

199 REPORTER

• • • INVER GROVE HEIGHTS SCHOOLS | SPRING 2023 • • •

Feedback Steers Next Steps of 199 Future Ready



We are currently reviewing feedback on our 199 Future Ready initiative. The initiative aims to further develop our school district offerings and structure so even more students graduate ready to succeed

in their chosen paths. We will use the results from our recent surveys and design workshops to refine our implementation plan and ensure that the initiative's impacts are sustainable.

Thank you to the nearly 400 families and community members who responded to this winter's 199 Future Ready Perspective Survey. Survey questions asked respondents to rate the importance of each of 199 Future Ready's focus areas: core life skills like problem solving and conflict resolution, world language classes, college and career exploration and preparation, and relevant learning opportunities. Highlights from the survey results include:

- A majority of families and community members (at least 70% of respondents) ranked all focus areas as "Important" or "Extremely important."
- The core life skills focus area had the most support from respondents with 86% ranking it as "Extremely important."
- Many respondents shared that they would like to see more relevant learning opportunities such as classes that teach financial literacy, car maintenance, and home economics skills like sewing and cooking.
- Respondents also expressed support for providing more options in middle school, especially options for world languages.
- Respondents elaborated on their support for career exploration and preparation, encouraging schools to expose students to every kind of career, including skilled trades, manual labor, administration, technology, and more.

The survey results are helping us understand the priorities of our families and community.

We also gathered feedback in design workshops with Inver Grove Heights Middle School and Simley High School staff and student representatives. In the high school design workshop, staff interviewed students in grades 9-12 about core life skills and their experiences at Simley as well as career pathways and possible future course offerings. Staff used the workshop to understand each student's current reality and needs. After gathering information from students, staff brainstormed ways that 199 Future Ready could address the realities and needs that students shared.

In the middle school design workshop, 8th graders answered questions about their school experiences and offered ideas to enhance their experiences. Middle school staff reviewed their answers and ideas from the high school design workshop. They talked through, refined, and ranked ideas they thought could help improve the student experience.

The 199 Future Ready team of district leaders is reviewing all of this feedback. Over the next few months, we will explore ways that we can implement this new programming for the 2024-2025 school year. We are grateful for the feedback our students, staff, families, and community shared. We will use feedback to ensure that we are innovating with the priorities and needs of our school community in mind.

Learn more about the 199 Future Ready initiative and look for updates at www.isd199.org/199FutureReady.

Regards,

Dave Bernhardson
Superintendent

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 - 4:00 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:

Katie Sheridan
Communications Manager
SheridanK@isd199.org

CONNECT WITH US

 [facebook.com/isd199](https://www.facebook.com/isd199)

 twitter.com/isd199

 [instagram.com/isd199](https://www.instagram.com/isd199)

 vimeo.com/isd199

 [linkedin.com/school/isd199](https://www.linkedin.com/school/isd199)

199 REPLIES

Do you have a question about our district?

Part of our mission is to maintain an involved and invested community. To do so, we want to keep you informed. Visit www.isd199.org/FAQ to browse answers to previously asked questions about our district or ask your own.

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 651-306-7828. More information is available at www.isd199.org/nondiscrimination.

Teacher of the Year Nominee at Salem Hills



Education Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award nominations recognize outstanding educators across the state. Salem Hills Elementary School teacher Joe Melde is one of 131 candidates in the running for the honor this year.

Mr. Melde is the STEAMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Media) Specialist at Salem Hills. He has been teaching and innovating

at Inver Grove Heights Schools for more than 25 years. Over the next few months, Mr. Melde will have a chance to show a panel of Minnesota education, business, and government leaders his qualifications to become the Education Minnesota Teacher of the Year.

The panel will narrow the pool of candidates to semifinalists and then finalists before announcing the Teacher of the Year around May. The selected educator will become an advocate for education and a spokesperson for teachers during the following school year. They will be responsible for meeting with policymakers and stakeholders, presenting to key groups, and representing the best interests of students and staff to move education forward.

Congratulations to Mr. Melde on his nomination, and good luck to him as he moves through the selection process!

Simley Teachers Earn Inclusive Educator Awards



Two Simley High School teachers were selected to receive the 2022-2023 Inclusive Educator Award from Intermediate School District 917! Special education teacher Susan Barnard and science teacher Janet Bates were nominated by District 917 colleagues and selected for their work to support the inclusion of unique learners.

District 917 created the Inclusive Educator Award to acknowledge the incredible work of educators from District 917's nine member districts. Inver Grove Heights Schools is one of those nine member districts. Students in member districts receive expanded special education services, alternative learning programming, and career and technical education that schools may not be able to support on their own.

District 917 Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Teacher Annie Taylor and Sign Language Interpreter Jodi Monson nominated Ms. Bates because of her advocacy for students who may need DHH services. District 917 Physical Disabilities Teacher Amber Kurten nominated Ms. Barnard for always asking students about the specifics of what they need to be successful. District 917 Dean of Special Education Lori Klein visited Simley to present the awards, and the award winners were announced at the District 917 School Board meeting on January 10.

Congratulations to Ms. Barnard and Ms. Bates, and thank you to these dedicated educators for helping all Simley students succeed!

Two School Board Vacancies Filled Through 2023



Two Inver Grove Heights School Board vacancies were filled at a special school board meeting on Monday, January 23. Darcie Pierson and Jake Klingner were appointed to fill the vacant school board seats.

The vacancies were left by ISD 199 School Board members Mary Frances Clardy and Charlie Thompson. Rep. Clardy submitted her resignation after being elected as the Minnesota State Representative for District 53A. Her resignation took effect on January 1, 2023. After news of a relocation, Mr. Thompson resigned on January 11, effective immediately.

The ISD 199 School Board interviewed five candidates for the vacancies. On January 23, the school board voted on final candidates for each vacancy and selected Ms. Pierson and Mr. Klingner. The new school board members were sworn in and officially took office at a regular school board meeting on Monday, February 27.

Ms. Pierson and Mr. Klingner will serve through December 2023. Both seats will be up for election on November 7, 2023. Because Mr. Thompson's term was set to expire in December of 2025, there will be one seat up for a two-year term rather than the full four-year term.

Thank you to all of the candidates who applied, and welcome to new school board members Ms. Pierson and Mr. Klingner!

SIMLEY STUDENTS PITCH BUSINESS IDEAS



Simley High School students in the TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) Business and Entrepreneurship course participated in a "Shark Tank"-style pitch event this January. Students

presented their business ideas to a panel of five local entrepreneurs for the chance to win a micro-internship and grant money.

The event was hosted by Rêve Academy, a non-profit organization that helps students build marketable skills for the modern workplace. The panel of judges included:

- Tim Farrow, Business Advisor, Small Business Team and Vice President and Business Access Advisor at U.S. Bank
- Cynthia Hanson, Assistant Vice President, Senior Scrum Master at U.S. Bank
- Dave Lundy, Owner of Evolve Workspace
- Nikos Raleigh, Senior Vice President, Head of Integration, Small Business Digital Team at U.S. Bank
- Jeremy Segal, CEO of Proozy.com

Students prepared presentations ahead of time, and each student had about 15 minutes to pitch their idea. The panelists then gave the students feedback and asked questions.

Simley students pitched a technology device shopping app, a company for people who need help moving furniture within their home, and an app that connects young workers with people looking for help on small jobs.

Students walked away with a chance to continue their business with Rêve Academy. The micro-internship is modeled after a corporate "entrepreneur in residence" role, which is popular with companies that empower their own employees to innovate around an aspect of their current business. The TriDistrict CAPS students will receive a \$250 grant and targeted mentorship from professionals who volunteer their time to help students advance their business skills. They will be eligible to do multiple rounds of their residencies as they further develop their businesses. Students will also be able to earn free college credit through the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE credits are transferable to thousands of colleges across the nation.

The TriDistrict CAPS program is for students enrolled in Simley, South St. Paul High School, and Two Rivers High School. The initiative aims to provide a wide range of opportunities for students to engage in authentic, real-world career exploration. The Business and Entrepreneurship course helps students gain a broader understanding of the world of business first-hand from business leaders in our communities. Along the way, students learn professional skills and practice these skills as they develop a professional resume, build a digital profile, and engage in practice interviews, site visits, and guest presentations.

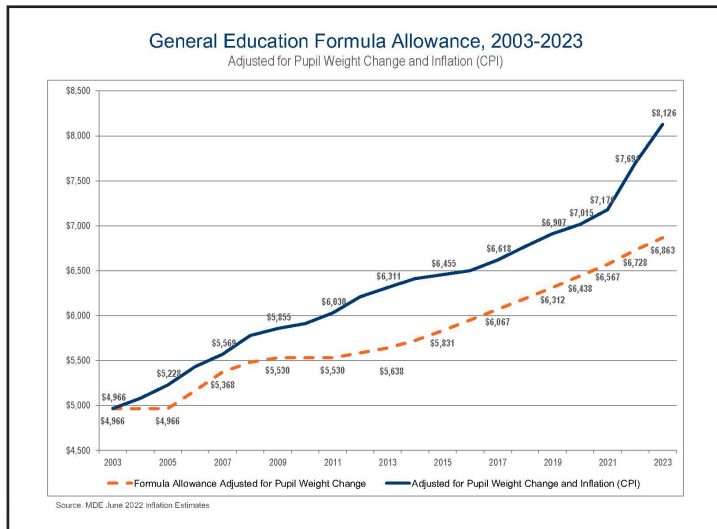
TriDistrict juniors and seniors at Simley, South St. Paul, and Two Rivers who are interested in enrolling in a TriDistrict CAPS course can talk to their counselors. Organizations that would like to learn more about TriDistrict CAPS or partner to train the next generation of business professionals can email TriDistrict CAPS Director Ben Kusch at BKusch@tridistrictce.org or visit www.careercollegeready.org/employers.

ISD 199 Budget Outlook & Factors for 2023-2024

As in other public schools around the state, the Inver Grove Heights Schools budget depends on a number of factors that fluctuate from year to year. Some are easier to predict than others. The school district’s finance staff builds realistic projections based on information about potential revenue each year. The school district uses these projections to plan for reasonable additions, reductions, and continuations with students in mind.

The 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session will set state education funding for 2024 and 2025. A 1% increase on the legislature’s general education revenue formula would equal \$250,000 for ISD 199.

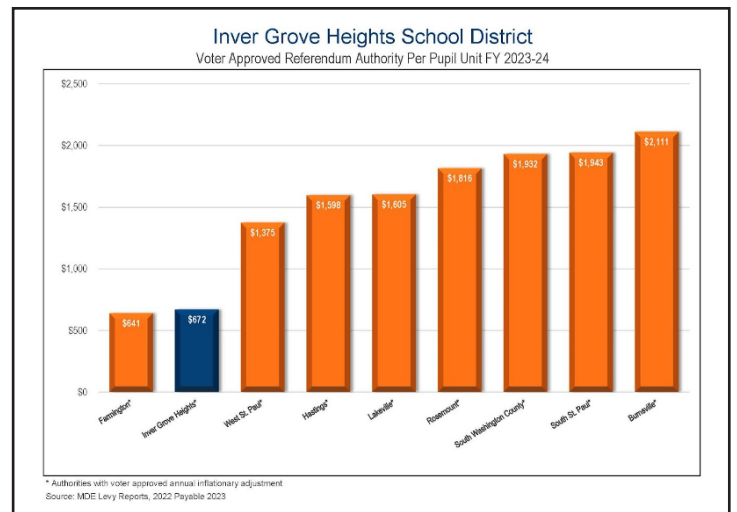
The state’s formula has not kept pace with inflation since 2003. In the 2021 session, the legislature approved a 2.45% increase for 2022 (\$161 per pupil) and a 2% increase for 2023 (\$135 per pupil). To keep pace with inflation, an additional 18.4% (\$1,263 per pupil) would have been needed.



and amounts to \$4.36 million in ISD 199. Dollars for general program operations must then be used to subsidize, or make up for, the underfunding of special education. The same is true for EL programs, which are underfunded by \$603,501 in ISD 199. To bridge the funding gaps, school districts must make budget cuts or increase local referendum revenue.

This school year, the district’s general fund expenditures are expected to exceed revenue by \$37,000. If the state does not increase funding for next school year, ISD 199 will have a deficit of \$2.1 million.

Local voter-approved referendum revenue makes up for much of the underfunding of Minnesota school districts. ISD 199 receives \$671.70 per pupil, or an additional \$2,377,952 to its total annual revenue, thanks to the operating levy that voters approved in 2017. This is ISD 199’s only local voter-approved levy. The following chart compares ISD 199’s voter-approved referendum authority to those of nearby school districts.



Other funding sources, such as special education, English language learner (EL), and capital funds, have also lagged behind inflation. The state and federal governments mandate, or require, school districts to provide special education and EL programs, but they do not fully fund them. The cost of providing special education programs is underfunded by 40%, on average,

As ISD 199 waits for funding information for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, the school district will continue to work to improve its academic offerings and the student experience so everyone who enrolls is engaged and prepared for career and/ or college.

Join ISD 199 Schools for Upcoming Community Events

April 11: Simley International Club Cultural Fashion Show

Join Simley High School International Club students as they showcase authentic regalia and share facts about each featured culture.

April 12: ISD 199 Bridging Band Concert

This districtwide concert will feature the elementary, middle school, and high school bands as they perform separately and as one during a night of music at Simley.

May 16: Inver Grove Heights Middle School Band Concert

Families and the community are invited to see what IGH Middle School band students have been learning.

May 22: Inver Grove Heights Middle School Choir Concert

Families and the community will hear from IGH Middle School’s talented choir students during their spring concert.

Visit www.isd199.org for more upcoming events.

TriDistrict CAPS Director Wins Award for Career Education



Director of the TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program, Ben Kusch, was recognized with a Willis E. Branning Excellence in Youth Employment Services

Award. The award honors organizations, programs, employers, or individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to and effectiveness in preparing young people, ages 14-24, for the workforce.

For the past six years, Mr. Kusch has been building up the CAPS program for TriDistrict students at Simley High School, South St. Paul High School, and Two Rivers High School. With the partnership of local employers, the program provides students with immersive career experiences in a number of fields to help them understand their post-secondary options.

Mr. Kusch's work has involved meeting with employers and community organizations, studying workforce needs and projections, and speaking with students, parents, and teachers. All of these efforts have led to one key understanding: The workforce is changing. In a variety of industries, from manufacturing to marketing, the skills and abilities needed by employers today are different from what was needed in the past.

Under Mr. Kusch's direction, the TriDistrict is reimagining the high school experience by developing new curriculum, offering new classes, forming community partnerships, and redesigning the career exploration and college search process.

Congratulations and thank you to Mr. Kusch! Simley, South St. Paul, and Two Rivers juniors and seniors interested in TriDistrict CAPS career classes should talk to their counselors. Employers who are interested in getting involved in the TriDistrict CAPS program can contact Mr. Kusch at BKusch@tridistrictce.org or learn more at www.careercollegeready.org/employers.

199 Experience Project Aims to Further Welcome & Engage Students

Inver Grove Heights Schools knows that students who feel like they belong, have meaningful relationships, and are engaged at school are more likely to find success in learning. This school year, staff have been brainstorming and planning steps to make the student experience the best that it can be for every student with a project called the 199 Experience.

Staff started the school year with a districtwide conversation to kick off the 199 Experience work. In small groups facilitated by Simley High School students, staff members answered questions like, "How might [ISD 199 staff members] ensure that every student feels welcome, supported, and engaged?" and "How can [ISD 199] ensure that every student receives a world class education?" Over the following months, district leadership

reviewed answers and synthesized them into the objectives that appeared most frequently.

At the beginning of 2023, school and district leaders met with Simley student leaders to finalize the objectives. Staff talked about the objectives with students in small groups and listened to their perspectives, including their experiences as ISD 199 students and their ideas for improvement. The groups then worked together to identify reasonable steps that staff could take to achieve those objectives.

ISD 199 staff will continue working with students on the 199 Experience project to create an achievable action plan that further improves every student's experience at ISD 199.

Community Members Share Their Stories at Salem Hills



World Read Aloud Day is an annual opportunity for classrooms to take time to celebrate the power of reading and sharing stories. Salem Hills Elementary School invited guests from the

community to read to students for World Read Aloud Day this year. Students listened to all kinds of books, including books in multiple languages, and then they had time to ask their guest reader questions.

Guests included city officials like Inver Grove Heights Mayor Brenda Dietrich, IGH Police Chief Melissa Chiodo and some

of her officers, Inver Grove Heights Schools School Resource Officer Ericka Eid, members of the IGH Fire Department, and a librarian from Inver Glen Library. The list of guest readers included even more community members as well as ISD 199 staff and volunteers. ISD 199 School Board Vice Chair and Treasurer Sherry Warrick, Inver Grove Heights Middle School Student and Family Success Coach Courtney Norman, and Salem Hills PTO President Amy Vanderbeek visited classes to read to and connect with students.

After they finished reading, guests answered questions from students. They shared their own stories based on the questions, talking about their careers, their native languages, and more. Thank you to all of the guest readers who took the time to visit Salem Hills students and celebrate literacy and storytelling!

BroadwayWorld Recognizes Inver Grove Heights Community Theatre



After two years of missed performances due to COVID-19 precautions, Inver Grove Heights Community Theatre (IGHCT) returned to the stage with the well-known musical “Rent.” The show drew thousands of audience members and praise from all corners of the community. The production also caught the eye of international Broadway theatre news outlet BroadwayWorld. BroadwayWorld Minneapolis / St. Paul, the outlet’s local affiliate, selected the show for a 2022 BroadwayWorld Regional Award and recognition in six other categories.

Madeline Huss, the vocal director for IGHCT’s “Rent,” and Noah Wilson, the production’s accompanist and pit conductor, earned the 2022 BroadwayWorld Regional Award for Best

Music Direction and Orchestra Performance. Reflecting on the award and production, Ms. Huss gave credit to the performers.

“It felt like a success, honestly, after casting it,” Ms. Huss said. “Like we could have conquered anything.”

IGHCT and its production of “Rent” were also recognized as runners-up in six other categories:

- Best Costume Design of a Play or Musical - Christy Branham
- Best Ensemble Performance - IGHCT “Rent” ensemble
- Best Supporting Performer in a Musical - Aram Eskridge
- Best Direction of a Musical - Quinn Forrest Masterson
- Best Musical - IGHCT “Rent”
- Favorite Local Theatre - IGHCT

The Guthrie Theater won the award for Favorite Local Theatre, but IGHCT was recognized as a runner-up alongside Eagan High School Summer Community Theatre and Theater Latté Da.

IGHCT was established in 2018 after Inver Grove Heights Schools Community Education earned a grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. The theatre’s mission is to provide opportunities for individuals of all ages, whether on stage, behind-the-scenes, or in the audience, to actively participate and/or appreciate the performance of live, high-quality, affordable theater in our community. This August, IGHCT will feature the talent of the community once again in its summer production of “Mary Poppins.” Look for information about auditions, crew positions, and tickets at www.ightheatre.org in the coming months.

Congratulations to Ms. Huss, Mr. Wilson, and all of the cast and crew of IGHCT who were recognized for their outstanding work on the theatre’s 2022 production of “Rent”!

IGHCT productions are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

SPARC
OPEN SKATE

Friday, March 10 • 6:00–8:30 PM
Veterans Memorial Community Center Ice Arena

Open to students who attend
ISD 199 or live in IGH & their
families

Register for this FREE event
at: www.ighmn.gov/register

SPARC Hosts Open Skate on March 10

MOST Spartans CHOOSE healthy activities in a typical week*, and the Inver Grove Heights Spartan Prevention, Advocacy, and Resource Coalition (IGH SPARC) is making the choice easier than ever! IGH SPARC’s next fun, free event will be an Open Skate for students and families of all ages who attend ISD 199 or live in Inver Grove Heights.

IGH SPARC is partnering with Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation to offer a free open skate event on March 10, 6:00-8:30 PM. Register for this FREE event at: www.ighmn.gov/register.

Skate rentals are available on a first-come, first-served basis due to limited availability. Participants are encouraged to bring their own skates and helmet. Children age 11 and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

**Data based on the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey of 1,432 Simley High School and Inver Grove Heights Middle School students in grades 6-12. Funded by MN DHS - BHDH.*

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

#1. MDE SCHOOL FINANCE AWARD

Every year, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Division of School Finance announces winners of the School Finance Award. The award recognizes schools for prompt submission of audited government financial data and reporting criteria. Inver Grove Heights Schools has earned the School Finance Award every year for the past 10 years. The award certifies that ISD 199 is consistently submitting timely, error-free reports, and the reports match audited financial statements with adequate fund balances that show the school district's fiscal health.

#2. REFUNDING

Inver Grove Heights Schools administration works with the municipal advisors from Ehlers, Inc. to continually monitor bond interest rates. They look for bond refunding opportunities in order to save ISD 199 taxpayers money.

Refunding is similar to refinancing a home mortgage. In October 2022, the ISD 199 School Board approved a parameters resolution. The resolution allowed for a future bond refunding

if the true interest cost of a project was expected to be less than 3.30%. This parameters resolution gave the school district flexibility and the ability to act quickly when interest rates decreased. The school district sold bonds on January 5, 2023. The sale date resulted in a true interest cost of 2.53% and a total savings of \$194,000 to taxpayers.

#3. CENSUS FORM FOR NEW FAMILIES

New families, register your baby with the Inver Grove Heights Schools census to help get your child on a path to success! You will receive all Early Childhood Program opportunities, early childhood screening information, and kindergarten registration packets so your child is ready for school!

Visit www.isd199.org/new_families and complete the "Census Form" or call 651-306-7520. If you have moved to or within ISD 199 boundaries, changed your phone number, or had a new baby, you will need to update your 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.

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



Inver Grove Heights Schools
2990 80th St. E.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

Non-Profit U.S. Postage PAID So. St. Paul, MN 55075 Permit 170

ECRWSS
Postal Customer
Inver Grove Heights
55076-55077