

199 REPORTER

• • • INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS | SPRING 2022 • • •

Thank You, ISD 199 Staff, for Innovating to Help Students Excel



In March of 2020, Minnesota schools closed and pivoted to distance learning in response to the effects of COVID-19. Now, two years later, we continue to grapple with the pandemic and its side effects. Although these enduring challenges have been frustrating, it has been amazing to see our staff's commitment to students, to each other, and to our community.

Considering all of the challenges associated with the pandemic, staff shortages have been some of the most difficult. Staffing issues have caused school districts around us to shift learning formats over the past few months. However, ISD 199 has been able to keep students in their current format. Staff have gone to great lengths to support both students and their colleagues because they know that this format

is the best experience for students on a daily basis. Every morning, our principals juggle assignments and work with staff to make sure they're providing the coverage and services necessary to the success of our kids.

Staff have continuously found creative ways to cover classes, cover bus routes, make meals happen, and seamlessly deliver all of the usual school-day services. From the time they step through the school doors, staff are adapting, innovating, modifying, and changing their days to accommodate students.

In November and January of this school year, we notified families that bus route schedules could temporarily change if our transportation staffing changed. Despite staff illnesses and a limited pool of bus driver substitutes, ISD 199 Transportation staff have kept buses running. Drivers have added to their original routes, substitute drivers have routinely taken on routes, and office staff have stepped in to get students to school on time. There may still be some temporary schedule changes before the end of the school year, but the department's foresight and hard work have helped us maintain student routines despite the obstacles so far.

In addition to staffing shortages, schools are adapting to the supply chain shortages and delivery delays that many industries are facing. Our food service staff are some of the hardest hit with these manufacturing and shipping issues. Each day, our cafeterias experience delayed deliveries of ingredients and unfulfilled orders of necessary supplies like trays. Yet, they adapt their menus and processes to ensure that every student receives a full, well-balanced meal.

Our front offices and school nurse offices are also continually working to provide the best and most compassionate service to families and staff. They have helped support and guide our school community through every procedure change related to or resulting from the pandemic with patience and grace. Their expertise is unmatched, and their resolve is tireless.

The will of our staff is off the charts, and we're very fortunate to have the staff we have at Inver Grove Heights Schools. Thank you to every person in our district: teachers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, bus drivers and transportation staff, food service staff, school nurses, buildings and grounds staff, childcare workers, activities staff, administrative assistants, technology staff, community education staff, administrators, event workers, and volunteers as well as the students, families, and neighbors who have supported our efforts. Most importantly, thank you all for the collaboration that has taken place to make things happen the way they have been happening so we can achieve our goal of keeping kids in their current format.

I look forward to the day we can put many of the struggles of the pandemic behind us, but it has been amazing to see the extraordinary efforts of our wonderful staff.

Regards,

Dave Bernhardson, Superintendent

INSPIRE • INNOVATE • EXCEL

199 REPORTER

Inver Grove Heights Schools

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

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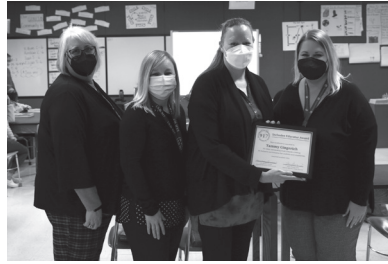
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199 REPLIES

Part of our mission is to maintain an involved and invested community. To do so, we want to keep you informed.

Have a question about our district? Visit www.isd199.org/FAQ to browse answers to previous questions or ask your own.

IGH Middle School Teacher Earns Inclusive Educator Award



Congratulations to Inver Grove Heights Middle School Science Teacher Tammy Gingerich on being selected for the Intermediate School District 917 Inclusive Educator Award for the 2021-2022 school year! Ms. Gingerich was nominated by her District 917 colleague Lisa Kent for her work to support the inclusion of the unique learners in IGH Middle School.

District 917 created the Inclusive Educator Award as part of Inclusive Schools Week. The week highlights and celebrates the progress that schools have made in implementing inclusive practices to ensure a quality education for an increasingly diverse student population. The 917 Inclusive Educator Award was created to acknowledge the incredible work of educators from District 917's nine member districts.

Inver Grove Heights Schools is one of District 917's member districts. As part of District 917, students in member districts receive expanded special education services, alternative learning programming, and career and technical education that schools may not be able to offer on their own. Ms. Gingerich takes advantage of District 917's services to ensure her students get what they need. In her classes, she makes sure students are mastering lessons by offering extra time when students are working in class, making lessons available in a student's preferred language, and much more.

As part of Ms. Gingerich's award, she was announced as a winner at the District 917 School Board meeting on January 4. Her award was delivered to her in her first-hour class on February 8 by Ms. Kent, who nominated her, as well as District 917 Dean of Special Education Lori Klein and Assistant Director of Special Education Taylor Thomas. The District 917 staff members thanked Ms. Gingerich for her dedication to her work and for supporting the unique learners at IGH Middle School.

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. For more information about immunizations, visit www.health.state.mn.us/immunize. Parents can use this website to learn more about which immunizations are necessary at specific ages.

MAYOR DISCUSSES IDEAS WITH PINE BEND STUDENTS



Pine Bend Elementary School third graders wrote letters to Inver Grove Heights Mayor Tom Bartholomew in their English Language (EL) class. The letters addressed problems identified by the class and provided ideas to help solve them. Some of the issues students identified focused on homelessness, animal protection, the need for more trees, and trash management.

Mayor Bartholomew responded to the student letters and scheduled a visit with students to discuss some ways the city government is responding to the issues they pointed out. Students asked him questions about his job as mayor, and he talked about his role, the election process, and how other city departments function, such as the police department and the public works department. Thank you to Mayor Bartholomew for taking time to visit students and teach them about our government.

Opportunities for New Families & New 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, and kindergarten registration packets.

Visit ISD 199's website at www.isd199.org/new_families and complete the "Census Form" or call 651-306-7503 to provide census

information. 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.

TWO LONG-TIME BOARD MEMBERS SAY FAREWELL



The terms of two long-time ISD 199 School Board members expired at the end of 2021 after more than a decade of service. Lynette Stensgard, a board member of 16 years, and Cindy Nordstrom, a board member of 12 years, decided not to run for re-election this past November.

The two left behind a legacy of advocacy and leadership as they stepped away from their roles on the board.

Ms. Nordstrom ran for the school board after helping the district renew its existing operating levy in 2008.

"Working to get a positive message out about education during the levy inspired me to work toward better communication as a board member while bringing my own experience as a teacher to the board room," she said.

Ms. Stensgard decided to run for school board after volunteering at her children's schools and acting as a community liaison in getting approval for the new middle school building project.

"When the bond passed, I wanted to continue my involvement with that effort as well as being an overall advocate for kids," she said. "The education system truly needs people to advocate for our kids, and I felt called to do so."

Ms. Stensgard admitted that she didn't expect to be on the school board this long, but the work and the people kept her coming back.

"There was always a need and a new goal to chase, and I've met and learned from so many wonderful staff and students during my time on the school board," she said. "I have loved being a part of facilities projects and collaborating with teams of people to bring in new programs and technology."

Ms. Nordstrom said her favorite memories on the board include providing free all-day kindergarten before it was fully funded by the state, hiring new district leadership, and seeing voters pass the bond that upgraded district facilities and built the Simley High School Performing Arts Center, stadium, and track.

The work and accomplishments of the two long-time board members have inspired their newer colleagues as well.

"Cindy and Lynette instilled in me the importance of explaining not

just what we are doing as a school board, but why we are doing it," ISD 199 School Board Chair Matt Schaefer said. "Taking time to explain why the board is doing something typically helps people understand what we are doing as well."

ISD 199 School Board Vice Chair and Treasurer Sherry Warrick said, "Cindy and Lynette are sincere advocates of our ISD 199 students, staff, and community. I've further improved my leadership skills by watching how they got involved and listening to the comments they would make and the questions they would ask during meetings."

ISD 199 School Board Member Mary Frances Clardy said the two school board members mentored her when she joined the school board in 2020. "They're so approachable and they always took extra time to explain the history and reasoning behind the board's past decisions," she said. "They really laid the groundwork for the culture and accomplishments of the current school board."

When Ms. Nordstrom and Ms. Stensgard were asked about the hopes they have for the future of the ISD 199 School Board, Ms. Nordstrom said, "I hope that they continue to believe in and advocate for public education. One of the greatest strengths of public education is the opportunity to educate ALL students."

Ms. Stensgard said, "Our goal has been to make decisions based on what's best for kids. The passion and creativity that is put into that goal is amazing. Don't lose that!"

Both board members expressed their gratitude for the chance to serve the district and for the support of the school community and ISD 199 residents.

"I'm so proud of all we've accomplished together over the years," Ms. Stensgard said. "Thank you to Dave Bernhardson, my fellow school board members, and the ISD 199 staff, students, and community for your support during my time with the board!"

Ms. Nordstrom added, "The mission 'Inspire. Innovate. Excel. A Community Commitment' is truly representative of ISD 199. Staff, students, families, and community members have the gifts and talents to support and encourage one another every single day. Thank you for allowing me to serve this community for 12 years as a school board member."

Newly elected school board members Sarah Larsen and Charlie Thompson stepped into their new school board roles this January. Thank you to our two long-time school board members for their tireless dedication to advocating for every ISD 199 student.

Revised Graduation Requirements Allow Students to Take More Goal-focused Courses



Conversations with students and parents over the last few years have highlighted the need for a change to graduation requirements and more classes based on student interests. Inver Grove Heights Schools has revised its graduation requirements for 2022-2023 to further align with state requirements. The revision will allow Simley High School to offer more classes without needing more staffing, and it will allow Simley students to take more classes that align with their goals.

After voters approved an operating levy increase in 2017, the district has been able to add numerous immersive career-focused courses at Simley and has graduated more students with college credit or a nationally recognized professional certification. However, students who want to take advantage of

Simley's extensive college and career classes have had to take summer classes to fulfill graduation requirements such as physical education classes. ISD 199 currently requires Simley students to take four times more physical education credits than required by the state and by its surrounding districts. So, the revised graduation requirements will allow Simley students to enroll in the courses that best match their goals without needing to sacrifice their summers. A variety of classes will continue to be available to any students who want to take more physical education credits than required.

The revised graduation requirements have also presented Simley with an opportunity to further expand its class options based on student goals and interests. Next school year, Simley students will have access to a computer science career course through the TriDistrict CAPS (Center for Advanced Professional Studies) Program, an urban teacher education program, and a personal finance class. No additional staffing will be needed due to the revised graduation requirements.

Revising graduation requirements to further align with state requirements has given ISD 199 an opportunity to respond to the needs expressed by its students and parents. During Simley's registration period for 2022-2023, the high school was able to utilize current staffing to offer more classes tailored to student interests, and Simley students had more freedom to choose classes that best fit their academic, professional, and personal goals without needing to add summer classes.

Hilltop Second Graders Host 2022 Potato Olympics



During the global 2022 Winter Olympics, Hilltop Elementary School second graders held their own Olympic Games: the 2022 Potato Olympics. Hilltop students decorated potato "athletes" to participate in the Games and heard from an Olympic hopeful about her journey to the speed skating trials.

In the morning, second-grade classes heard from virtual guest speaker Allie Thunstrom, who has come close to competing in the Olympic Games twice and is a Minnesota Whitecaps hockey player. Ms. Thunstrom talked about her hockey career and her participation in two Olympic Trials for speed skating, placing within a few spots of qualifying for the 2014 and 2018 Olympics. She showed students clips of her speed skating races and hockey games and talked about her team, training, and how she got into her

sports. She also answered student questions about how she became so fast, if she was a fast runner too, and what students can do now if they want to play hockey and skate like her in the future.

After Ms. Thunstrom's virtual visit, students paraded their potato athletes down the second- and third-grade hallway as part of the Olympic opening ceremony. Each second-grade class then participated in Olympic events like the potato bobsled and potato luge, sending their athletes on high-speed pursuits and experimenting with the best techniques for a successful run.

Thank you to Ms. Thunstrom for talking to students about her career path, and great job to all of the students and their athletes who were part of the 2022 Potato Olympics.

SUMMER SPARTAN KIDS' CARE & IGH YOUTH CENTER



ISD 199 has summer care opportunities for students going into kindergarten through grade nine. Students going into kindergarten through fifth grade can participate in Spartan Kids' Care summer childcare, and students going into sixth through ninth grade 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 summer care opens March 14. Visit www.isd199.org/parents and click "Spartan Kids' Care" or "IGH Youth Center" for more information.

Gov. Walz & Lt. Gov. Flanagan Visit Hilltop & the IGH Early Learning Center



Minnesota Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan visited Hilltop Elementary School and the Inver Grove Heights Early Learning Center on January 25 to see the work happening in schools and roll out some budget recommendations for

education and childcare. They were able to tour the school before holding a mini press conference in the gym.

Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Flanagan were greeted at the IGH Early Learning Center by Inver Grove Heights Schools staff, including paraprofessionals Jane LaVoie and Chelly Stein. Gov. Walz thanked the paraprofessionals for all of their work, especially as the state celebrated Paraprofessional Recognition Week.

Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Flanagan then began their tour in an Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) class, speaking with parents of young children about their experiences. They visited Hilltop next, seeing all of the posters that students made to welcome them. They also received a keepsake booklet from Ms. Larson's first-grade class about all the things the students believe the governor does.

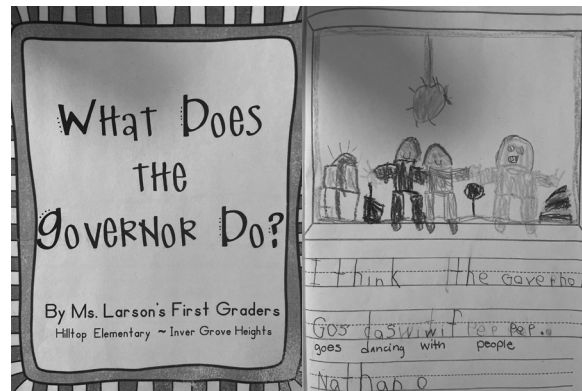
At Hilltop, Gov. Walz visited Ms. Schroeder's kindergarten class where they were learning about arctic animals. Gov. Walz put on his winter hat before reading "In the Arctic," a picture book about all of the different animals that live in cold climates. The governor howled along with students at the end of the book, mimicking the wolves they had just learned about.

Gov. Walz then met with some staff members in the school's Inspiration Center, where classes focus on building skills related to STEAMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math, and Media).

Staff included School Social Worker Andrea Lichtsinn, Spartan Kids' Care and Youth Enrichment Coordinator Erica Tollefson, Early Learning Coordinator Lora Lambert, Learning Partner Darcy Huspek, Student and Family Success Coach Sarah Zaiser, and Scott, Carver, and Dakota County Director of Head Start and Educational Services Holly Schultz. Each staff member provided a description of their work for the governor and lieutenant governor. Staff also thanked Gov. Walz for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER III) funds that made it possible to bring on extra support for students after some of the most severe effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The visit culminated in a mini press conference in the Hilltop gym that featured announcements and information from Gov. Walz, Lt. Gov. Flanagan, Commissioner of Education Heather Mueller, and Assistant Commissioner of the Minnesota Children's Cabinet Erin Bailey about the governor's proposed budget items for education and childcare.



Throughout the visit, the governor, lieutenant governor, and commissioner of education repeatedly acknowledged the extraordinary work that teachers and school staff have done and continue to do throughout the pandemic. Each spoke about the Herculean efforts of staff to take care of their classrooms and students while simultaneously taking care of their own families in a situation that was brand-new to everyone.

Thank you to Gov. Walz, Lt. Gov. Flanagan, Commissioner Mueller, Assistant Commissioner Bailey, and all of the other state administrators and staff who visited Hilltop this January. Thank you, also, to all of the ISD 199 staff members who made the visit possible and to all of the students who made our guests feel welcome.

ADVANCED COURSE FAIR



Simley High School held an Advanced Course Fair this school year to provide a student perspective on the college and career courses available to Simley students. The idea for the Advanced Course Fair came from conversations with students. Students said they would be more likely to take advantage of a college or career class if they heard about it from another student. So each year, student representatives from each class set up a booth in the gym and freshmen, sophomores, and juniors visit to learn and ask questions about the class.

This year, students were able to showcase a variety of on- and off-campus classes that provide Simley students with opportunities to earn college credit, career experience, internships, and professional certifications before high school graduation. At the booths for TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) Program classes and the Genesys Works program, students talked to their peers about their opportunity to work alongside local employers, gain professional experience, and earn an internship. At the booths for Advanced Placement (AP) and concurrent enrollment classes, students talked about learning college-level material and earning college credit. At the booths for Simley's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) courses, students showed their peers the skills and medical equipment they learned to use in class and talked about the process of earning a nationally recognized professional certification. Thank you to all of the students who shared their experiences.

ISD 199 Schools Rank Highly on U.S. News 2021 Best Schools List



U.S. News & World Report released its school rankings for 2021 this winter. The publication's Best Schools lists include national, state, and metro rankings for high schools and state rankings for middle and elementary schools. Simley High School, Pine Bend Elementary

School, and the Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program ranked highly this year with Atheneum ranking No. 3 in Minnesota.

U.S. News & World Report ranked Minnesota's public elementary and middle schools for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The organization considered state test performance, school size, student-teacher ratios, and other similar data when ranking schools. Its Best Elementary Schools and Best Middle Schools lists only rank the top 75% of schools in each state.

Atheneum's outstanding proficiency scores earned the school a ranking of No. 3 out of all of the traditional, charter, and magnet schools in Minnesota. In its ranking, U.S. News & World Report pointed out that 98% of students scored at or above proficiency level for math and 92% scored at or above proficiency level for reading. Pine Bend Elementary School also ranked relatively highly at No. 369. Their rank puts the

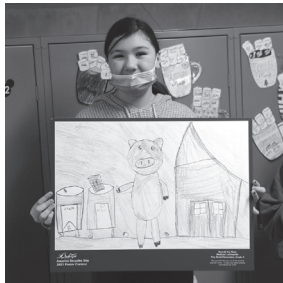
school around the top 30% of elementary schools in the state.

Simley High School regularly ranks highly on the U. S. News & World Report Best High Schools list. This year, Simley again broke into the top 25% of high schools in the nation, state, and metro area. The school ranked in the top 25% of traditional, charter, and magnet high schools in the U.S. It also ranked No. 73 in the state, putting Simley in the top 15% of all Minnesota high schools.

U.S. News & World Report noted Simley's high participation in Advanced Placement (AP) coursework and exams. More than half of Simley students took at least one AP exam during 2021. The school is also highly ranked for how well it prepares students for college. The College Readiness Index measures how many students took and passed at least one AP exam during the year, and the College Curriculum Breadth Index measures how many students took and passed AP exams in multiple areas. Both Simley's College Readiness Index and College Curriculum Breadth Index rank in the top 15% of U.S. high schools and the top 10% of Minnesota high schools.

Inver Grove Heights Schools strives to maintain a culture of high expectations that accelerates learning for all students. Great job to students and staff for all of the hard work they did during a year that was challenging for many. Go Spartans!

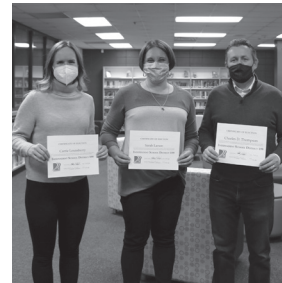
Pine Bend Student Wins County Contest



In November, Dakota County opened its America Recycles Day Poster Contest to fourth graders throughout the area. A submission from Pine Bend Elementary School student, Madison, won First Place Overall, and the school surprised her with an impromptu awards celebration.

Madison was one of 34 entrants in the Dakota County contest, earning the top prize. Dakota County's environmental specialist and school recycling coordinator delivered Madison's prize with the help of Principal Quennel Cooper, paraprofessional Ashley Buntin, and Madison's mom. As part of her prize, Madison's poster was displayed at Galaxie Library in Apple Valley throughout the month of February and returned to her afterward. Congratulations, Madison!

School Board Induction & Officers



The Inver Grove Heights School Board held a special meeting on Monday, January 10, 2022, to swear in new and re-elected members and to hold board officer elections. New board members Sarah Larsen and Charlie Thompson and returning member Carrie Lounsberry took the oath of office.

The board also held elections for 2022 officers. Matt Schaefer will continue in his role as school board chair and Sherry Warrick will continue her role as board vice chair and treasurer for this calendar year. The role of school board clerk will transfer from ISD 199 School Board Member Rachel Hanson to ISD 199 School Board Member Carrie Lounsberry. Director Lounsberry accepted the role for 2022 with no contest.

2022-2023 KINDERGARTEN



Elementary school buildings are accepting 2022-2023 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 - 4:30 PM. There is a no-contact dropbox at the ISD 199 District Office's

Door 16 as well. Every family who enrolls for 2022-2023 kindergarten will receive a free t-shirt for their future Spartan graduate! Families who enroll online at www.isd199.org/kindergarten can also pick up a t-shirt at an ISD 199 elementary school or the ISD 199 District Office. Enrollment for all grades, preschool through grade 12, and online learning is open now through www.isd199.org/enroll or the ISD 199 District Office.

Pine Bend Holds Pig Races After Donations



Before Winter Break, Pine Bend Elementary School collected donations for a local food shelf, Neighbors Inc. The non-profit social services organization offers emergency and supportive services to northern Dakota County residents. Students gathered more than 2,800 pounds of donated food for Neighbors Inc. The annual donation drive not only helps stock the local pantry for winter, it also leads into a Pine Bend tradition: the school's annual Pig Races.

Classes are given one electronic big pig or little critter to enter into the race for every 100 pounds of food they donate. The day's races include a Big Pig Race and a Little Critter Race. One student is chosen per entry to start

their class's pig or critter in the races, which are held in the gym. Classes watch the races and cheer on their pig or critter from their classrooms via Zoom.

This year, Mr. Peine's and Mrs. Peterson's classes won the races. Great job to all of the students who donated food to help their neighbors, and congratulations to the winners!

Simley Students Selected for Grades 9-10 Augsburg Honor Band



Congratulations to Simley High School students Alice Islam, Carter Kline, and Madeline Ngo on being accepted into the Augsburg University Grades 9-10 Honor Band. Band directors from around the state of Minnesota submitted more than 250 nominations for the band, but only a select few were chosen. As part of the honor band, Simley students participated in rehearsals and master classes throughout the day near the end of February.

"What a wonderful opportunity for these members of our high school program," Simley Band Director Kevin Robinson said. "I'm proud of their dedication and willingness to continue their growth as musicians."

Skier Visits Spartan Nordic Ski to Talk About His Path to the Olympics



Olympian Jon Soto Moreno visited Simley High School and Inver Grove Heights Middle School students in Nordic Ski. Mr. Soto Moreno, who competed in the 2022 Winter Olympics with Team Mexico, was born in Mexico and later moved to Minnesota, where he began skiing at Richfield High School. He ran students through drills and talked about his path to the Olympics.

He shared his community message with students: "Hechenle ganas! Poco a poco puedes lograr lo que quieras," which roughly translates to "Little by little, you can achieve your goals." Thank you to Mr. Soto Moreno for taking the time to visit students and speak about his experiences.

NEARLY 20 SIMLEY MUSICIANS SELECTED FOR ALL CONFERENCE FESTIVAL



Each year, the top band, choir, and jazz students are chosen for the Metro East All Conference Honor Band Festival. This year, 19 Simley High School band students were selected to perform at the two-day event at Mahtomedi High School.

Students participate in rehearsals, sectionals, and master classes on the first day of the honor band, and on the second day, they perform in the festival. Simley students performed alongside students from Hastings High School, Hill-Murray School, Mahtomedi High School, North St. Paul High School, South St. Paul Secondary, St. Thomas Academy, Tartan High School, and Two Rivers High School.

"This is such a wonderful honor for these students who have worked hard on their instruments and given a lot to our band program," Simley Band Director Kevin Robinson said. "They are very deserving of this honor, and I couldn't be more proud of who they are as band students and people."

Zainab Adebayo
Ian Anich
Crystal Bonilla Rios

Rebecca Elkin
Alyssa Gaarder
Noah Hunt

Tyler Janey
Cecelia Jorde
Emily LaForte
Kiera Maupin

Aja Moore
Chrissa Muller
Mason Ostebo

Grace Raab
Athena Schaefer
Blake Stinnett

Shelby Phillips
Anais Torres
Gwen Ukestad

The festival was held on Monday, January 31. Congratulations to all of the selected students!

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

#1. NON-ISD 199 SCHOOLS IN IGH

Despite being located in the city of Inver Grove Heights, Discovery Charter School and the Concord Education Center are not part of Inver Grove Heights School District 199. Our elementary schools are Hilltop, Pine Bend, Salem Hills, and 199 Online elementary schools and the Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program. Discovery is an independent charter school, and the Concord Education Center is a special education program location operated by Intermediate School District 917.

District 917 has nine member districts, including ISD 199. Instead of enrolling its own students, District 917 only serves students from its member districts, providing supplemental special education services, alternative learning programming, and career and technical classes. Even if ISD 199 students attend the Concord Education Center for specialized services during the school day, they are enrolled in ISD 199, not District 917 or Concord.

#2. WHAT IS A CROSS SUBSIDY?

The federal government and the Minnesota state government set requirements for what schools must provide for students, including special education and English language services. More than 40 years ago, legislation was passed that promised to provide aid to cover a significant portion of the additional costs school districts would incur for providing these mandated services.

However, each year since then, the state and federal governments

have only provided enough aid to cover about 12-14% of the additional costs. As a result, school districts must use a significant portion of their own funds each year to cover the remaining costs. The school district's contribution that covers remaining costs is considered a cross-subsidy. For years, districts and school organizations across the state have been advocating for the government to fully fund the additional costs they require for special education or to decrease the cross-subsidy. Doing so would leave more revenue to expand programming and respond to the unique needs and goals of each district's students.

#3. INCREASES TO THE STATE FORMULA

Each year, the Minnesota Legislature discusses changes to the general fund revenue formula for schools. In the past several years, legislators have approved a 2% increase to the general revenue formula. For the 2021-2022 school year, the increase was slightly more at 2.45%, and for the 2022-2023 school year, the increase is 2%.

For Inver Grove Heights Schools, 2% equals about \$500,000 that the district can use for instructional purposes. This 2% increase is based on student enrollment but is only a portion of the district's state aid, so it does not equate to a full 2% increase in the district's overall budget. ISD 199's 2021-2022 general budget is \$51,080,000. These general education revenue formula increases are meant to enable districts to maintain current programming with each year's cost of inflation. Although these increases have not kept up with inflation since the 2002-2003 school year, they still provide crucial financial resources that help the district maintain a balanced budget.

• **QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR DISTRICT? WWW.ISD199.ORG/FAQ** •



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