

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 14, 2026
ISD 197 District Office, Mendota Heights, MN

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held on Monday, September 14, 2026 beginning at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice.

The meeting was called to order by current School Board Chair Larsen at 6:00 p.m. The following School Board members were present: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel. School Board members absent: Randi Walz. Student Representatives Aubrey McMahon and Clara Rebhan were present. Superintendent Peter Olson-Skog was present.

Also present for the meeting were: Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent; Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; Sara Lein, Director of Special Programs; Brian Schultz, Director of Finance; Sara Blair, Director of Communications; Tom Stukel, Assistant Director of Technology; Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources.

Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Schwab to approve the agenda as presented.

Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0).

Consent Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Steele and seconded by Mr. Vaupel to approve the consent agenda items as presented:

- Approval of the August 24, 2026 School Board Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Administrative Review of Policy 511, Student Fundraising
- Administrative Review of Policy 706, Acceptance of Gifts
- Administrative Review of Policy 906, Community Notification of Predatory Offenders
- Second Reading of Policy 106, Equity
- Approval of July 2026 Accounts Payable Report
- Approval of July 2026 Treasurer's Report
- Approval of August 2026 Wire Transfers Report

Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0).

Student Representatives' Report

Student Board Representatives Aubrey McMahon and Clara Rebhan presented their first report of the 2026-27 school year, highlighting back-to-school activities and upcoming events throughout the district. Their update included elementary family events and learning opportunities, middle school orientation and athletics, and activities supporting students as they begin the school year. At Two Rivers High School, they highlighted the school's recognition on the *U.S. News & World Report* Best High Schools list, student activities and athletics,

and upcoming community events including the Warrior Rally and Warrior 5K.

Recognitions

The School Board recognized three student groups. First, the WEB Leaders from Heritage Middle School along with their advisor, Isaiah Schmidt. Over 80 eighth-grade students applied for mentorship positions in the WEB (Where Everyone Belongs) Leaders and those who were selected will act as positive role-models, helpers, and guides for the incoming fifth-grade students new to Heritage. Next, members of the LINK Crew at Two Rivers High School and their coordinator, Grant Moris, were recognized for their leadership and guidance of the incoming freshman class, which is nearing 450 students. Finally, the Two Rivers High School Band, under the leadership of Erik Christiansen, were recognized for their summertime efforts, travel, and performances across the metro area in the off-season.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Olson-Skog welcomed students, families, and staff back for the 2026-27 school year and highlighted the positive start across the district. He thanked staff for their work creating welcoming environments for students and families and introduced the district's School Board Student Representatives for the year. The report also recognized School Board members in celebration of Minnesota School Board Recognition Month.

Presentation of Middle School Technology Update

Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, and Tom Stukel, Assistant Director of Technology, provided an update on middle school technology initiatives, including the grades 5-6 iPad pilot in which devices remain at school while feedback is gathered during September and October. They reviewed new digital citizenship instruction, the Acceptable Use Policy process for students and families, and Health and Wellness course content addressing topics such as privacy, online interactions, media literacy, AI ethics, and digital well-being. The presentation also highlighted family technology tools including Jamf Parent and the Campus Parent Portal, with next steps focused on gathering feedback, monitoring the pilot, conducting classroom visits and student focus groups, implementing AI guardrails, and continuing analysis of classroom technology use.

Presentation of First Day of School Enrollment Report

Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent, presented the district's first-day enrollment update, noting that K-12 enrollment totaled 5,124 students, 19 students above the projected enrollment of 5,105. Enrollment was above projections at the elementary and middle school levels, while kindergarten and high school enrollment were below projections. Mau noted that enrollment typically changes between the first day and October 1, when MDE captures official enrollment data, and that the district will continue monitoring enrollment in relation to Board-approved class size parameters.

Presentation of Levy Update

Superintendent Olson-Skog provided an update on the district's 2026 capital project levy referendum and reviewed frequently asked questions related to the proposal. The presentation outlined the district's ongoing structural budget gap, more than \$3.2 million in reductions made over the past two years, the estimated tax impact of approximately \$14 per month on a \$400,000 home, and the existing expenses the levy would support, including instructional materials, safety and security, maintenance, utilities, transportation, and equipment. Administration also explained how the local levy differs from the statewide Permanent School Fund constitutional amendment and reviewed the potential financial implications if the levy passes or does not pass. The update concluded with information about the ballot, comparisons of School District 197 property taxes with other metro districts, and opportunities for community members to learn more and ask questions.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Hill to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel
Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0).

The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting of Independent School District 197 will be Monday, September 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. It will be held in the School District 197 District Office Training Room, 1897 Delaware Avenue, Mendota Heights. *Please refer to the district website for possible changes to any meeting times/locations.*

Upon approval by the School Board, official minutes will be available at the District Office, 1897 Delaware Avenue, Mendota Heights, and on the district website. The full meeting materials are available for public inspection at the administrative offices of the school district and on the district website.

Sarah Larsen
School Board Chair

Jon Vaupel
School Board Clerk