

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Regular Meeting and Work Session
Monday, September 28, 2026
ISD 197 District Office, Mendota Heights, MN

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held on Monday, September 28, 2026 beginning at 5:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice.

The meeting was called to order by current School Board Chair Larsen at 5:00 p.m. The following School Board members were present: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz. School Board members absent: Morgan Steele. School Board student representatives Aubrey McMahon and Clara Rebhan were present. Superintendent Peter Olson-Skog was absent.

Also present for the meeting were: Peter Mau; Assistant Superintendent; Sara Lein, Director of Special Programs; Sara Blair, Director of Communications; Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources; Brian Schultz, Director of Finance; Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education; Mark Fortman, Director of Operations.

Agenda

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

*Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz
Nay: none*

The motion carried (6-0).

Consent Agenda

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

- Approval of the September 14, 2026 School Board Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Final Reading of Policy 106, Equity
- Approval of Gifts to the District

*Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz
Nay: none*

The motion carried (6-0).

Comments to the School Board

Three speakers addressed the Board regarding coaching stipends.

Presentation of American Indian Education Plan

Assistant Superintendent Peter Mau, Educational Equity Coordinator Kevin Sheridan, and American Indian Education Coordinator Nell Barri presented an update on the district's American Indian Education Program, which focuses on increasing educational access and academic achievement while strengthening culturally relevant learning opportunities and school climate. The presentation highlighted continued growth of the program, including Native Student Groups at all schools, college and cultural field trips, literacy supports, family engagement, and the End of the Year Celebration and Senior Honoring. The Board also received an overview of the 2026-27 program plan, which establishes goals related to postsecondary preparation, academic achievement, culturally relevant curriculum, student and family participation, and intercultural awareness. The

district currently serves 161 American Indian students and is receiving \$110,500 in American Indian Education Aid for the 2026-27 school year.

Presentation of FY25 Audit

Director of Finance Brian Schultz introduced Jim Eichten of independent audit firm LB Carlson, who presented the results of the district's fiscal year 2024-25 audit, including financial, internal control, compliance, and federal single-audit findings. The district received an unmodified, or clean, opinion on its basic financial statements; the audit also identified four material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting and findings related to federal programs and Minnesota legal compliance. The presentation also reviewed the district's financial position, including a declining General Fund balance, the district's fund balance policy, and the deficit financial position of the self-insured medical plan. The auditor discussed corrective action plans, implementation of new accounting standards, and future audit planning.

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Hill to accept the FY25 Audit as presented.

*Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz
Nay: none*

The motion carried (6-0).

Approval of Pay 27 Preliminary Tax Levy

Director of Finance Brian Schultz presented the proposed 2026 property tax levy, payable in 2027, which must be certified by September 30, 2026. Administration recommended certifying the levy at the maximum amount, allowing the district to accommodate any subsequent adjustments to levy authority made by the Minnesota Department of Education before the final levy is adopted in December. The proposed levy totals \$39,605,090, an increase of \$108,694, or 0.28%, from the prior year; the General Fund levy decreases by 0.04%, the Community Service Fund levy increases by 12.77%, and the Debt Service Fund levy decreases by 0.24%. The Truth in Taxation hearing will be held December 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Mendota Heights City Hall.

It was moved by Mr. Aune and seconded by Mr. Schwab to approve the Pay 27 Preliminary Tax Levy as presented.

*Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz
Nay: none*

The motion carried (6-0).

Approval of Resolution to Close Open Enrollment for Grades 7-9 for the 2026-2027 School Year

Assistant Superintendent Peter Mau presented a recommendation to limit open enrollment for grades 7-9 for the 2026-27 school year due to enrollment levels and class-size considerations. Grades 7 and 8 are at or near Board class-size parameters, while higher-than-projected enrollment in grade 9 has limited scheduling flexibility and created challenges in maintaining the ninth-grade team model. Approximately 20% of students in grades 7 and 8 and 24% of students in grade 9 are currently enrolled through open enrollment; the limitation does not affect District 197 resident students. The Board was presented with a resolution limiting nonresident enrollment in each of grades 7, 8, and 9 to the lesser of one percent of total enrollment at that grade level or the number of District 197 resident students at that grade level enrolled in another district under the Enrollment Options Act. The resolution also requires the district to report to the Minnesota Department of Education the number of nonresident students denied admission as a result of the limitations.

It was moved by Ms. Walz and seconded by Mr. Vaupel to approve the Resolution to Close Open Enrollment for Grades 7-9 for the 2026-2027 School Year as presented.

Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0).

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Ms. Walz to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Aye: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0).

The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting of Independent School District 197 will be Monday, October 12, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. It will be held at the City of Mendota Heights Council Chambers, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, MN. *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