

Strong Schools. Strong Communities.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 197

Frequently Asked Questions

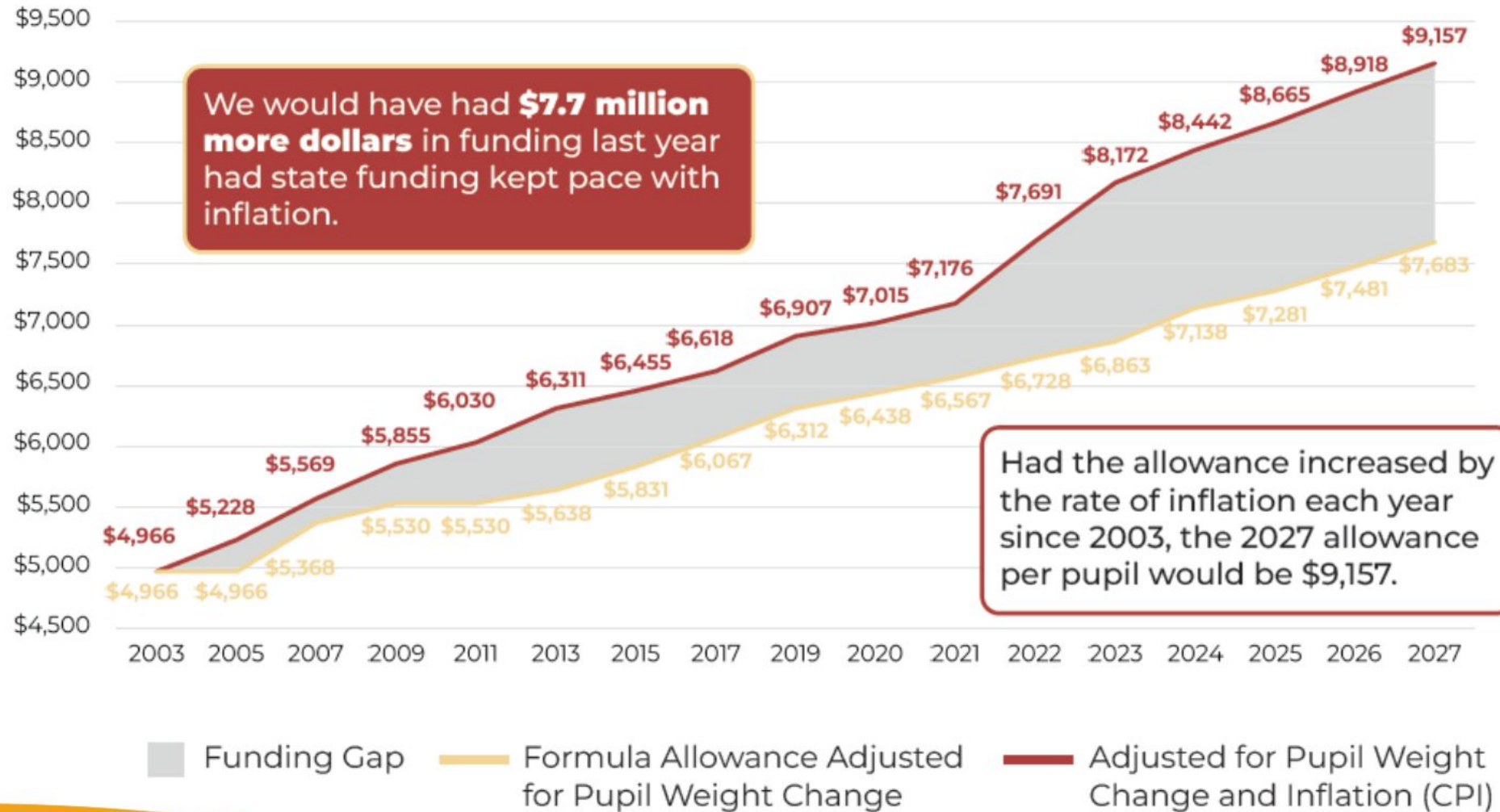


Question:
Why a levy is needed?



General Education Formula Allowance, 2003-2027

Adjusted for Pupil Weight Change and Inflation (CPI)



Question:

**What has the district
already done to address
the budget gap?**



BEFORE ASKING

We didn't start with property taxes

More than \$3.2 million reduced over two years before bringing any question to voters. Nearly all of it permanent structural change rather than one-time patches.

\$3.2M

CUT OVER TWO YEARS

Reductions made before any levy question went to the ballot.

\$2.55M

FOR 2026–27 ALONE

\$1.73M from positions;
\$825,000 from everything else.

One-third less

THAN STATE AVERAGE SPENT ON ADMIN

Per MDE's FY25 report as a percentage of budget*

**The MDE report predates nearly all of these reductions — the next one should show us further below average, not closer to it.*

Question:
What is the tax impact?

The bottom of the slide features two overlapping wavy lines. The top line is a dark red color, and the bottom line is a golden-yellow color. They create a layered, organic shape that spans the width of the slide.

TAXPAYER IMPACT

What it costs an average-priced home

The average home value in School District 197 is \$400,000. Impact varies with your home's estimated market value.

\$14/month

On a \$400,000 home.

\$168/year

The full-year cost on that same home.

Renters pay no direct property tax impact.



The proposed amount was reduced from \$5 million to \$4.6 million after community feedback. Actual impact varies by property.

Question:
**What would the
levy fund?**



LEVY USES

What the levy would fund

The ballot authorizes **textbooks and teaching materials, plus other operating capital purposes permitted by law** — costs the district already carries, in other words...existing expenses in....



Textbooks

Teaching materials and classroom resources.



Maintenance & Utilities

Building upkeep and utility costs.



Safety & Security

Cameras, secure entrances, door access systems.



Transportation & Equipment

Equipment and school transportation vehicles.

CLARITY OF PURPOSE

What This Is — and Is Not

What the levy covers, and what it does not.

This Is Not

- New schools, stadiums, or construction
- New or expanded programs
- A replacement for responsible budgeting
- A permanent fix to school funding

This Is

- A way to pay existing costs differently
- Relief for the general operating budget
- Fewer and smaller future cuts
- A decision the community makes

Question:

**How is the levy different
from the Permanent
School Fund?**



SIDE BY SIDE

Different very different ballot questions

	Permanent School Fund amendment	Capital project levy
Who decides	Every voter in Minnesota	Only voters inside our district
What it costs you	Nothing — no new taxes	About \$14 a month on a \$400,000 home
What we would receive	Roughly 0.2% more revenue (~\$150 to \$200K)	About 5% more revenue (\$4.6 million a year)
Against a \$2M annual gap	Helps a little — about 10% of one year’s gap	Closes it for the near future and rebuilds fund balance, assuming consistent state and federal funding

They are not alternatives. Passage of the statewide amendment would not remove the need for the local question.

Question:

What is the funding gap?



The math...one more time

~3%

**What our costs rise
each year**

Wages, health insurance, fuel,
food, utilities — everything we
buy.

~1%

**What our revenue rises
each year**

Set almost entirely at the
Capitol. Not something we
choose.

~\$2 million

**The distance between
those two lines**

Every year, compounding on
top of the last year.

Had the state's general education formula tracked inflation, we would have roughly
\$7.7 million more this year.

Question:

**Why ask for more than
the funding gap?**



"So why ask for \$4.6 million if the gap is \$2 million?"

The \$2 million isn't a hole we fill once. It's a hole that gets about \$2 million deeper every year.

YEAR 1

\$2M gap

Covered, with room to spare.

YEAR 2

\$4M gap

Roughly break-even.

YEAR 3

\$6M gap

About \$1.5 million short, but we will have built up some fund balance.

YEAR 4

\$8M gap

About \$3.5 million short.

Realistically this buys somewhere around three years — and that assumes nothing gets worse at the state or federal level, which I can't promise anyone. If that makes you wonder whether we'll be back: that is exactly why the real fix is at the Capitol. This buys time to keep fighting for it. It does not substitute for it.

Question:

**What happens if the levy
fails to pass?**



What happens either way

If it passes

- About \$4.6 million a year covers eligible existing costs
- Pressure comes off the general operating budget
- Current classroom supports, programs and services are maintained
- We can rebuild the fund balance to board policy
- Future reductions get smaller and less frequent

If it doesn't

Another \$2 to \$4 million cut for 27-28, just to hold the fund balance where it is. The range depends on the Legislature. Based on where we are, that would likely include:

- Staff reductions
- Larger class sizes, and higher caseloads for staff working with our neediest students
- Reduced student programming
- Reduced transportation services

Question:

What will the ballot look like?



Official Ballot

Judge _____

Judge _____

State General Election Ballot

Dakota County, Minnesota

November 3, 2026

EAGAN P-01 ISD 197

Instructions to Voters:

To vote, completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ●

Federal Offices	State Offices	City Offices Eagan
United States Senator Vote for One	State Auditor Vote for One	Mayor Vote for One
☐ Michele Tafoya Republican	☐ Scott Jensen Republican	☐ Mike Maguire
☐ Marisa Simonetti Independent	☐ Zack Filipovich Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ Mike Supina
☐ Rebecca Whiting Libertarian	☐ Jay Reeves Forward Independence	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Peggy Flanagan Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ _____ write-in, if any	Council Member Vote for Up to Two
☐ _____ write-in, if any	Attorney General Vote for One	☐ Gary Hansen
United States Representative District 2 Vote for One	☐ Ronald J. Schutz Republican	☐ Scott Armitage
☐ Eric Pratt Republican	☐ Keith Ellison Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ Jason Narverud
☐ Matt Little Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ Paul Bakken
☐ _____ write-in, if any	Constitutional Amendments	☐ _____ write-in, if any
State Offices	Failure to vote on a constitutional amendment will have the same effect as voting no on the amendment. To vote for a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word "No" on that question.	☐ _____ write-in, if any
State Senator District 52 Vote for One	Increasing funding to school districts	School District Offices Independent School District No. 197 (West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan)
☐ Brady O'Neil Republican	Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to increase the funding going to all school districts from the permanent school fund, which is a fund that supports school districts without raising individual income or property taxes, effective July 1, 2027?	School Board Member Vote for Up to Three
☐ Liz Rayer Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ Yes	☐ Dwight H Larson
☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ No	☐ Sarah Larsen
State Representative District 52B Vote for One	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ Marcus Hill
☐ Bianca Virnig Democratic-Farmer-Labor	County Offices	☐ Jon Vaupel
☐ Tom Lopac Republican	County Commissioner District 3 Vote for One	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ Laurie Halverson	☐ _____ write-in, if any
Governor and Lieutenant Governor Vote for One Team	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Amy Klobuchar and Ben Schlierer Democratic-Farmer-Labor	County Sheriff Vote for One	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Lisa Demuth and Ryan Wilson Republican	☐ Joe Leko	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Steven Young and Jane Kirby Green	☐ Bobby Lambert	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any
Secretary of State Vote for One	County Attorney Vote for One	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ George "Chip" Tangen Libertarian	☐ Jeffrey Sheridan	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Steve Simon Democratic-Farmer-Labor	☐ Kathy Keena	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Seth Kuhl-Stennes Green	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ Tad Jude Republican	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any
☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any	☐ _____ write-in, if any
	Vote front and back of ballot	

Typ 01 Seq 0053 Spt 01

Front



Back



State General Election Ballot

Dakota County, Minnesota

November 3, 2026

Instructions to Voters:
 Completely fill in the oval(s) next to your choice(s) like this: ●

School District Questions	Judicial Offices	Judicial Offices
To vote for a question, fill in the oval next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a question, fill in the oval next to the word "No" on that question.	Court of Appeals	1st District Court
	Judge 7 - Court of Appeals Vote for One	Judge 9 - District Court Vote for One
☐ Rachel Bond Incumbent write-in, if any		☐ Patrick Goggins Incumbent write-in, if any
School District Question 1	Judge 13 - Court of Appeals Vote for One	Judge 12 - District Court Vote for One
Approval of Capital Project Levy Authorization The school board of Independent School District No. 197 (West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan) has proposed a capital project levy authorization of 4.027% times the net tax capacity of the school district. The additional revenue from the proposed authorization will be used to provide funds for safety and security improvements; textbooks and teaching materials; school transportation vehicles; school facility maintenance; cybersecurity protections; utility service costs; and other operating capital revenue purposes permitted by law. The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately \$4,600,000 for taxes payable in 2027, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for ten years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately \$46,000,000. The projects to be funded have received a positive Review and Comment from the Commissioner of Education. Shall the capital project levy authorization proposed by the school board of Independent School District No. 197 be approved?	☐ Jeanne Cochran Incumbent write-in, if any	☐ Michael D. Wentzell Incumbent write-in, if any
☐ Yes ☐ No	Judge 15 - Court of Appeals Vote for One	Judge 15 - District Court Vote for One
	☐ Kevin G. Ross Incumbent write-in, if any	☐ Lauren M. Johnson Incumbent write-in, if any
	Judge 18 - Court of Appeals Vote for One	Judge 16 - District Court Vote for One
	☐ JaPaul J. Harris Incumbent write-in, if any	☐ Luis Morales Incumbent write-in, if any
	1st District Court	Judge 18 - District Court Vote for One
	Judge 1 - District Court Vote for One	☐ Christian Sean Wilton Incumbent write-in, if any
	☐ Ann M. Offermann Incumbent write-in, if any	Judge 27 - District Court Vote for One
	Judge 2 - District Court Vote for One	☐ Tanya Olympia O'Brien Incumbent write-in, if any
	☐ Krista M. Marks Incumbent write-in, if any	Judge 34 - District Court Vote for One
QUESTION: YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.	Judge 3 - District Court Vote for One	☐ Christopher D. Bates Incumbent write-in, if any
Judicial Offices	☐ Dannia L. Edwards Incumbent write-in, if any	Judge 36 - District Court Vote for One
Supreme Court	Judge 4 - District Court Vote for One	☐ Adam Johnson Incumbent write-in, if any
☐ Sarah Hennesy Incumbent write-in, if any	☐ Tracy Perzel Incumbent write-in, if any	
Associate Justice 4 - Supreme Court Vote for One	Judge 6 - District Court Vote for One	
☐ Paul Thissen Incumbent write-in, if any	☐ Kelly A. Staples Incumbent write-in, if any	
Court of Appeals	Judge 7 - District Court Vote for One	
Judge 1 - Court of Appeals Vote for One	☐ Matthew Schmidt Incumbent write-in, if any	
☐ Elizabeth Bentley Incumbent write-in, if any		
	Vote front and back of ballot	EAGAN P-01 - ISD 197

School District Question 1

Approval of Capital Project Levy Authorization

The school board of Independent School District No. 197 (West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan) has proposed a capital project levy authorization of 4.027% times the net tax capacity of the school district. The additional revenue from the proposed authorization will be used to provide funds for safety and security improvements; textbooks and teaching materials; school transportation vehicles; school facility maintenance; cybersecurity protections; utility service costs; and other operating capital revenue purposes permitted by law. The proposed capital project levy authorization will raise approximately \$4,600,000 for taxes payable in 2027, the first year it is to be levied, and would be authorized for ten years. The estimated total cost of the projects to be funded over that time period is approximately \$46,000,000. The projects to be funded have received a positive Review and Comment from the Commissioner of Education. Shall the capital project levy authorization proposed by the school board of Independent School District No. 197 be approved?

Back



☐ Yes

☐ No

BY VOTING "YES" ON THIS BALLOT QUESTION, YOU ARE VOTING FOR A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE.

Constitutional Amendments

Failure to vote on a constitutional amendment will have the same effect as voting no on the amendment.

To vote for a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word "Yes" on that question. To vote against a proposed constitutional amendment, fill in the oval next to the word "No" on that question.

Increasing funding to school districts

Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to increase the funding going to all school districts from the permanent school fund, which is a fund that supports school districts without raising individual income or property taxes, effective July 1, 2027?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Front

School District Offices Independent School District No. 197 (West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan)

School Board Member Vote for Up to Three

- ☐ Sarah Larsen
- ☐ Marcus Hill
- ☐ Jon Vaupel
- ☐ Dwight H Larson
- ☐

write-in, if any
- ☐

write-in, if any
- ☐

write-in, if any

Question:

**How do our taxes
compare to other school
districts?**



TAX CONTEXT

Where Our Taxes Stand Today

How School District 197 school property taxes compare across the metro today.

#40 of 47

Metro School Tax Ranking

Seventh-lowest total school property taxes among metro districts, on a \$400,000 home.

Lowest

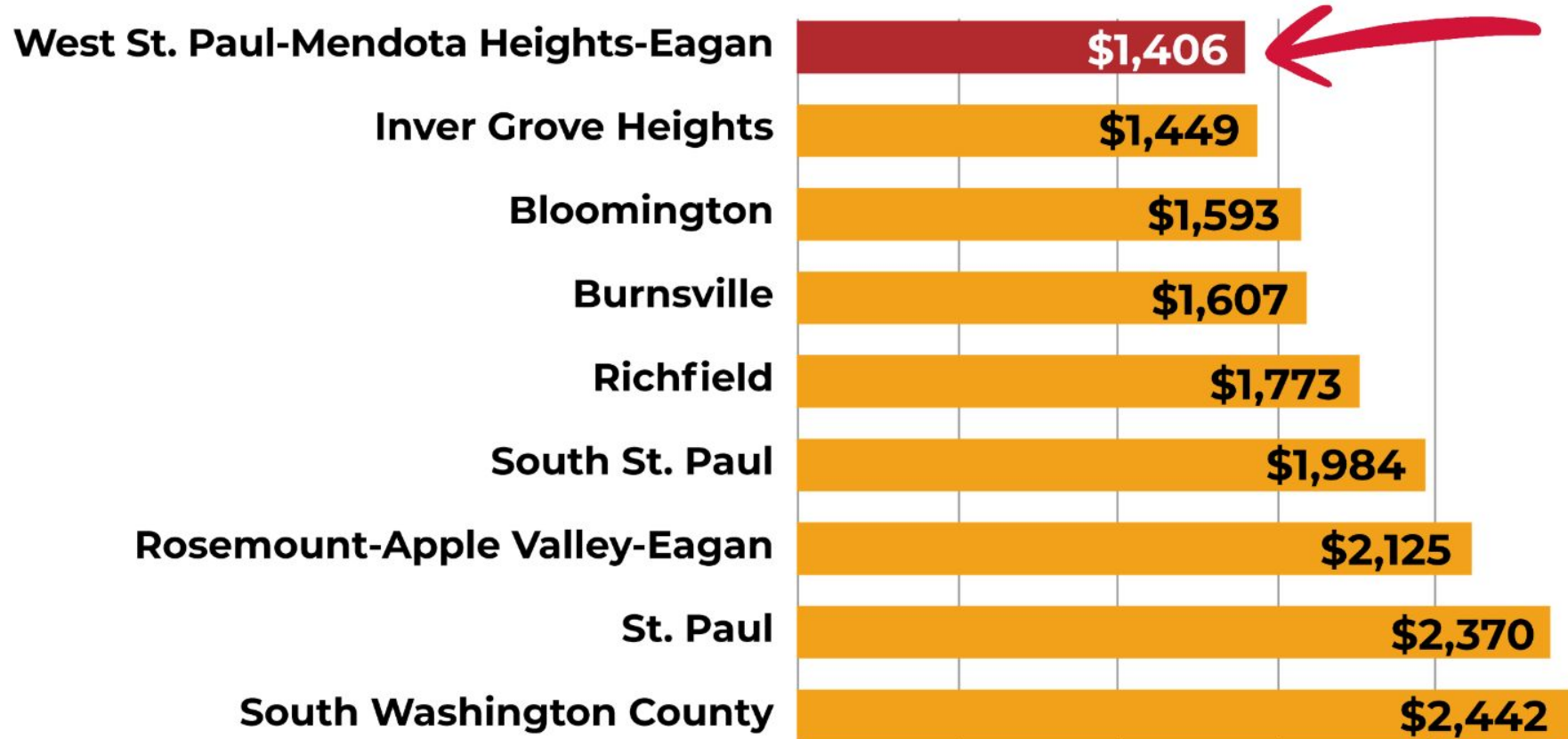
Among Our Neighbors

\$1,406 vs. \$1,449 to \$2,442 in surrounding districts.

 Source: Pay 26 School Tax Report, AMSD comparison of all 47 metro districts.

How School District 197 Compares

Total school property taxes, payable 2026, on a home with an estimated market value of \$400,000



Question:
**What if I have more
questions?**



Get your answers here...

1 **Our website - isd197.org/vote2026**

The most info is here. We keep adding as we get more questions.

2 **Email us - levy@isd197.org**

Whether it's a question or a concern or an idea, we want to hear from you.

3 **Come to a meeting on Sept. 16, Sept. 30 or Oct. 29.**

September 16 - 8 to 10 AM - District Office - 1897 Delaware Ave, Mendota Heights

September 30 - 4 to 6 PM - District Office - 1897 Delaware Ave, Mendota Heights

October 29 - 5 to 7 PM - Thompson Park Activity Center - 1200 Stassen Lane, WSP