

199 Reporter

Volume 38, No. 2

December 2010

www.invergrove.k12.mn.us



Inver Grove Heights Community Schools Volunteer Corps

Join the Inver Grove Heights Community Schools Volunteer Corps.

Volunteers are an invaluable asset to our district. Our goal is to increase volunteers in various school settings, based on need, in order to provide the greatest benefit to students.

A list of volunteer opportunities is available on the district Web site at www.invergrove.k12.mn.us/volunteercorps.

Examples of the type of work volunteers could perform include: assisting students with reading or math, tutoring students before or after school, working with ESL students or helping teachers prepare materials for lessons.

All volunteers will receive training to ensure that they understand district policies and are able to assist in the most helpful manner. This program came about as a suggestion from some parents in the community.

Elementary Study Update

The district received helpful feedback at our community input forum that took place in late August.

Participants used instant-response clickers to provide the district with feedback on possible strategies that the district could use to improve ISD 199's elementary system. The strategies were formulated from information gathered at focus groups.

We also received input through a web survey and a paper survey containing the exact same questions that were asked at the input forum.

The district has analyzed the results from the input forum, online survey and paper survey and will be developing action plans around strategies identified as key in promoting student success. These strategies can be found on the district Web site at www.invergrove.k12.mn.us/elementarystudy.

Upcoming Events

Winter Hilltop University Begins
January 10

Pine Bend Movie Night
January 14
6:30 p.m.

Salem Hills PTSA Fun Night
January 17

Simley Financial Aid FAFSA Night
January 20
6:30 p.m.
Simley IMC

Hilltop Healthy Snack Breakfast
January 21
7:15-8:30 a.m.

CONFERENCES

January 24
4-7:30 p.m. (Grades 6-8)
4:30 -8 p.m. (Grades 9-12)

January 26
4-8 p.m. (Grades K-5)
4-7:30 p.m. (Grades 6-8)
4:30-8 p.m. (Grades 9-12)

January 27
4-8 p.m. (Grades K-5)
January 28
9 a.m.-3 p.m. (Grades K-5)

NO SCHOOL (K-5 Only)
January 28

Simley Winter Formal
February 5
7:30 -11 p.m.
Cahill Court



Follow ISD 199 on Twitter at
www.twitter.com/isd199

Follow the Simley Career Center at
www.twitter.com/SimleyCareer

Howl If You Hear Me: A Video Conference with the International Wolf Center

Salem Hills third-graders recently learned about wolves through a video conference learning experience with the International Wolf Center, located in Ely, Minnesota.

A wolf specialist taught students in Mr. Melde's class about wolves' tendencies and the habitat in which they live. Students learned about wolves' eating patterns, where the creatures build their dens, the role of the dominant wolf and more.

The specialist fielded questions from students such as, "How good are (wolves) at catching their prey," "How big can one male wolf get," and "How do (wolves) get their voice to howl?" Find the answers to these questions on the district Web site at www.invergrove.k12.mn.us/wolfcenter.

Near the end of the session, the specialist asked students to draw a wolf den using their memory of how she described the environment. Then a few students showed her their drawings and explained where the den was located in the forest and what materials the wolves would need to build the den. Students also explained why they chose that specific location.

The International Wolf Center loaned the class additional materials for students to use in the classroom outside of the video conference. Some contents inside the Wolf Loan Box included a wolf paw rubber stamp, wolf pelt, wolf photos, wolf howl CD and books.

Video conferencing has been used for virtual field trips and to create discussions and form relationships with classrooms throughout the country.

Questions?

This publication is produced by ISD 199's Office of Communications.

If you have any questions about this publication, please contact Johnny Germscheid, communications coordinator, at 651-306-7105 or germschj@invergrove.k12.mn.us.

Special Education Finances

*The federal government first mandated special education in 1975 when Congress required states to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to all children with disabilities from the ages of 3 to 21. Minnesota started providing special education services in the 1950s, twenty years before the federal government mandate.

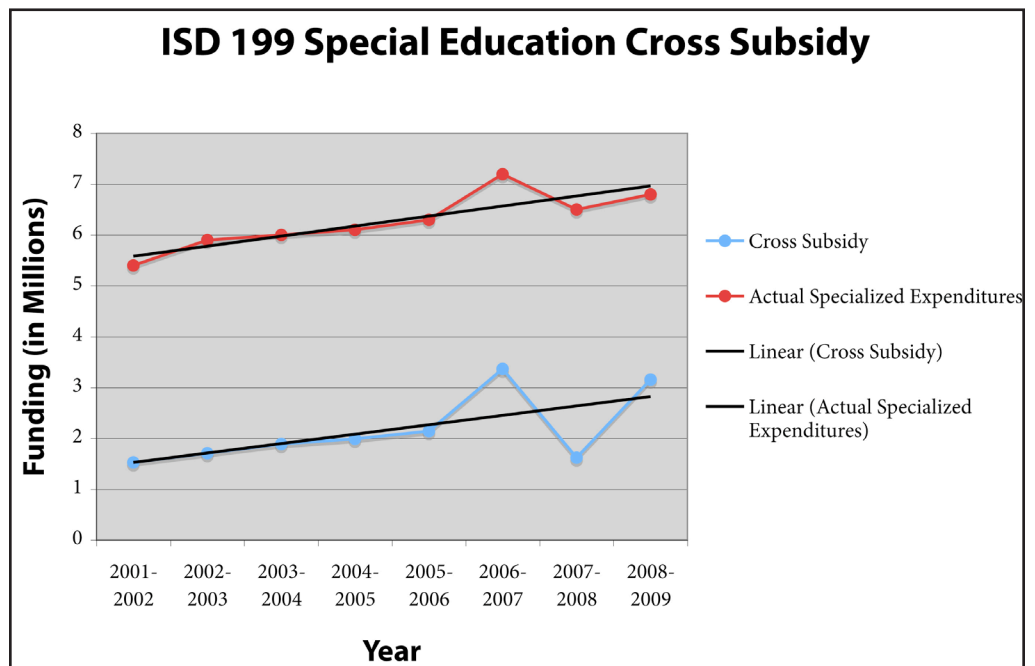
Under the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorization, the federal government commits to providing states with the full 40-percent federal share of special education costs by 2011. The 40-percent commitment, present in federal law since 1975, was designed to help local school districts pay for the excess costs associated with special education. The federal government has never funded more than 17-percent of its special education commitment. If Congress had fully funded its share of special education, Minnesota would have received an additional \$168.8 million for the 2003-2004 school year, the most recent figures available.

The pattern repeats itself at the state level. The gap results from the insufficient appropriation of funds to cover the regular special education formula. The state special education formula calls for the state to provide districts with 68-percent of the salaries of special education teachers, persons providing related services to students, and support service staff providing direct services to students. The state appropriates a fixed amount to cover these costs. When the state appropriation is insufficient, each school district receives a reduced amount of revenue.

It is estimated that Minnesota covers approximately 52-percent of the required services in ISD 199 as opposed to the mandated 68-percent. After federal and state special education funding are taken into account, school districts must subsidize special education in excess of the special education aid. The special education cross-subsidy refers to the amount of general education revenue that a school district must use to narrow the gap between special education funding and actual cost. The need for this special education cross-subsidy is the result of federal mandates, state and federal funding, and the level of services needed by and provided to Minnesota's special education students. Inver Grove Heights' latest cross subsidy increase amount was approximately \$1,542,000 (2007-2008 to 2008-2009). The graph below depicts to the cross subsidy from 2001-2002 to 2008-2009. As a part of the recent Federal Fiscal Stimulus plan (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act), school districts saw an increase in IDEA funding. This, however, is a one time payment and does not recur. Serving an entire community is a responsibility we accept willingly. Funding these commitments remains our challenge.

*The information above is from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

For more information, visit the MDE Web site.



Farm2School

ISD 199 joined a program in October that promotes locally grown foods in schools throughout the district.

Farm2School is a nation-wide program that brings food directly from farms to schools.

The program provides a fresher product, helps out local farmers and cuts down on pollution caused from transportation. Additionally, it aims to make students conscious of what they are eating.

“One of the goals is to get students to try different foods,” said Cathi Krick, Inver Grove Heights Community Schools’ director of food services.

Apples were the only produce item on the menu in the fall that were purchased directly from local farmers.

Both apples from area farmers and local apples bought from Bix Produce Company were available in district lunch rooms in October. Cafeterias featured signs posted above batches of apples purchased from farmers so that students could select the type of apple they preferred.

ISD 199 continues to purchase a variety of locally-grown produce through Bix including: coleslaw mix, apples, cucumbers, green peppers, radishes, green onions and cubed butternut squash.

The district hopes to get more produce from local farmers this coming spring and next fall, but it largely depends on the weather during the growing season.

Publication Costs

It is always ISD 199’s responsibility to use our funding in a most efficient and beneficial manner.

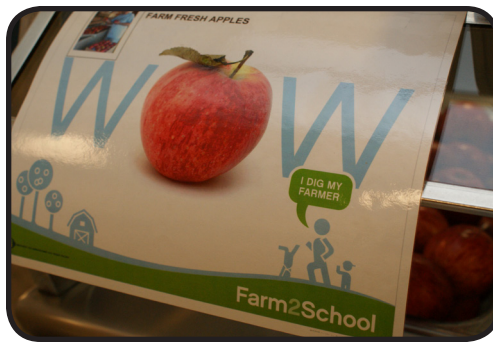
This school year’s calendar was printed in color because the district is opting to distribute one fewer issue of the 199 Reporter. The 199 Reporter will now be produced six times per year. By printing the calendar in color and eliminating one issue of the 199 Reporter, the district will save a couple thousand dollars.

The 199 Reporter is distributed to all residents with an Inver Grove Heights ZIP code (55076 and 55077). It informs the community of district business and accomplishments by students and staff members within our schools.

Each piece that is distributed is labeled Enhanced Carrier Route Walking Sequence Saturation, (ECRWSS). This is the cheapest way to send the publication because the 199 Reporter is added to every address in the route as opposed to only select addresses. Therefore, the work that is required by the United States Postal Service is reduced and in turn, postage is reduced saving the district a great deal of money.

ISD 199 appreciates all of the positive feedback that we have received on the calendar’s new look. We must continue moving forward with our publications in order to remain competitive with surrounding districts and maintain a positive learning environment that will benefit students.

The goal is to keep the community informed about what is happening in our schools and to do it at the lowest possible cost. Being fiscally responsible is what keeps our community and our schools running strong.



ISD 199 Sells off Bonds, Reducing Financial Burden on Taxpayers

Inver Grove Heights Community Schools financed a current refunding of the 2012-2017 maturities of the \$6,805,000 General Obligation School Building Refunding Bonds dated March 27, 2001.

The bonds were initiated in 1996.

The lower rates will reduce future debt service payments by a total of \$424,749.

This will reduce property tax levies payable in 2011-2016 by an average of nearly \$71,000 per year.

Project A.R.T.

Ms. Severson’s sixth-grade class spent some time around Veterans Day drawing pictures to send to veterans and individuals affiliated with military personnel on active duty.

The drawings were submitted to a program called Project A.R.T. (Always Remember Troops).

Project A.R.T. was started by a student in Ohio three years ago. This is the first year Inver Grove Heights Middle School students participated in the program.

Artwork created by Inver Grove Heights Middle School students will be delivered to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, kids in Child Development Centers on military bases throughout the world, and wounded and recovering veterans.

To the Rose Parade

Catherine Casey, mother of Deanna Casey--who was a junior at Simley High School when she was killed by a drunk driver in 2006, has been selected to ride on the Donate for Life Float in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, CA on New Year’s Day.

Catherine was one of 30 people selected to participate and will ride on the float in honor of Deanna’s gift of organ/tissue donation.

Watch the 122nd Rose Parade live at 10 a.m. on ABC, NBC or HGTV.

Simley High School Fall Activities Review

The Simley girls tennis team finished the season with a record of 12-6. The team won in the first round of sections and advanced to the final eight. Three tennis players earned all conference honors: Morgan Short, Meggin Green and Mickie Trudeau. Two girls were named honorable mention: Sydney Short and Maria Dillon. Morgan Short and Meggin Green advanced to the section 3AA quarterfinals in doubles.

Volleyball ended its season with a record of 13-15. The team's 5-9 record in conference play earned them a 6th place finish. The 2010 squad was a very resilient and competitive team, pushing its opponents to four or five set matches in the majority of its contests. The team swept South St. Paul and Richfield, dominated Sibley in the home rematch, had an 8-5 tournament record, and a solid second place finish in the Simley Invitational. Seniors Briana Fairhurst (right side hitter), Brittney Willaert (libero) and junior Emma Russ provided outstanding leadership as captains, demanding a high work ethic and great enthusiasm. Brittney Willaert was selected to the All-Conference team. Honorable Mention selections went to Briana Fairhurst, Emma Russ and sophomore Roda Mena.



The Simley boys soccer team had another outstanding season, finishing the season with a 12-5-5 record. The team reached the section finals and lost a hard fought battle to St. Paul Academy. All-Conference honors were awarded to Juan Acosta, David Mendoza and Tyler Tatarek. Tatarek was also named All-State Honorable Mention.

Girls soccer finished fourth in the Classic Suburban Conference with a record of 11-6-3. The team tied Mahtomedi 1-1 and beat Hill Murray 2-0 on their fields, which has not happened in many seasons. The team graduates ten players this season and will look to the strong junior class to take the reins and lead a young team in 2011. Jill Richgels was named to the All-State team. All-Conference honors went to Danielle Haala, Sydney Knutson and Jill Richgels. Natalie Battis, Tiana Elliot and Ellie Schaaf were named All-Conference Honorable Mention. The team received a Silver Academic Award for achieving a collective GPA between 3.3 and 3.6.

The Spartans football team entered the season with the belief that "One Heartbeat," or focusing on "Team First," would help them achieve their best in the face of success and adversity. Certainly, playing the two perennial conference leaders in St. Thomas Academy and Mahtomedi to start the season put this theory to a challenge and provided early adversity for the Spartans. The team's persistence paid off in the final two games of the season. First, a 25-7 victory over Highland Park and a season-ending fourth quarter come-from-behind 12-8 victory against Richfield on Senior Night at Boche Memorial Field. In those two games, the Spartans offense came together and rushed for more than 600 yards. The Spartans season came to an end with a closely contested playoff loss to Chaska.



Simley's boys and girls cross country teams showed leadership from newcomers and seasoned vets. The boys squad was led by captains Connor Phares, Kyle Nordstrom and alternate captain Cola Jensen. Girls captains were Mary Pringle, Andrea Castillo and alternate captain Cori Nordstrom. Boys awards were as follows: Most improved player - Trevor Schauls; most valuable player - Max Wellens; team contributor - Cola Jensen; outstanding practice worker - Kyle Nordstrom; All Conference Classic Suburban Conference - Max Wellens (3rd Place). Girls awards were as follows: Most improved player - Mady David; most valuable player - Margie Freed; team contributor - Summer Freed; outstanding practice worker - Andrea Castillo.



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