SCHOOL DISTRICT 197
West St. Paul + Mendota Heights + Eagan Area

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education

DATE: November 23, 2026

SUBJECT: Presentation of Proposed Early Learning Fee Increases for 2027-2028 and 2028-2029

BACKGROUND

There are a variety of funding streams that provide financial support for families who want to participate in School District 197's Early Learning Preschool Programs. Families apply for available funds, which are awarded on a sliding scale based on the family income or needs of a student. There are income limits to receive financial support.

The chart on the following page details the current fees for families who do not qualify for financial assistance. These fees are more complicated than simply using a daily rate, given holidays and other non-school days a particular program would not meet. The fees are determined based on the total number of programming days in a year.

The administration recommends a 1.5% annual fee increase across most early learning programs for the next two school years (2027–2028 and 2028–2029). However, we recommend keeping fees unchanged for both the 5-day half-day and full-day programs, as our current rates for these options are already higher than those of surrounding districts. Detailed rate comparisons are provided in the table below. Please note that comparative figures from neighboring districts may reflect estimated monthly averages calculated from their set daily rates. Meanwhile, our extended-day fees remain aligned with standard school-age care rates. Upon Board approval, the updated fee schedule will be published in community preschool brochures and mailed to district households in January.

The district also considered the proposed fee structure against the 4-Way Equity Test. The fee structure continues to allow for equitable access. Students with special needs are integrated into early learning preschool classes at no cost or a reduced cost. Pathways I and II scholarships provide financial assistance to pay yearly tuition for students who meet free and reduced lunch qualifications. In addition, school readiness dollars provide transportation and tuition support for students who demonstrate a financial need. Registration materials and financial assistance forms are translated, and interpreters are provided to support communications. Individual support for families who are English language learners is provided to explain programs and preschool options.

WSP 2026-2027	WSP 2027-2028	WSP 2028-2029
Registration Fee = $60.00	Registration Fee = $60.00	Registration Fee = $60.00
Monthly Rate (9 payments) 2 day - $185.00 3 day - $253.00 5 day - $420.00 All day - $980.00	Monthly Rate 2 day - $188.00 3 day - $257.00 5 day - $420.00 (no increase) All day - $980.00 (no increase)	Monthly Rate 2 day - $191.00 3 day - $261.00 5 day - $420.00 (no increase) All day - $980.00 (no increase)
Extended AM or PM -$14.00/day	Extended AM or PM - $14.25/day	Extended AM or PM - $14.50/day

Data from other districts:

Inver Grove Heights 2026-2027	ISD 196 2024-2025
Registration Fee - $00.00	Registration Fee - $00.00
Monthly Rate 2 day - $152.00 3 day - $203.00 5 day - $328.00 All Day - $907	**Monthly Rate** 2 day - $150.00 (2 hr/day vs 2.5 in comparison districts) 3 day - $255.00 5 day - $350 All day - $850
Extended Day - $12.50/day	Extended AM - $285/month

South Washington County 2026-2027	Robbinsdale 2026-2027
Registration Fee - $85.00	Registration Fee - $30.00
Monthly Rate 2 day - $260.00 3 day - $320.00 5 day - $440.00 All Day - N/A	Monthly Rate 2 day - $215.00 3 day - $300 5 day - $450 All Day - N/A
Extended Day - N/A	Extended Day - N/A

St. Louis Park 2026-2027	South St. Paul 2026-2027
Registration Fee - $75	Registration Fee $55.00
Monthly Rate 2 day - $220.00 3 day - $295.00 5 day - $455.00 All Day - $1,264 (7:00 AM-6:00 PM)	Monthly Rate 2 day - N/A 3 day - $212 5 day - $355 All Day - $710
Extended Day - Included in all-day price	

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

No resolution is needed at this time. This fee increase proposal will be brought back for approval at a future board meeting.