

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 boundaries to keep all of our community members informed about district news.

If you have questions about this publication, please contact:

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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.

Simley Ranked as Best High School for Fifth Year in a Row



For the fifth year in a row, Simley High School has ranked in the U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools list. U.S. News & World Report ranks the top 40% of traditional, charter, and magnet public high schools each year. The publication bases its rankings on a combination of factors tied to academic excellence. Simley ranked in the top 15% of Minnesota high schools ranked on the 2023 Best

High Schools list and the top 20% of U.S. high schools ranked on the list. The school also nearly ranked in the top 10% of all traditional, charter, and magnet public high schools in the Twin Cities Metro Area this year.

Simley Excels at College Readiness

U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools are ranked using data from test scores, access to and participation in college-level learning, graduation rates, and more. The publication highlighted that nearly half of all Simley students took at least one Advanced Placement (AP) Exam in 2023. Simley also ranked highly 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. Simley's College Readiness Index ranked in the top 15% in Minnesota and the top 20% in the U.S. The College Curriculum Breadth Index measures how many students took and passed AP exams in multiple areas. Simley's College Curriculum Breadth Index ranks in the top 15% of ranked high schools in the state and the nation.

Simley Strives to Provide Career Exploration

In addition to offering a variety of AP classes, Simley offers hands-on career exploration in technology, health, business, education, transportation, and the skilled trades. The TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program is a collaborative effort between Simley, South St. Paul High School, and Two Rivers High School. It helps students build professional skills and gain experience in career fields first-hand through guest speakers and internships. TriDistrict CAPS offers Healthcare, Information Technology and Computer Science, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Transportation and Skilled Trades classes.

Outside of the TriDistrict CAPS program, Simley students interested in teaching can take Introduction to Urban Education. Students taking the class are concurrently enrolled in Metropolitan State University in St. Paul and earn credit toward a teaching degree and certification upon passing the class. Qualifying Simley students interested in business technology can apply to the Genesys Works Program, which connects students with paid internships as well as career support. Simley students interested in healthcare can also take Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Emergency Medical Responder (EMR), and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) classes. These classes are taught by professionals in the field and allow students to earn certifications before graduation.

Students interested in career exploration can talk to their counselor or visit the district website at www.isd199.org/district/about/career.

Simley continues to expand its career exploration opportunities to help students make informed decisions after graduation and find success in the career that fits them best. Congratulations to Simley on continuing its streak of being named one of the best high schools in the Twin Cities Metro, Minnesota, and the U.S.!

Atheneum Ranks No. 1 on U.S. News Best Elementary Schools List



The Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program, housed within Salem Hills Elementary School, has been named the best elementary school in Minnesota! U.S. News & World Report ranked Atheneum No. 1 in

the State of Minnesota on their 2023 Best Elementary Schools list. Established in 2021, the list ranks the top 75% of magnet, charter, and traditional public elementary schools in each state. The publication considers state test performance, school size, student-teacher ratios, and other similar data when ranking schools.

In 2021, Atheneum placed third. Now, in U.S. News & World

Report's second Best Elementary Schools list, Atheneum ranked first out of more than 800 ranked elementary schools in Minnesota, surpassing the elementary school that placed first in 2021. The school's outstanding proficiency scores earned the school its top spot. U.S. News & World Report emphasized that 92% of students scored at or above proficiency level for math and 98% scored at or above proficiency level for reading.

"We take immense pride in the fact that Atheneum was identified as the top elementary school in the state," Atheneum Principal Tina Willette said. "This recognition is a testament to the collective efforts of our students, staff, and supportive families, all working together to ensure that our students thrive academically."

Congratulations to Atheneum and its school community!

Simley Marching Band Reaches New Heights in State Fair Band Competition

The Simley High School Marching Band finished first in their class and fifth overall at this year's Minnesota State Fair Band Competition! Simley students donned their new uniforms despite the heat and showed the state fair judges what they could do.

"I've never seen a group improve so much since their first performance," Simley Band Director Kevin Robinson said. "Their judging stand performance at the state fair was spectacular."

The Simley Marching Band earned a score of 83.2. They improved their score by 12 points in one year and shattered their previous state fair record from 2018! They won first place in Class B for the first time in school history and earned fifth place out of all 47 competitors. Congratulations to the Simley Marching Band on this outstanding achievement!

TriDistrict CAPS Students Design Human-centered Solutions for Local Businesses



Simley High School, South St. Paul High School, and Two Rivers High School students in the TriDistrict Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) program started off their year with a design challenge

that pushed them to start thinking like professionals. Students learned about human-centered design, or designing a solution based on the client's experiences rather than the designer's experiences. Then they put their new learning into practice alongside local business leaders.

Rêve Academy, an organization that helps students build marketable skills for the modern workplace, introduced the design challenge by teaching students about human-centered design. TriDistrict CAPS then brought in local business leaders to present a problem they wanted help solving, such as getting more volunteers or more applicants for certain positions. Students asked the leaders questions to better understand their experience and began developing solution proposals. At the end of the challenge, each group presented their proposed solutions to their business leader.

Students took what they learned in the design challenge and applied it as they began their individual TriDistrict CAPS classes: Business and Entrepreneurship, Healthcare, IT and Computer Science, and Transportation and Skilled Trades. This fall, they have been learning professional skills and preparing to interview for internships in the spring, keeping in mind what they learned during the design challenge.

TriDistrict CAPS is a profession-based learning program that is a collaboration between Inver Grove Heights Schools, South St. Paul Public Schools, and West St. Paul - Mendota Heights - Eagan Area Schools. The TriDistrict CAPS program is a member of the international CAPS Network of programs that promotes career exploration, professional skills development, and preparation for workplaces and careers of today and tomorrow.

Simley, South St. Paul, and Two Rivers juniors and seniors should contact their counselors to learn more about the program and enroll. Local employers are encouraged to find out what opportunities TriDistrict CAPS can offer them to help train the workforce of tomorrow. Contact TriDistrict CAPS Program Director Ben Kusch at BKusch@tridistrictce.org or visit CareerCollegeReady.org for more information.

ISD 199 Guide to Emergency Responses Standardizes Procedures for Safety

Inver Grove Heights Schools (ISD 199) uses universal procedures so all staff and classrooms use consistent language and take consistent action in response to any emergency situation that could occur in school. The six universal procedures are based on the Standard Response Protocol, which is provided, free of charge, by the I Love U Guys Foundation. The universal procedures were created through the research-based best practices of school administrators, psychologists, public space safety experts, families, and first responders.

ISD 199's six universal procedures are Hold, Lockdown, Secure Perimeter, Evacuation, Shelter in Place, and Severe Weather.



HOLD is used when hallways need to be kept clear, possibly for a medical emergency or other situation. Students and adults stay in their classroom or area. Classroom activities can continue as usual. The hold continues until the "all clear" is announced.



LOCKDOWN is used to secure individual rooms and keep people in place, quiet, and hidden from a possible threat inside the building. Teachers and students hide inside rooms and wait quietly for additional directions.



SECURE PERIMETER is used to keep people safe inside the building from a possible threat outside. All students and adults get inside the building, and all outside access points are locked. Classroom activities can continue as usual inside the building. The secure perimeter is ended by another announcement.



EVACUATION is used to move occupants to a different part of the building or out of the building. Evacuation would be used in case of a fire, for example. Each school has an off-campus evacuation site. More details or directions may be given as part of an evacuation announcement.



SHELTER IN PLACE is used for an external hazard like an external biohazard or flooding. Classrooms are directed to shut doors and windows or move to higher ground based on the situation. Students and staff would move to a predetermined area of the building.



SEVERE WEATHER is used for dangerous weather like a tornado. Students and adults move to the closest designated shelter area and take protective measures, such as "Drop and Tuck" during a tornado.

Signs showing the district's six universal procedures are posted in classrooms, offices, and commons areas throughout the district. Every posting also includes the building address, room number, building emergency number, and emergency exit door number for quick reference in case of an emergency.

Students participate in drills throughout the school year to practice their responses. State law requires schools to conduct 11 drills during the year, including five evacuation (fire) drills, five lockdown drills, and one shelter in place (tornado) drill.

Salem Hills Students Bring Positive Change to Students Around the World

Students at Salem Hills Elementary School and in the Atheneum Gifted Magnet Program increased access to clean water for the Navajo Nation and four schools in Zambia this year. The increased access is a result of service learning students completed at the end of last school year.

Salem Hills and Atheneum have been increasing access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene through their partnership with non-profit organization H2O for Life for more than 10 years. H2O for Life teaches students about the global water crisis and the importance of clean water. Last year, students took what they learned from H2O for Life and organized a Water Fair and Water Walk to address the issue through education and fundraising.

Students created educational carnival games for the Water Fair and sold crafts related to what they learned to teach others while raising funds. Students also participated in a Water Walk

to simulate the nearly one billion people who make a three-hour journey to gather fresh, clean water every day.

Funds gained through the Water Fair and Water Walk were donated to the Navajo Water Project, which is supported by H2O for Life and its implementing partner DigDeep. The project brings clean water to homes across the Navajo Nation in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah that don't have access to water or sewer lines. This was the school's first opportunity to donate funds domestically. Remaining funds were pooled with those of other donors to construct piped water systems in communities around four schools in Zambia. The new systems will provide safe water for 2,660 students.

Great job to students on all of their learning and work to create positive change!

IGH Community Theatre Earns 16 BroadwayWorld Nominations for “Mary Poppins”



Inver Grove Heights Community Theatre brought the family classic “Mary Poppins” to life this summer. The production resulted in 16 nominations from BroadwayWorld Minneapolis/St. Paul, an affiliate of the international Broadway theatre news outlet BroadwayWorld. In the coming months, winners will be selected for 2023 BroadwayWorld Regional Awards.

The IGH Community Theatre production of “Mary Poppins” has been nominated for Best Musical and Best Dance Production. IGH Community Theatre has earned nominations for Best Theatre for Young Audiences Production and Favorite Local Theatre. In addition, the “Mary Poppins” cast

and crew earned the following nominations:

- Best Direction of a Musical: Braylon Lane
- Best Choreography in a Play or Musical: Maeve Mellen
- Best Music Direction and Orchestra Performance: Trevor Woggon
- Best Sound Design of a Play or Musical: Matthew Hayes
- Best Lighting Design of a Play or Musical: Seth Bercich & Jacob Pasiuk
- Best Scenic Design of a Play or Musical: Vicky Erickson
- Best Costume Design of a Play or Musical: Emily Heaney
- Best Performer in a Musical: Bridget Benson (Mary Poppins)
- Best Supporting Performance in a Musical: Jasper Grawe (Mrs. Corry)
- Best Supporting Performance in a Musical: Mars Severson (Jane Banks)
- Best Supporting Performance in a Musical: Lois Estell (Miss Andrew)
- Best Ensemble

Congratulations to all of the nominees, and good luck as BroadwayWorld Minneapolis/St. Paul makes its selections for 2023.

College Board Recognizes Three Simley Students for Outstanding Academics

Three Simley High School students have earned academic honors from College Board’s National Recognition Programs! Catherine Hagel received the National African American Recognition Award, Abigale Lindquist received the National Indigenous Award, and Ana Alvear received the National Indigenous Award and the National Hispanic Recognition Award.

The National Recognition Programs honor the strong academic achievements of underrepresented students, including those living in rural areas, and highlight their accomplishments on college applications. Catherine, Abigale, and Ana were selected for their outstanding GPAs and for earning a score of 3 or higher on two or more AP exams or scoring in the top 10% of PSAT/NMSQT® or PSAT™ 10 assessment takers in Minnesota and within their program.

Students are encouraged to apply for recognition during their sophomore or junior year at www.bigfuture.org. Congratulations to Simley’s National Recognition Program award winners!

2023 School Board Election Results



On November 7, Inver Grove Heights Schools voters cast their ballots to fill four four-year seats and one two-year seat on the ISD 199 School Board. The seats are currently held by Rachel Hanson, Jake Klingner, Darcie Pierson, Matt Schaefer, and Sherry Warrick. Board Member Hanson did not seek re-election, and Board Chair Schaefer suspended his campaign for the two-year seat early in the race. Both have served since 2016.

Incumbents Jake Klingner, Darcie Pierson, and Sherry Warrick were elected to the four-year seats alongside new School Board Member Liz Niemioja. Board members Klingner, Pierson, Warrick, and Niemioja will serve on the ISD 199 School Board for the 2024-2027 term. New School Board Member Shana Dukes was elected to the two-year seat. She will serve on the ISD 199 School Board through December 2025.

All board members elected on November 7, 2023, will begin their terms in January 2024. Visit www.isd199.org/elections for more information about the newly elected school board members.

IGH SPARC 5th Quarter is Positive Celebration for IGHMS



MOST Inver Grove Heights Middle School (IGHMS) students say they DON'T need to drink alcohol or vape to have fun.* To give middle school students a fun, positive way to celebrate Homecoming, the Inver Grove Heights Spartan Prevention, Advocacy, and Resource Coalition (IGH SPARC) and Inver Grove Heights Parks and Recreation organized a 5th Quarter Lock-in event. Nearly 200 middle school students attended for a great night of activities and fun with friends!

The 5th Quarter event was held at the Veterans Memorial Community Center after Simley High School's Homecoming football game. IGHMS students arrived at the community center to find tons of activities for every interest. IGH Parks and Recreation opened its turf, gym, and ice skating rink for kids. Participants played basketball, pickleball, and other games, and IGH SPARC provided inflatable games and pizza for all of the kids.

The event was a great way for students to have fun and connect through positive, healthy activities. Thank you to all of the families who signed their students up for 5th Quarter!

IGH SPARC's goal is to reduce youth substance use in Inver Grove Heights. The coalition organizes events to provide fun, positive alternatives for kids. The group also focuses on using data to correct misperceptions about youth substance use and, ultimately, further reduce underage substance use. Inver Grove Heights parents, students, and community members and Inver Grove Heights Schools staff are invited to join IGH SPARC. Learn more about IGH SPARC and join the coalition at www.ighsparc.org.

**Data based on the 2023 Positive Community Norms Student Survey of 621 IGH Middle School students in grades 6-8.*

Funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services - BHDH.

Seven Simley Band Students Chosen as Top Musicians

Seven Simley High School band students were selected to participate in the Björling High School Music Festival at Gustavus Adolphus College. Students from seven states were nominated by their high school band directors and the top musicians in the upper midwest were chosen. Tabby Eschbach, Kris Gurgel, Collin Momper, Madeline Ngo, Diego Rivas, James Swearingen, and Cailyn Voss were selected to perform. Ahead of the performance, they worked with internationally known composer and conductor Óscar Navarro as well as instrument specialists from the Gustavus Adolphus College faculty. Congratulations to the students for being chosen for this honor!

Pine Bend Celebrates Giving Back With Annual Tradition



Pine Bend Elementary School students collected food for local food shelf and social services organization Neighbors Inc. ahead of winter and the holidays. They gathered nearly 2,000 pounds of food donations in just a few weeks. The annual donation drive not only helps stock the pantry for northern Dakota County residents in need, it also leads into a Pine Bend tradition: the school's annual Barnyard Bonanza Race.

Each year, classes race electronic toy animals during a schoolwide assembly. Classes can earn additional race entries for every 100 pounds of food their class donates. This year, Pine Bend had so many donations that they had two races: one for big electronic toy pigs and one for smaller electronic toy animals like rabbits. Ms. Roberts's second grade and Ms. Miller's preschool classes won this year's Barnyard Bonanza trophies! Thank you to everyone who donated and the students who collected food to help their community!

Fall Sports Recognition

Football

All District

Derrick Dohmen
Jerrod Jones
Brandon Kropuenske
Danny Martin
Jake Stanton

Honorable Mention

Connor Binley
Tim Pietsch
Cash Raymond
Lucio Rivera

Cross Country

All Conference

Niklas Abrahamson
Megan Gullerud
Abigale Lindquist

Boys Soccer

All Conference

Elvis Hernandez Paz
Michael

Hernandez Ruiz
Rodrigo Meza Rojas

Honorable Mention

Brandon Diaz
Ceballos
Zach Hilsgen
Justin Klint

Girls Soccer

All Conference

Ashley Lynner
Taylor Ralston

Honorable Mention

Chloe Gee
Emerson Hocking
Sydney Ries

Girls Swim & Dive

All Conference

Madeline Ngo
Tiffany Nguyen
Hailey Suchy

Honorable Mention

Lauren Oswald
Riley Scott
Margaret Ukestad

Girls Tennis

All Conference

Vanessa Leonard
Leah Thoemke

Honorable Mention

Rose Burrows
Taylor Oster
Makenzi Ries

Volleyball

All Conference

Glissa Gorter
Avery Renslow

Honorable Mention

Makayla Goldschmitz
Gwynn Gorter
Anesya McElmury
Kelsi Ries

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

#1. ENROLLMENTS & STATE FUNDING

Resident students are returning to Inver Grove Heights Schools (ISD 199) from other school districts, private institutions, and homeschooling. Out-of-district students are open enrolling here. Families from outside Minnesota are choosing to move to Inver Grove Heights. Although we want to celebrate that more families are choosing our district, we must remain realistic about our funding.

Like most Minnesota school districts, the state is our largest source of funding, and the amount we receive each year is mainly determined by our enrollment. However, even as we gain enrollments, we lose financial ground to inflation. State funding has not kept pace with inflation for 20 years, requiring our district to dedicate more of the funding we do receive each year toward necessities like utilities and transportation rather than student achievement and our classrooms.

If state funding had kept pace with inflation, ISD 199 would have an additional \$4.6 million in our budget this school year. We are grateful for the 4% increase in the state's general education formula for the current school year, but with 7.1% inflation in 2022 and 6.18% inflation in 2023, it barely kept us afloat. The

formula will also drop back down to 2% next school year.

Every year, we use processes like right-sizing, or matching staffing to student enrollment, to balance our budget. These processes can only do so much before class sizes must grow and the quality education that brought more students to ISD 199 is impacted.

That is why we have had to rely on additional funds from voter-approved operating levies. Maintaining class sizes and quality education with increasing enrollments and lagging state funding is only possible with the support of our community.



#2. OPEN POSITIONS

Get a schedule that follows the school year, great benefits, and an outstanding team! Inver Grove Heights Schools (ISD 199) families and neighbors are encouraged to apply to our open positions. Currently, the district has a few positions in high need: Special Education Paraprofessionals, Special Education Resource Teacher, and Social Worker. Apply at www.isd199.org/careers.

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



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