through Schoology. Visit www.isd199.org/parents/emergency_closings for Frequently Asked Questions about Extended Learning and more information about school closings.

BE PREPARED FOR WINTER-RELATED SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYS

Winter weather is on its way, and every year, it brings the potential for emergency school closings and delayed school starts. Families, please take a moment to check that your contact information in Infinite Campus is correct and that your preferred email and phone number are marked for "General" and "Emergency" notifications. The district will send information about school closings, emergencies, and other important matters to any phone number and email address marked for "General" and "Emergency."

How to Check and Update Your Phone Number and Email Address

1. Log in to Infinite Campus: www.isd199.org/parents.
2. At the bottom of the side menu, click "More."
3. To check or update your preferred phone number and email address, click "Family Information."
4. If you want to make changes, click "Update."

How to Check and Update Your Contact Preferences

1. After logging in to Infinite Campus, click the Account tab in the upper right corner of the screen, and then click "Settings."
2. Under "Contact Preferences," mark "General" and "Emergency" under your preferred phone number and email address.
3. If you would like to receive texts as well, check the "General" and "Emergency" boxes under "Text (SMS)" in the "Phone" tab.
4. Click "Save" after making changes.

In addition to automated calls, information about school closings or delays will be available in the following places:

- **DISTRICT WEBSITE:** Visit www.isd199.org for the most updated and detailed information about any closings or delays
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Follow **Inver Grove Heights Schools** on Facebook or **@isd199** on Twitter for updates
- **TV:** Watch **Twin Cities television network affiliate stations**, and look for Inver Grove Heights Schools in the news crawl
- **RADIO:** Tune in to **WCCO-AM 830** and listen for Inver Grove Heights Schools
- **DISTRICT WEATHER LINE:** Call **651-306-7875** for a recorded message about any emergency school closings or delayed starts

Please visit www.isd199.org/parents/emergency_closings to learn more about how school closing and delay decisions are made.

First STEAM Nights Encourage Elementary Families to Learn Together



Elementary STEAM Nights focus on engaging students and families in hands-on activities that highlight the connection among science, technology, engineering, art, and math. In September, Pine Bend Elementary School, Salem Hills Elementary School, and the Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program held STEAM Nights to bring students and families together to learn. At Salem Hills and Atheneum's third annual STEAM Night, students showed their parents how to code, design on a 3D printer, and use a green screen app. The night also offered offline activities such as customizing journals and building structures from marshmallows and toothpicks.

This year was Pine Bend's first STEAM Night. Students and their families were invited to tour the school forest, learn about the school gardens and design their own garden, and see the Simley Robotics Team's robot. Students and parents also built their own robots, tried duplicating musical notes by filling glasses with different amounts of water, and learned from a 3M Visiting Wizard, a volunteer from 3M who did hands-on demonstrations to teach students and families about magnets. At the end of both STEAM Nights, the Friends of the Inver Glen Library offered every student a book to bring home and read with their family.

Simley Communications 11 Teacher Brings College Learning, Options to All Students

For their junior Language Arts credit, Simley High School students can enroll in Communications 11 or AP Language and Composition. While the AP class has always offered college-level learning and an opportunity for college credit, Communications 11 teacher David Guenzel worked with Inver Hills Community College this year to include college learning in his class as well. The result is a one-of-a-kind class that ensures that all juniors, including the more than 100 students who take Communications 11 each year, are introduced to college work and can earn college credit before graduation.

Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, Mr. Guenzel began integrating the curriculum of Inver Hills' College Success Strategies course into his Communications 11 class. He regularly checks in with the professor of the Inver Hills class, Brenda Van Vossen, to make sure that his students are meeting the same standards as students taking her college course and that their grading is aligned.

"The idea of this class is rooted in the belief that post-secondary education should be available to everyone," he says. "This is extremely important in breaking down barriers and creating opportunity for all students."

The addition of the College Success Strategies curriculum familiarizes students with campus technologies, money management, goal-setting, and the support resources available to them, including access to the Inver Hills library and writing center. Students also practice applying for college and exploring different career paths. Once the high school students complete the class, they earn two college credits in addition to the college skills developed in class.

"They are navigating college expectations with the support of staff and teachers here at Simley," Mr. Guenzel says. "The process can be daunting and overwhelming. We're trying to make it approachable and doable so that students can find success not only at Simley, but [in college] as well."

Simley Students Add Their Perspectives to Education Improvement Plan



In 2016, a group of metropolitan Minnesota superintendents, including Inver Grove Heights Schools Superintendent Dave Bernhardson, began discussing how to ensure equity and excellence for all Minnesota students

as the state's demographics change. Reimagine Minnesota is the comprehensive collective action plan superintendents are building, based on input from students, parents, and community members, to address integration, access, opportunity, and educational achievement. This October, Simley High School picked 30 students to attend the Reimagine Minnesota Student Conference, #StudentVoice, to add their experiences and ideas to the plan.

The student-led #StudentVoice conference focused on a single challenge for attendees: Design and build a school system that offers all children an education that provides equal access, opportunity, and equity in an integrated environment by 2030. About 2,000 students from around the metro attended breakout sessions to discuss everything from physical spaces in schools and district boundaries

to technology and curriculum. The sessions encouraged students to share their stories about what they have experienced at their own schools. Five Simley students led a session about College and Career Readiness, offering insights about their own experiences in Simley college and career readiness classes and making sure that everyone in the session had a chance to participate.

The conference was an exciting opportunity for both the students and the staff members who attended with them.

"These students are paving the way for elementary students," Simley Dean of Students Rico Bohren said. "They're not just affecting the actions of school districts but the entire school system, making sure that all students see themselves represented in their education and that multiple points of view are presented."

After seeing the excitement and energy students had at the #StudentVoice conference, Mr. Bohren and Simley Principal Jerry Sakala made plans to check in with some of the students moving forward, creating a #StudentVoice group for the school. They plan to meet with 10 of the conference attendees twice a month so the students have an ongoing opportunity to share their insights with administration.

63 Simley Students Earn AP Scholar Awards

Advanced Placement (AP) classes challenge students with college-level coursework and provide an opportunity to earn college credit before graduation. Students take exams at the end of the year, which are scored on a 0-5 scale, to qualify for college credit. Each year, students are recognized for earning outstanding scores of 3 or higher on multiple AP exams. Simley High School had 63 students earn AP Scholar Awards in four categories this year. The high school has had 862 AP Scholars in less than 10 years.

AP Scholar Award: *Earned scores of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.*

Jenna Bezek
Byamungu Bigabwa
Alexander Binley
Sydney Bohn
Benjamin Briguët
Callie Burch
Felicia Buysman
Bria Carlson
Anna Cheyne
Emma Deyo
Emanuel Diaz
Grant Dilla
Alaina Fricke
Makayla George
Hannah Giese
Alex Guggisberg
Nikole Gullerud
Charles Gustafson

Connor Hassing
Austin Illetschko
Ethan Jie
Cameron Judge
Allison Krech
Norah Larson
Natalie Leeder
Kaitlyn Maynard
Yesica Mercado Munoz
Tammy Ngo
Drake Nordenstrom
Megan O'Connor
Gabrielle Overton
Taylor Pawlenty
Isabelle Pippert
Alexandra Reichenbach
Aprilee Rodriguez
Connor Sanford
Zach Sayner
Margaret Sutton
Alex Vraa
Matthew Wegener

AP Scholar with Honor Award: *Earned an average score of 3.25 or higher on all exams taken and earned scores of 3 or higher on four or more of those AP exams.*

Alisabeth Birkeland
Carter Bollmann
Shiraj Chowdhury
Joshua Franson
Sabrina Marrero
Maya Merritt
Adelynn Pettee
Emma Raab
Rebekkah Scufsa

AP Scholar with Distinction Award: *Earned an average score of 3.5 on all AP exams taken and earned scores of 3 or higher on five or more of those exams.*

Sarah Anaya
Benjamin Borchard
Jordan Boswell
Sophia Fenske
William Hackerson
Curtis Hance
Sadie Haugo
Hannah Heiss
Marisa Modica
Taylor Riess
James Schmotter
Noah Sticha
Catherine Thoenke
Rachel Wanger

Educators Visit IGH Middle School to See a Successful AVID System in Action



This fall, Inver Grove Heights Middle School invited educators around the state to learn about their AVID system and see it in practice. AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination and is part of the curriculum at IGH Middle

School to help students learn strategies that will make them successful in high school and after graduation. There is also an AVID elective that provides additional support for students who may be struggling academically but are determined to attend college. Students learn critical reading, writing, inquiry, organization, collaboration, communication, and advanced study skills. Visiting staff toured classrooms and heard from IGH Middle School AVID staff about the program's start and their experiences since.

IGH Middle School staff began the day by introducing visiting staff to the AVID program and its history in the school. AVID started at IGH Middle School in 2011 with one class that had a handful of students who met every other day. AVID staff explained how the class expanded into multiple classes for students in 7th through 12th grade, how AVID practices were embedded into every classroom, and how every staff member was trained to use AVID's best practices.

Since it became eligible, IGH Middle School had been recognized as a Highly Certified AVID School. Being Highly Certified showed that IGH Middle School was effectively implementing AVID strategies that were proven to help students succeed. However, in 2016, the school earned the chance to apply to be an AVID National Demonstration School. A demonstration school is nationally recognized for showing evidence of student achievement schoolwide. The designation identifies the school as a learning center for AVID best practices and schoolwide teaching strategies that help all students experience rigorous instruction.

Over two years, AVID coaches visited the school to observe its practices, measure progress, and provide feedback on what still needed to be done. At the beginning of 2018, IGH Middle School was ready for its site visit. The middle school's AVID staff organized a student panel for AVID representatives to talk to, held a presentation summarizing the staff's efforts over the previous seven years, and detailed their future plans for the program to serve more students.

In March of 2018, IGH Middle School became one of only eight AVID National Demonstration Schools in Minnesota. More than 6,000 schools across the country use the AVID program, but only 175 of those schools have met the rigorous standards to become a demonstration school. The designation must be reviewed every two years, and in the meantime, IGH Middle School staff share their experiences with other schools who are interested in the program and continue to advance their AVID practices to improve outcomes for all of their students.

Simley Basketball Coach Looks Back on 20 Years of Excellence



Simley High School math teacher and basketball coach Ben Bushaw has coached the Simley Spartans boys basketball team for 20 years. But before this season, he made the difficult decision to set aside coaching.

“This will be the first season, probably in my whole life, or at least since kindergarten, that I won’t be playing or coaching basketball,” he said. “This decision didn’t come easy, and I’ve really enjoyed working

with these athletes.”

Mr. Bushaw will not be coaching Simley basketball this year to spend more time with his family. He looks forward to attending his son Owen’s varsity basketball games, something he couldn’t do while coaching because his son’s games are held at the same time as Simley’s. He will also be spending more time with his son Logan who is coping with a critical medical condition.

Mr. Bushaw has lost count of all the Spartan basketball players who have gone on to successful Division 1 college basketball careers, but he does recall a number of accomplishments from his players. During

his time as coach, the team won the section in 2016, earning a trip to state for the first time since 1997. His players also earned multiple school records. In the 2011-2012 season, the team scored 114 points against North Branch, which remains unbeaten. In 2014-2015, the team averaged 69.8 points per game and had a three-point percentage record of 37.9%. Both records still stand. In 2016, one of his players broke an individual scoring record from the early ’80s. Then, in 2017, two of his players broke the new individual scoring record.

“It’s hard to believe that hundreds of athletes have come through this program,” Mr. Bushaw said. “Sometimes as a coach, you have no idea the impact you make on someone’s life, whether I helped turn around someone’s life or gave someone an opportunity to succeed. It’s those things that are the most rewarding part of coaching and the part I will miss the most.”

He also said he would miss working with fellow coaches, especially his assistant coach of 17 years, Mike VerWay.

“He was a big part in our success and I appreciate his support,” Mr. Bushaw said. “I will always cherish our time together on the sidelines of the Simley basketball court, and I will cherish my years of coaching in Inver Grove Heights.”

Justin Timberlake’s Touring Trumpet Player Visits Simley, Middle School to Talk About Music Careers



If you have listened to new music in the last few years, you have probably heard Sean Erick play his trumpet. Mr. Erick tours with Justin Timberlake and has performed and recorded with other big names, including Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars. This November, he visited Simley High School and Inver Grove Heights Middle School students to talk about his career and what led him there. Mr. Erick brought Simley band members on Simley’s Performing Arts Center stage to show students how he layers instrumental parts to create new songs.

He then told students about his background: His story began in high school when he was lead trumpet in his high school’s jazz ensemble. During his studies at Berklee College of Music, Mr. Erick got involved with every band and ensemble that his college’s campus and community offered. After graduation, he combined his experiences to create The Regiment Horns with two other Berklee alumni. The group shows how a horn section can be integrated into contemporary music. Mr. Erick also answered student questions about performing with pop stars, the equipment he uses to record, and his inspiration for becoming a musician. His main message focused on showing students how to succeed in their own passions by creatively using the resources available to them and working hard for their dreams.

Simley Theatre Fall Play Director Brings Years of Theatre and Teaching Experience



This year, Simley High School welcomed Tinne Rosenmeier as its Fall Play Director. Mrs. Rosenmeier earned her master’s in Educational Theatre from New York University and has more than 35 years of theatre experience. Her experience includes attending the National Shakespeare Conservatory in New York and acting with Park Square Theatre, Pangea World Theatre, Freshwater Theatre, and many others in the Twin Cities. She also taught at Theatre for a New Audience and TA DA! Youth Theater in New York as well as with numerous theatre programs around the Twin Cities.

Though she retired a few years ago, Mrs. Rosenmeier took the opportunity to lend her talents to this year’s Simley Fall Play. She chose “Romeo and Juliet” to bring the play to life for students, many of whom still read the play in their classes.

“Shakespeare’s words are meant for mouths and ears,” she said, explaining that many people miss the play’s insight because they have only ever read it instead of seeing the play in action. She also chose the play because of how accessible it is for students. Mrs. Rosenmeier set Simley’s “Romeo and Juliet” in a shopping mall to bring the centuries-old drama into perspective for modern audiences.

Her play choice was as much for adults as it was for students. Mrs. Rosenmeier said the conflict that takes place in the classic play of star-crossed young lovers creates a space for conversation about similar personal and large-scale issues facing people today.

Fall Sports Recognitions

Cross Country

All Conference

Brekken Grathen
Nathan Schauer

Honorable Mention

Ana Alvear
Crystal Bonilla
Grant Dilla
Abigale Lindquist
Julia Myers

Football

Sub-District Defensive

Player of the Year

Hope Adebayo

All District

Hope Adebayo
Victor Brooks
Tomi Oduwaiye
Shane Prifrel
Crist Pugh
Bennett Tabor
Nolan Wanzek

Honorable Mention

Travis Dohmen
Jamonte Franklin
Ruot Jioklow
Josh Painter

Boys Soccer

All Conference

Alex Binley
Ezequiel Dominguez
Aiden Garcia
Andrew Jeffers

Honorable Mention

Ben Hatcher
Sam Scheffley
Lucas Vandermeer

Girls Soccer

All Conference

Zoe Boughton
Norah Larson
Avery Schwark

Honorable Mention

Abby Boughton
Emma Raab
Bekkah Scufsa

Girls Swimming and Diving

State Participant

Diving

Erin Orn

All Conference

100 Backstroke

Madeline Ngo

50 Freestyle

Emily Hageman

200 Freestyle

Stella Anderson-Moye

200 Individual Medley

Sophia Fredeen

500 Individual Medley

Sydney Bohn

Diving

Erin Orn

Honorable Mention

100 Breaststroke

Kjerstin Iverson

Tiffany Nguyen

50 Freestyle

Danielle Norsten

200 Individual Medley

Elizabeth Ngo

Girls Tennis

All Conference

Jenna Bezek

Erin Borchard

Sara Borchard

Cayla Friemann

Shelli Muller

Catie Thoemke

Clara Thoemke

Honorable Mention

Anna Ahern

Carissa Thomas

Volleyball

All Conference

Emma Heimerl

Abby Hepper

Brynn Rogers

Honorable Mention

Tiwaah Danso

Molly Stein

Sydney Stensgard

Isabella Studer

Simley Hall of Fame Honors Alumni & Community Members



The Simley High School Hall of Fame honors outstanding Simley alumni and community members who have made an impact on the school. This year, Simley inducted five new members into the Hall of Fame during halftime at Simley's September 13 football game: Kevin Ahern, Jeff Davis, Joseph deLeon, Brian Howard, and Jill Lewis.

Kevin Ahern, Class of 1988, competed on Simley's football and wrestling teams. He earned numerous awards for his athletic and academic achievements and was part of Simley's first wrestling state championship team in 1987. Mr. Ahern continued his wrestling career success in college at the University of St. Thomas. He earned his master's degree in education at St. Mary's University.

Jeff Davis, Class of 1973, is the longest-serving firefighter in the Inver Grove Heights Fire Department's history. He retired after 45 years of work that included heroic acts that saved countless lives. He also has one of the highest attendance records in the history of the department, responding to an estimated 10,000 calls.

Joseph F. deLeon, Class of 1980, played on Simley's football, baseball, and hockey teams in addition to being the vice president of the Student Council and a member of the National Honor Society. He was recognized for his outstanding accomplishments as a student-athlete, including becoming a seven-time letter winner and Simley's first Hispanic Male Athlete of the Year. Mr. deLeon continued his involvement in hockey into college and beyond, playing and officiating. Today, he is vice president of Vikings Exteriors.

Brian Howard, Class of 1981, played on the Spartan football, wrestling, and baseball teams. The three-year letter winner continued playing football in college, graduating from Mankato State University with a degree in electrical engineering before earning his MBA at the University of St. Thomas. Mr. Howard served his community and volunteered to coach and officiate football. Now immobilized by multiple sclerosis, he works with the Kenny Courage Center to help others dealing with the daily challenges of MS.

Jill Lewis has served Inver Grove Heights Schools in a board capacity for more than 40 years. She represented the district on the Intermediate School District 917 School Board for nearly 25 years and served on the Inver Grove Heights School Board for 15 years, acting as chairperson in both roles for 29 years. She also helped develop and grow the Inver Grove Heights B.E.S.T. Foundation, which provides scholarships for graduating Simley students. Ms. Lewis is a small business owner and works with vocational programs and programs for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and autistic children.

Congratulations to all of the 2019 inductees. Thank you for your remarkable role as part of the school district and broader community. More information on the Simley Hall of Fame, including a list of inductees and nomination forms, can be found at simleyathletics.com/hall-of-fame.

Spartan Superhero Visits Provide Leadership, Role Models



Spartan Superheroes is a districtwide program that aims to connect older and younger students in a positive, educational way. Students in Simley High School activities, from band to football to hockey, visit the elementary schools in the district. Team members talk to students about their activity and answer questions.

During one of the first Spartan Superheroes events of the year, Simley Cross Country team members visited Salem Hills Elementary School to talk about what it means to be on a team. As part of the Spartan Superheroes program, the Cross Country team also stayed to eat lunch with students and play at recess with them. While the Spartan Superheroes program provides role models for younger students, it also gives secondary school students an opportunity to build their leadership skills.

Stay informed of the current issues, challenges, and changes facing the Inver Grove Heights School District.

#1. LOCAL SCHOOL LEVIES

In November 2017, the Inver Grove Heights Schools community generously passed two referendum questions for the district. Voters approved an operating levy increase and a capital projects levy to help the schools afford the resources needed to remain competitive and help students prepare for college and career. The school district's operating referendum revenue per pupil increased from \$562 to \$819 in the levies' first year, the 2018-2019 school year. The timing was especially crucial to the district's competitiveness because many neighboring districts, including ones already receiving more than double ISD 199's amount of funding per student, passed levy increases as well.

Even after the 2017 referendum, ISD 199's per pupil funding was the second lowest of the neighboring schools, receiving only slightly more per pupil than Farmington Area Public Schools. This November, a few local districts posed referendum questions again, further increasing their operating levies. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, ISD 199 receives \$837 per pupil compared to the average operating referendum revenue of local districts: \$1,382.73.

Dakota County Commissioner Joe Atkins recently compared the combined city, school, and county tax rates for cities with a population of 30,000 or more. He found that Inver Grove Heights had one of the lowest property taxes of all Minnesota cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Commissioner Atkins noted that the residents in his list of

lowest-taxed communities have a tax rate that was at least 25% lower than Minnesota's highest-taxed community.

#2. GROW YOUR OWN TEACHER PROGRAM

This year, Inver Grove Heights Schools is partnering with the University of Minnesota's Grow Your Own Teacher program to help teachers get training and to recruit qualified teachers who represent student demographics. The district's Grow Your Own program provides financial, academic, and emotional support to assist program participants in getting their master's degree. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will commit to at least five years in ISD 199.

The program addresses the nationwide teacher shortage and will allow our schools to recruit and retain teachers who will provide the best education for our students. Research also shows that having a teaching staff that reflects the student population positively affects outcomes such as test scores, attendance, suspension rates, drop out rates, and college aspirations. Education and economic researchers found that, when students have at least one teacher of the same race, students perform better on standardized tests, have improved attendance, are suspended and drop out less frequently, and are more likely to aspire to attend a four-year college. The components of the Grow Your Own Teacher program are helping the district achieve its mission to inspire students, innovate in education, and help every student excel so they can become a productive member of our community.

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS WEATHER UPDATES: WWW.ISD199.ORG



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