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ISD 199's Atheneum program one of eight schools in the state to be named a Blue Ribbon School by U.S. Dept. of Ed.

Independent School District 199 - Inver Grove Heights Community Schools - has been informed that the U.S. Department of Education has named the Atheneum gifted and talented program a "Blue Ribbon" school. The Blue Ribbon program was created to identify schools throughout the country whose students are high performing or have exhibited improved academic achievement.

Atheneum is housed inside of Salem Hills Elementary School. The program started with third-, fourth- and fifth-graders in 2002. Since that time, it has expanded to include second-grade. Students invited to participate have been tested and found to be in the superior range of cognitive ability. The program's mission is to provide a self-contained classroom option for students to enhance the daily academic rigor that will motivate and challenge this group of learners.

One reason Atheneum was regarded so highly was that 100-percent of the program's students passed the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) in reading and math during the 2009-2010 school year, which is the year that was analyzed for the award.

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In addition, 99-percent of Atheneum students displayed medium-to-high growth in math and 89-percent achieved medium-to-high growth in reading.

Only eight Minnesota schools received the Blue Ribbon award in 2011. Atheneum is one of two schools in Dakota County to be named a Blue Ribbon school this year. The school will receive a plaque and Blue Ribbon flag at an awards ceremony in mid-November.

Congratulations to the students and teachers in Atheneum who consistently aim high to reach their full academic potential.

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