



Simley Theatre Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate in the Simley Theatre program?

Students in grades 6-12 are welcome to participate in the theatre program. Although the program operates out of the Performing Arts Center in Simley High School, Inver Grove Heights Middle School students are welcome to audition for a part in the cast or join the technical crew by registering for the program through TriDistrict Community Education.

When are middle school students eligible to participate?

Middle school students are welcome to audition for a part in the cast or join the technical crew of Simley Theatre by registering for the program through Community Education. The only part of theatre that middle school students cannot participate in is the MSHSL One Act Play competitions. There is a non-competition Winter One Act in which Middle School students may participate. Theatre opportunities will be advertised in the morning announcements and emailed to parents. For those who are new to theatre and want a smaller learning environment, CE also offers A.C.T. (Awesome Children's Theatre) for students in grades 3-8.

Can high school students letter in Theatre?

Simley Theatre has a Theatre Guild, which is a student-led group. It is free for theatre students. Participating in the Guild is part of the lettering requirement. The Guild has established guidelines for students to follow and participation hours that they need to complete, etc., to letter. The lettering requirements for theatre are comparable to other high school's lettering requirements. Students in grades 7-12 are eligible to letter. Students' letters are approved by the Athletic Director upon recommendation from the theatre director.

Who supervises the Theatre program?

Simley Theatre is supervised by the Secondary Youth Programs Coordinator who is under contract with ISD 199 and paid out of the CE budget. This coordinator works closely with the Activities Director to hire a technical director and a fall/spring theatre director. The directors are on an annual contract and must follow all school district policies. They report to the CE Coordinator but are also accountable to Simley High School and ISD 199. All contracts are presented to the school board for approval.

Why have there been so many directors lately?

Simley Theatre had a long-time director, who was also on staff in ISD 199 but retired in 2009. Since then, although we have tried to maintain one director from year-to-year, different circumstances have led to a higher turnover rate than anticipated. It is the intent of CE and AD to hire the best qualified person to fit with the Simley Theatre program and the students.

Why is Simley Theatre under Community Education instead of Simley High School Activities?

The school district was looking for ways to reduce expenses. In 2009, an ECA Committee was formed to review extracurricular activities to reduce district costs. In 2010, the school board approved several non-athletic activities to be cut from the ISD 199 budget with the understanding that they would be moved to Community Education. This change had the least impact on students and activities while providing a savings of \$60,000 to the school district. The following programs were moved to Community Education's ISD 199 Youth Programs:

- Simley Theatre
- Robotics
- German Club
- Spanish Club

Knowledge/Quiz Bowl
Destination Imagination (Gr. 2-12)
Math League
Newspaper
Summer 5th Grade Band
Middle School and High School After-School Activity Bus

What is the difference between Community Education (CE) and the ISD 199 Activities Department (AD)?

CE and AD work very closely to support and meet the needs of students. Both CE and AD are departments of ISD 199, report to the school board, and are accountable to the Minnesota Department of Education. The main difference, which applies to this question, is the funding. CE is under a different funding code. CE revenue is generated differently and is to be used for different purposes (both determined by the legislature). CE cannot operate programs during the school day. CE cannot operate without the school district and is governed by the school board under the guidance of an Advisory Council. Preschool and Early Childhood Family Education are also CE programs, which are district programs that are funded by CE. The district administration and school board are very supportive of Community Education and value the programs that CE brings to the school district and the community.

Why doesn't Simley Theatre offer a "family cap" offered like other Simley Activities?

Because the revenue streams are different and the registration process is different, CE has not participated in the family cap. CE does offer scholarships and works with families who need financial support. The AD is given a budget for activities from ISD 199; all revenue goes to the district's general fund, not to the AD. CE also has a budget, but revenue is generated by board-approved fees charged for programs, classes, etc. and the money stays within the CE program. This is how most of the CE revenue is generated; the class/program must generate the revenue to cover the expenses. However, CE and AD have created a plan to have theatre included in the Simley High School Family Cap beginning 2017-2018.

Questions and/or concerns may be forwarded to the Youth Programs Coordinator at 651-306-7866.

