

# 199 REPORTER

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS | SPRING 2021

## School Buildings Welcome Back Students as Guidance is Updated

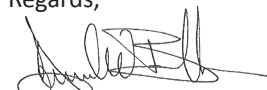
On December 16, Governor Walz announced updates to the Minnesota Safe Learning Plan that would allow young students to return to In-person Learning. The updated guidance recognized what health experts have learned about COVID-19 over the past year. It also required school districts to implement new health and safety measures in addition to existing measures before any students returned to school buildings.

After studying the Minnesota Safe Learning Plan updates and gathering the perspectives of our families and staff, we announced the Phased Transition Plan. As required by the December 16 guidance update, the Phased Transition Plan gradually reintroduced some students back into buildings: Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes, preschool-grade 5 students, and students at all levels with significant needs who are enrolled in center-based programs. Young students returned to buildings in the Hybrid model their first week back, four days In-person their second week back, and five days In-person starting their third week back. As of March 1, all ECFE classes, preschool-grade 5 students, and students in center-based programs are in the In-person Learning model, unless they are enrolled in a full-time online learning format such as 199 Online.

A February 17 update to the Safe Learning Plan provided a way for middle and high school students to return to buildings in the Hybrid or In-person Learning model. The most recent guidance removed the rolling start requirement so all middle and high school students can return on the same day. However, before they return, more health and safety measures must be implemented in addition to the measures in all previous guidance. To provide a safe return, Simley High School and Inver Grove Heights Middle School will return to Hybrid Learning on March 15. The transition does not apply to center-based students who returned to school buildings as part of the Phased Transition Plan or to students who enrolled in 199 Online for Trimester 3. Visit [www.isd199.org/covid19](http://www.isd199.org/covid19) for more information about the transition.

We are thrilled to welcome students back into our buildings, and we will continue to monitor and refine our procedures. Thank you to our neighbors all over Dakota County. Your cooperation, patience, and determination have paved the way for students to safely return to school buildings. As we look toward the future and hope for more good news, please continue to stay home when you are sick, wash your hands frequently, maintain 6 feet of social distance between yourself and others, wear a face covering outside of the home, and get tested when you need it with information from [mn.gov/covid19](http://mn.gov/covid19). Thank you for helping us move forward together!

Regards,



Dave

### Examples of Additional Health & Safety Measures for the Return of Students

- Implement a rolling start to bring a few grades back into buildings at once and allow two weeks between each group's return. *(This requirement was removed in the February 17 guidance)*
- Set up a bi-weekly COVID-19 testing program so staff can choose to get tested.
- Recommend that students and families get tested for COVID-19 every other week.
- Provide clear barriers for educators to use when they cannot be 6 feet from students.
- Require students to wear face coverings during indoor physical activity.
- Keep young students in their classroom for the entire school day unless otherwise allowed by new guidance.
- Keep secondary staff and students in smaller groups that stay together as much as possible throughout the day.
- For young students, keep at least 3 feet between classmates and 6 feet between students from different classes.
- For middle and high school students, keep 6 feet between students whenever possible.
- Document daily seating in secondary lunchrooms and on buses.
- Keep 6 feet of distance between bus drivers and riders, and keep as much distance between all riders as possible.

INSPIRE. INNOVATE. EXCEL.

## 199 REPORTER

## Inver Grove Heights Schools

2990 80th Street East  
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076  
651-306-7800  
www.isd199.org

Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM

The 199 Reporter is a quarterly publication that is mailed to every household in School District 199 to keep all of our community members informed about district news.

If you have questions about this publication, please contact:

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## CONNECT WITH US

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## GET INVOLVED

ISD 199 is seeking community members for district-level committees and advisory councils. Provide your perspective and feedback on decisions to help the school district move forward. If interested, please visit [www.isd199.org/community/give](http://www.isd199.org/community/give), and 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 Abel Riodique at 2990 80th Street East in Inver Grove Heights, RiodiqueA@isd199.org, or 651-306-7826. More information is available at [www.isd199.org/nondiscrimination](http://www.isd199.org/nondiscrimination).*

## Enroll Now for 2021-2022 Preschool



ISD 199's Early Learning Program offers welcoming preschool classes that will allow your 3- or 4-year-old to explore, create, and learn. Students build confidence and skills as they participate in engaging, play-based learning activities. Caring licensed teachers help children develop social, cognitive, physical, and creative skills with a balanced curriculum.

Preschool classes for 3-year-olds are held at the Inver Grove Heights Early Learning Center, and preschool for 4-year-olds is available at each of the ISD 199 elementary schools: Hilltop, Pine Bend, and Salem Hills. Our district provides morning, afternoon, and all day class options. Visit [www.IGHEarlyLearning.org](http://www.IGHEarlyLearning.org) to register and for more information.

## ECFE Classes Set Up Families for Lifelong Success



In addition to providing preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds, ISD 199's Early Learning Program offers Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes for parents and other caretakers of children, birth through age 5. According to the Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education, "Brain research confirms that the first three years are an extremely critical period in a child's development," and ECFE helps parents make the most of those years.

ISD 199's ECFE classes focus on developing each child's language and communication, learning, social-emotional, and motor skills. Classes also focus on parents, who are children's first and most important teachers. Parents learn about and practice important parenting and family life skills. They also build supportive relationships with other parents in the community. The skills learned and resources gained in ECFE classes allow parents to provide the best possible environment for the healthy growth of their children, paving the way for success in school and life.

Every ISD 199 ECFE class includes a licensed parent educator, who provides parents with the most current research and techniques, and an educator trained in early childhood development, who provides a learning-rich, play-based environment for children to explore while their parents learn. The staff's training also allows them to identify developmental concerns to address them early for better results. The program's Family Support Team also offers visits to address individual concerns.

The main goal of ISD 199's ECFE classes is connection. Parents connect with their children, research-based parenting information, and each other, setting up every family and student for lifelong success. Registration for spring ECFE classes is open now. To register or for more information, visit [www.IGHEarlyLearning.org](http://www.IGHEarlyLearning.org). Class fees are based on a sliding scale and financial assistance is available.

## ISD 199 School Board Officers Chosen for 2021



During the Inver Grove Heights School Board's January 11 special meeting, board members voted on officials for 2021. Matt Schaefer was voted in as the board chair, Sherry Warrick was voted in as the board vice chair and treasurer, and Rachel Hanson was voted in as the board clerk. All three officials held the same positions during 2020. They will continue their duties throughout 2021.

## Concord Education Center Room Named for Former ISD 199 & 917 School Board Chair



At a recent Intermediate School District 917 School Board Meeting, the board approved the name for the staff training center at the Concord Education Center: The Jill Lewis Training Center. Jill Lewis served on the Inver Grove Heights School Board for 15 years and on the ISD 917 School Board representing member district Inver Grove Heights Schools for 25 years. She was the chairperson for the majority of her time on each board. Ms. Lewis was also the inspiring and sustaining force behind the Inver Grove Heights B.E.S.T. Foundation, which gifts scholarships to Simley High School seniors each year.

In 2018, Ms. Lewis was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Even during her 2-year battle with the illness, she continued to be a steadfast supporter of students, learning, and her community. She passed away in June of 2020.

The Concord Education Center offers specialized career and technical education, special education services, and alternative learning for secondary students to its nine member school districts. The training center will provide space for ISD 917 staff to attend training sessions that are crucial to their work as educators and to the success of students. The training center, which resides in Inver Grove Heights, being named in honor of Jill Lewis is indicative of her fierce devotion to education. ISD 199 is glad to hear that such a great advocate will be immortalized in this naming. Our community and school district are better because of Jill Lewis' service and commitment.

## Giant Puzzle Helps IGHMS Staff Through Pandemic



When schools closed and cities declared Stay at Home orders in the spring of 2020, some Inver Grove Heights Middle School staff looked for ways to reduce the uncertainty and fear that came with the global COVID-19 pandemic. IGH Middle School nurse Vicki Fisher and a few other staff found a massive 40,320-piece puzzle they could split up as a relaxing activity amidst all the stress of the unknown. The 10 4,000-piece puzzle sections were divided among staff, both current and retired, as well as some family members of staff. Between April and September of 2020, the sections were assembled and ready to be connected together to create the final 6-foot by 22-foot result.

Rather than breaking the puzzle up upon completion, the staff who worked on it wanted to share it with students. The puzzle features scenes from 10 classic Disney movies that include a hidden Mickey Mouse silhouette in each scene. They found a spot in the Guidance Office hallway big enough to fit the whole piece, and IGHMS custodial staff, Simley High School industrial technology teacher Thom Fisher, Bill Krech of Total Construction, and Jeff Schaupe of Chad Tracy Signs helped finalize it for display. The "IGHMS Pandemic Puzzle 2020" is now under a protective plastic frame along with a plaque that includes everyone who contributed. It is hung up in the counselor's office hallway for students and staff to enjoy when they return to the building.

## Register for Spartan Kids' Care and IGH Youth Center Summer Care Starting April 1



ISD 199 has summer care opportunities for students going into kindergarten through grade 9. Students going into kindergarten through grade 5 can participate in Spartan Kids' Care Summer Childcare, and students going into grades 6-9 can enroll in the IGH Youth Center. Both programs offer kids many different activities designed to keep them engaged in a safe environment!

Kids will have a fun, active summer with Spartan Kids' Care and the IGH Youth Center. Registration for both summer care programs opens April 1. Visit [www.isd199.org/parents](http://www.isd199.org/parents) and click "Spartan Kids' Care" or "IGH Youth Center" for more information.

## HOUR OF CODE FAMILIARIZES EVERY STUDENT WITH COMPUTER SCIENCE

Students in nearly 200 countries participate in Code.org's Hour of Code each year. The annual event aims to give every student the opportunity to learn computer science. The event offers hundreds of interactive coding tutorials through the Code.org website. Students learn how coding works and try it for themselves with both online and offline activities.

Hilltop, Pine Bend, and Salem Hills elementary schools and the Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program held Hour of Code activities again this year to further familiarize students with coding and introduce them to computer science careers. Despite using computers and devices each day in Distance Learning, this year's Hour of Code event

allowed students to dig deeper into how computers work and to become familiar with more computer science vocabulary.

Each Code.org activity challenged students to combine commands in a way that would tell the computer what steps to take to achieve the correct result. Kindergarteners who are still new to computer science and coding learned how to combine simple commands. They played a Code.org game in which they used commands like "move forward one space" and "jump once" to help a cartoon dog reach a bone on the other side of the screen. Older students finished entire activity levels with one large list of code. They worked through obstacles and avoided traps in each level with more complex coding.

## Opportunities for IGH Babies

Have you registered your baby, toddler, or preschooler with the Inver Grove Heights School District census? With census information, ISD 199 can help you get your child on the path to success! Having your child's name on the census will ensure that you receive:

- all Early Childhood Program opportunities
- early childhood screening information
- kindergarten registration packets

To provide census information, visit ISD 199's website at [www.isd199.org/new\\_families](http://www.isd199.org/new_families) and complete the "Census Form" or call 651-306-7503. If you have moved to or within Inver Grove Heights School District 199, changed your phone number, or had a new baby, you will need to update the census information.

*Census information is for educational purposes only and the release of this information is governed by State and Federal laws as well as School Board policy. Your address and phone number are considered private data.*

## Immunization Requirements

Minnesota state law requires that students receive vaccinations to enroll in childcare, early childhood programs, and school. Parents must submit written proof of vaccinations before enrolling.

Please make sure your child has the proper immunizations at every age. Visit [www.health.state.mn.us/immunize](http://www.health.state.mn.us/immunize) for everything you need to know about required immunizations. Parents can use this website to learn more about which immunizations are necessary at specific ages.

## Free Meal Boxes Continue to Be Available to ALL Children



As students return to school buildings, Inver Grove Heights Schools will continue to provide Free Meal Boxes to ALL children, ages 18 and younger. Families do not need to pre-order meals, and any child can pick up a Free Meal Box, whether they are an ISD 199 student or not.

Free Meal Boxes provide children with breakfast and lunch for multiple days. In the interest of health and safety, family members may pick up a Free Meal Box for their children. Boxes are currently available for pick-up at distribution sites across Inver Grove Heights with some distribution times around noon and some in the evening. For the most updated information about Free Meal Boxes, check [www.isd199.org/covid19](http://www.isd199.org/covid19) under "Free Meals for All Children" throughout the school year.

Please be aware that meals are not distributed on non-school days. Also, Free Meal Box distribution sites, days, and times will change when secondary students return to Hybrid Learning on March 15. Updated Free Meal Box distribution will be put in place for the safety of middle and high school students returning to buildings. Check [www.isd199.org/covid19](http://www.isd199.org/covid19) under "Free Meals for All Children" for the most current distribution information.

Students who are learning at school in the Hybrid or In-person Learning model will continue to receive free meals at school, thanks to the district's free breakfast program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's emergency funding of school lunches through June 2021.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## Early Childhood Screenings

Inver Grove Heights Early Learning offers early childhood screenings for children ages 3-5. A screening is required of children enrolling in kindergarten next fall and involves a check of your child's vision, hearing, height, weight, immunizations, speech and language, motor skills, and general development. Children are screened one at a time and individual attention is given to the needs of the child and family.

Families now have the option of participating in an in-person or a virtual early childhood screening. Visit [www.IGHEarlyLearning.org](http://www.IGHEarlyLearning.org) or call 651-306-7503 to make an appointment.

## Visitors Prohibited After Return

Although we are excited to welcome students back into our school buildings, we must continue to prioritize the health and safety of our students and staff. To do so, ISD 199 will continue to prohibit visitors in its school buildings.

Anyone entering the front office must wear a face covering as outlined in ISD 199 Policy 808: COVID-19 Face Covering Policy. Visit [www.isd199.org](http://www.isd199.org) and use the link listed on the homepage to view the full policy. Thank you for helping us keep our school community healthy and in buildings!

## ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER ACADEMY 2021

Elementary Summer Academy for current kindergarten through 5th-grade students and Middle School Summer Academy for current 6th-through 8th-grade students provide opportunities to build academic, social, and emotional skills for the next school year. Students are recommended to these summer programs based on a variety of criteria including academic, language development, behavioral, and mental health needs. Summer Academy for qualified students includes transportation, breakfast, and lunch. Families will receive more information regarding qualification and registration for summer programming in April.

### Elementary Summer Academy (Grades K-5)

Mondays-Thursdays  
7:50 AM - 12:50 PM

Monday, June 21 - Thursday, July 15

Hilltop Elementary School, 3201 68th Street East in Inver Grove Heights  
For questions: Sarah Zaiser at [ZaiserS@isd199.org](mailto:ZaiserS@isd199.org) or 651-306-7454

### Middle School Summer Academy (Grades 6-8)

Mondays-Thursdays  
8:50 AM - 12:00 PM

Monday, June 21 - Thursday, July 15

IGH Middle School, 8167 Cahill Avenue in Inver Grove Heights  
For questions: IGH Middle School Office at 651-306-7200

## Snow & Cold Days Become Flex/Extended Learning Days for 20-21



Please be aware that ISD 199's emergency closing procedures have changed this school year. Any Snow and Cold Days will now be Flex/Extended Learning Days. The district will declare a Flex/Extended Learning Day if the buildings are using the In-person or Hybrid Learning model and the weather is too severe to get students safely to and from school buildings.

Students will use Seesaw and Schoology to get assignments and communicate with teachers, similar to Wednesday Distance Learning Days. Spartan Kids' Care will not be offered on Flex/Extended Learning Days due to the severe weather.

Any closures or delays will be communicated to the families and staff in an automated phone call and text. Families, please take a moment to check that your contact information in Infinite Campus is correct and that your preferred email address and phone number are marked for "General" and "Emergency" notifications. The district will send information about school building closings, emergencies, and other important matters to any phone number and email address marked for "General" and "Emergency." For instructions on how to check and update your contact information and preferences, visit [www.isd199.org/parents/emergency\\_closings](http://www.isd199.org/parents/emergency_closings).

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

- **DISTRICT WEBSITE:** Visit [www.isd199.org](http://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 building closings or delayed starts

Please visit [www.isd199.org/parents/emergency\\_closings](http://www.isd199.org/parents/emergency_closings) to learn more about how decisions are made about school delays and building closures.

## Students Who Enroll in 2021-22 Kindergarten Welcomed With Free T-shirt



Elementary schools are accepting 2021-2022 kindergarten enrollment packets, proof of age documents, and immunization records Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM.

- Hilltop Elementary School, 3201 68th Street East, Inver Grove Heights
- Pine Bend Elementary School, 9875 Inver Grove Trail, Inver Grove Heights
- Salem Hills Elementary School, 5899 Babcock Trail, Inver Grove Heights

Families can also drop off enrollment documents at the ISD 199 District Office, 2990 80th Street East in Inver Grove Heights, every school day, 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM. There is a no-contact dropbox at the ISD 199 District Office's Door 16 as well.

Every family who enrolls for 2021-2022 kindergarten will receive a free t-shirt for their future Spartan graduate! Families who have enrolled their child already or who would prefer to enroll online can also pick up a t-shirt at their elementary school or the ISD 199 District Office.

## Sign Up for Vaccine Opportunities With Minnesota's Vaccine Connector

The State of Minnesota has announced the launch of the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector. This tool helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get their COVID-19 vaccine. The system is a proactive way for all Minnesotans to indicate their interest in receiving a vaccine, so that when they become eligible, they can be alerted and connected to resources to schedule a vaccine appointment.

Demand for vaccine far exceeds supply, and Minnesotans are encouraged to remain patient as more vaccine arrives in the weeks and months ahead. Minnesota is continuing to distribute vaccines using a phased approach to immunize for impact by focusing on populations with the highest risk of getting COVID-19, as well as those most at risk of severe illness and complications if they become infected.

However, all Minnesotans 18 years of age and older are encouraged to sign up for the Vaccine Connector. Signing up is easy, safe and secure.

There will be no cost and no restricted time period to sign up. Health insurance and personal identification forms are not required to sign up.

### To Sign Up

- Go to [mn.gov/vaccineconnector](http://mn.gov/vaccineconnector) to sign up.
- Minnesotans unable to sign up online can have family or friends help them sign up online, or call 833-431-2053 for assistance signing up over the phone.
- Translation is available by phone in all languages. Minnesotans can call the translation hotlines at 833-431-2053 and 651-318-0989 for assistance signing up over the phone.

As more vaccine becomes available, the Vaccine Connector will send you updates about your vaccine eligibility and opportunities to receive the vaccine. Visit [mn.gov/covid19/vaccine](http://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine) for more information.

## Enrollment for 2021-2022 School Year Open Now

Families with children in preschool through 12th-grade are welcome to enroll their child any time! Right now, parents can enroll their student for the 2021-2022 school year. Hilltop, Pine Bend, and Salem Hills elementary schools are accepting preschool through 5th-grade enrollments, Inver Grove Heights Middle School is accepting 6th- through 8th-grade enrollments, and Simley High School is accepting 9th- through 12th-grade enrollments.

Parents who have newborn babies through 5-year-old children can also enroll in Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classes for spring. ECFE classes help parents connect with their children, research-based parenting techniques, and other parents who can offer support and experience.

Parents and guardians can complete their student's enrollment online or download enrollment documents at [www.isd199.org/enroll](http://www.isd199.org/enroll). Completed enrollment documents can be dropped off at:

- **ECFE & Preschool enrollment:** IGH Early Learning Center, 3203 68th Street East, next to Hilltop Elementary School
- **Kindergarten - Grade 5 enrollment:** ISD 199 District Office, 2990 80th Street East
- **Grade 6 - 8 enrollment:** IGH Middle School, 8167 Cahill Avenue
- **Grade 9 - 12 enrollment:** Simley High School, 2920 80th Street East

Visit [www.isd199.org/enroll](http://www.isd199.org/enroll) to download enrollment forms and see requirements for incoming students.

## Spartan Kids' Care Staff Appreciation Day 2020

The ISD 199 School Board declared December 16, 2020, as Spartan Kids' Care Staff Appreciation Day. The resolution came after childcare workers provided more than nine months of quality childcare to Tier 1 workers free of charge to support those working to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Spartan Kids' Care staff followed strict health and safety measures to keep the children of healthcare workers safe while their parents worked on the front lines to help our neighbors. Childcare staff cared for 145 students during Essential Worker Care. On average, 80 children attended Essential Worker Care daily. Staff planned activities for attending students in the summer, gave each of them space to work during the school year, and always ensured that the program was abiding by the most current health guidelines.

Spartan Kids' Care workers put students at ease despite the worries of the pandemic while making sure they were following all health and safety precautions to keep everyone in the program safe both during childcare and when they returned home. Thank you, childcare staff, for coming into buildings to care for children so parents in the healthcare field and those doing essential work during the peak of the pandemic could provide critical services to our community.

## Extra Student Support Implemented During Distance Learning

ISD 199 staff worked hard to drastically improve the district's Distance Learning model since the Spring of 2020, and some students have thrived in the model. However, many students still struggle to learn outside of school buildings. During Distance Learning this year, ISD 199 put elementary and secondary tutors in place to provide extra support.

Students were able to schedule a 20-minute phone call or Zoom video call with a tutor, or they could get help on a first-come, first-served basis during the tutor's open office hours. Tutors helped answer questions, reinforced learning, provided feedback, and assisted with homework, projects, and other academic tasks.

## 199 Online Connects With Author, Each Other



199 Online students may not be coming into school buildings, but they are experiencing some of the same opportunities at home over Zoom. At the elementary schools, older students, who are called "Big Buddies," visit younger students, who are

their "Little Buddies," to work together on projects or spend time together. Recently, 199 Online recreated the program through a Zoom video call. Big Buddies played games with their Little Buddies and drew pictures with them in Zoom breakout rooms. The Buddy program connects students to build school culture, provide role models for younger students, and teach older students leadership skills.

199 Online students also had an author visit over Zoom. Children's book author Peter Pearson kicked off I Love to Read Month for 199 Online students. He read his book, "How to Walk a Dump Truck," aloud for students and shared his love of reading and writing. Mr. Pearson visited the virtual classrooms of older students and younger students separately to ensure engaging, age-appropriate content for each group. Thank you to Mr. Pearson for bringing a unique experience to 199 Online!

Secondary students in Distance Learning were also able to get in-person help. Distance Learning for secondary students includes some real-time virtual class days and some self-paced work days. On self-paced work days, middle and high school students could sign up to work with a tutor during a 3-hour session at Simley High School. Each student was seated at their own socially distanced table, the tutor and students wore masks, and all tables and equipment were cleaned after use to ensure the safety of participants while providing in-person support.

ISD 199 continues to innovate to support students through the pandemic and in every setting. For more information about tutors, visit [www.isd199.org/covid19](http://www.isd199.org/covid19) and click "Extra Support in Distance Learning."

## IGH Middle School WEB Leaders Make and Donate Blankets



Each school year, 8th graders at Inver Grove Heights Middle School sign up to be WEB Leaders. Through WEB, which stands for “Where Everyone Belongs,” 8th graders are trained as mentors for incoming 6th graders. At the beginning of the school year, they familiarize the younger students with their new school and then stay in contact with their group of 6th graders to act as a resource for them to navigate and succeed in middle school.

WEB Leaders also act as role models for all of the younger IGHMS students. Part of their participation in WEB includes service learning and giving back to the community. WEB Leaders have visited nursing homes in the past as part of their community service. However, to keep their community safe during the spread of COVID-19 this year, the leaders decided to make blankets to donate to those who may need them this winter. Students were able to work on their blankets in the IGHMS cafeteria if they were comfortable with it, cutting and tying fleece blankets at different tables. Students made 15 blankets that will be donated to Cahill Place, an apartment complex that offers supportive housing to homeless families.

## Students Earn Outstanding Scores in WordMasters Challenge



Seven Inver Grove Heights Schools students achieved outstanding scores in this year’s WordMasters Challenge™, including one perfect score. The WordMasters Challenge™ is a national vocabulary competition that tests each student’s critical thinking skills. Students become familiar with a set of words that are considerably harder than grade level, and then they use those words to complete analogies expressing various kinds of logical relationships. Working to solve the analogies helps students learn to think both analytically and metaphorically. Although most vocabulary enrichment and analogy-solving programs are designed for high school students, the WordMasters Challenge™ is for students in grades 3-8.

This year, Pine Bend Elementary School third grader Mila Sarver earned a perfect score of 20 in the difficult Blue Division. Nationally, only 42 third graders achieved this result. Pine Bend third graders Hayley Chatleain and Tyler Olson also achieved outstanding results.

In the very difficult Gold Division, Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program third graders Penny Miller, Lenora Gold, and Daphne Martin, and fifth grader Alexis To also achieved outstanding results.

Students were coached by Pine Bend’s Nancy Gagne and Atheneum’s Joyce Ursin and Kim Westra. Thank you to the coaches, and congratulations to all of the students!

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## IGH Middle School Creates Newspaper by Students, for Students



Inver Grove Heights Middle School English teacher Becky Momany and counselor Jessica Maloney recently started a student newspaper to give students a place to share their stories. The first edition of the monthly newspaper says, “The goal of the Spartan Newsflash is to create community in a time of separation, allow for the diverse voices of our students to be heard freely, and showcase the (mostly) unedited talents of the Spartan Newsflash reporters.”

Ms. Maloney and Ms. Momany, the staff editors, have established the newspaper as student-run to encourage the reporters to learn from their mistakes and constantly try to improve their skills through reflection.

The first edition of the Spartan Newsflash features articles, photos, cartoons, and more from 16 student reporters. Visit the IGH Middle School webpage, [www.isd199.org/schools/ighms](http://www.isd199.org/schools/ighms), and click “Student Newspaper” in the sidebar to read the latest edition of the Spartan Newsflash.

## Simley Theatre Presents A Christmas Carol Radio Show

With COVID-19 data rising and students in Distance Learning this December, Simley Theatre said the show must go on! Instead of their usual performance, students produced a radio show that the community could safely enjoy at home.

Simley Theatre students held a live radio performance of “A Christmas Carol” on December 19 and 20, inviting their audience to listen in over a Zoom web conference. The cast and crew told the story of Ebenezer Scrooge and his visits with the ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Yet to Come.

The live radio performance presented students with an opportunity to expand their skills. Without the use of visuals, students were challenged to transport audience members into their story when they could not portray emotion through facial expressions, use lighting or sets to show their scenes, or even be in the same room.

Simley Theatre hopes to return to the stage soon. You can support the Simley Theatre Program by making a donation. Visit [tridistrict.ce.eleyo.com](http://tridistrict.ce.eleyo.com), search for “Simley Theatre Donations.” After choosing a donation amount from the dropdown, click “Enroll Now” to donate. Thank you for supporting our students in their performing arts experiences!

## IGH B.E.S.T. Foundation

The Inver Grove Heights B.E.S.T. Foundation raises funds to award academic scholarships to graduating Simley High School seniors. Last year, 111 scholarships were awarded, totaling more than \$150,000.

In the interest of the health and well-being of our students and community, the B.E.S.T. Foundation will host its scholarship awards ceremony virtually on May 21. The Foundation holds fundraisers throughout the year to drive donations, including an annual golf event scheduled for August 9 at Inverwood Golf Course. Donations can also be made through the Foundation website. Club 199 is the simplest and most affordable way to contribute, featuring monthly donations of \$19.99 or more or annual donations of \$199. Visit [www.ighbestfoundation.com](http://www.ighbestfoundation.com) and click Donate for options, and be sure to follow the @IGHBESTFoundation on Facebook.

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

**#1. 1% INCREASE TO GENERAL FORMULA**

Part of every public school district’s general fund is state-funded. The level of state funding is determined by the legislative process and based on student enrollment. Currently, the state provides an estimated 73% of ISD 199’s general funding. A 1% increase to the general formula for school districts has been proposed for legislators to approve this year. A 1% increase would provide \$250,000 for ISD 199’s general fund.

The state’s funding of school districts has not kept pace with inflation since 2003. If funding had kept pace, the percentage of funding would be 7.7% higher, providing \$503 more per pupil. An increase in state support would help the school district maintain the programs it has developed and continue preparing students for academic, professional, and personal life beyond graduation.

**#2. SOUTH GROVE UPDATE**

In July of 2018, the ISD 199 School Board authorized the district administrative team to explore the potential of selling the property that once included South Grove Elementary School. The school was closed in 2008 and removed from the property. Now vacant, the property cannot be used by the school district because it does not meet building requirements.

In October of 2018, the ISD 199 School Board approved a purchase agreement for the property at their regular board meeting. The purchase agreement was contingent on the buyer being able to rezone and obtain the necessary approval to develop the property. The buyer worked with the city of Inver Grove Heights for approval.



School district proceeds from the sale can only be used for capital improvements. The proceeds cannot be used to add or compensate staff. The first intent with the proceeds of the South Grove property is to renovate the Salem Hills Elementary School access and parking area to improve safety for students, families, and staff as well as drivers on Babcock Trail. Depending on the final costs of the Salem Hills project, the district may also be able to update the safety alarm systems throughout the district and make improvements to the Hilltop and Pine Bend parking lots.

*NOTE: During the COVID-19 pandemic, information can change rapidly. Although the information contained in this edition of the 199 Reporter is accurate as of its publication date, please visit [www.isd199.org](http://www.isd199.org) or our COVID-19 information site, [www.isd199.org/covid19](http://www.isd199.org/covid19), for the most up-to-date information available.*

**INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS WEATHER UPDATES: [WWW.ISD199.ORG](http://WWW.ISD199.ORG)**



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