

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Regular Meeting
Monday, June 2, 2025
Mendota Heights City Hall, Council Chambers

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held on Monday, June 2, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice.

The meeting was called to order by current 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 and Randi Walz. Superintendent Peter Olson-Skog was present.

Also present for the meeting were: Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent; Sara Lein, Director of Special Education; Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources; Mark Fortman, Director of Operations; Dave Sandum, Director of Technology; and Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education.

Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Steele and seconded by Mr. Aune to approve the agenda as presented.

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Consent Agenda

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

- Approval of the May 19, 2025 School Board Regular Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Second Reading of Policy 603, Curriculum Development

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Listening Session Report

Board member Schwab stated that one individual attended the listening session to recommend updates that are needed to the Two Rivers High School auditorium.

Recognitions

Superintendent Olson-Skog introduced several student recognitions. Annabelle and Malea, from the CAPS Health Care Program, were introduced. While on a work shift together, they encountered someone in cardiac arrest and immediately used their training to perform CPR and call 911 until help arrived. Their actions earned praise from first responders. The Two Rivers High School female and male athletes of the year, Claire Stein and Quinn Keyes, were introduced. Claire is a three-sport athlete excelling in soccer, Nordic skiing, and track and field, earning multiple varsity letters, conference honors, all while maintaining a 4.187 GPA. Quinn is a

letter winner in Cross Country, earned All-Conference honors, and qualified for the State competition. In Nordic Skiing, Quinn achieved All-Conference status while also being named Most Improved Player. Quinn also participated in Track earning three letters, achieving All-Conference, all while maintaining a 3.89 GPA. The Two Rivers Lightning Turtles robotics team qualified to participate in the FIRST Robotics World Championship in Houston. This was the first time the team has earned a spot at the world championship. Students included: Carly Buzzell; Jesus Enriquez Camacho; Evan Hansen; Wesley Hendel; Ava Herrera; Zev Jackman; Camille Lamb; Samuel Larson; Jude Meyer; Brendan Monroe; Carrington (Azalea) Smith; Kaia Smith; Hannah Trudeau; Julia Trudeau; and Amelia Warneke. Some of the cast and crew from the Two Rivers High School spring musical, Mean Girls, were introduced along with their list of awards from Hennepin Theatre Trust's Spotlight Education program. The theater department earned an "Achievement in Theater" award which means the cast has been invited to perform at the Spotlight Showcase at the State Theatre on June 9. Students included: Thomas Larsen; Signe Kearse; Elise Moga; Dejanae Merriman; Ari Ernst; Lucy Van Moorlehem; Zoe Barbagallo; Selma Olsen; Amanda Morales-Pirela; Ayden Hahnfeldt; Miranda Arnold; Ayla Baussan; Annika Lechowich; Sun Van Winkle; and Heaven Gordon. Speech team students were introduced who had outstanding performances at the National Individual Events Tournament of Champions earlier this month—Andrea Carreras, Patrick Bohmbach and Amelia Elgstuen. Amelia finished 54th of 190 competitors in Informative Speaking, Patrick finished 9th of 213 competitors in Original Oratory and Andre was the tournament champion in Impromptu Speaking. Students who have participated in a state tournament, both in track and field and in golf, were introduced. Track and field students were: Navie Sexton; Max Molinaro; Claire Stein; Kaliyah Binns; Izzy Williams; Michaela Smith; Sophia Agan; Maria Becker; Charlotte Chandler; Josie Miller; Haakon Hanson; Quinn Keyes; Riley Tillander; Niah Fernandes; David Rice; Taylor Taurinkas; and Cora Frey. Golf athletes included: Briana Simek and Kaya Skog. This year's exchange students were introduced. Two Rivers High School was awarded a certificate for becoming a Medallion Member school by hosting U.S. Department of State-sponsored students. Students included: Maite Pollex; Ahmad Rasheed; and Mariana Semeniuk.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Olson-Skog presented his report. The Class of 2025 high school graduation ceremony is complete. Graduating seniors had the opportunity to return to their elementary school alma maters, where their educational journey began. This is a tradition in School District 197. Students paraded through the hallways and reconnected with former teachers. The district's team of Cultural Liaisons, Translators, and Interpreters hosted a community event at Thompson Park last week to celebrate the end of another successful school year. Families enjoyed food, games, and the chance to connect with their school liaisons. June is National Pride Month. School District 197 strives to be inclusive and provide safe spaces for our students, families, and staff identifying as 2SLGBTQ+ and celebrates the messages of inclusion, diversity, love, and acceptance that Pride Month seeks to achieve.

Review of FY 26 Budgets and Revisions to FY 25 Budgets

Scott LeSage of CESO (Center for Effective School Operations), presented revisions to the FY 25 budgets and information on the FY 26 budgets. Administration will be asking for approval in two areas: modifications to the FY25 budgets (July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025); and the proposed FY26 budgets (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026). Budgets in both fiscal years include the General Fund budget, the Food Service budget, the Community Education budget, the Capital Project budget, and the Debt Service budget. The required deadline for budget approval is June 30.

Proposed FY25 Revisions

The FY25 Revised General Fund Budget (Fund 01) reflects increased revenue from the FY25 Preliminary budget, primarily driven by higher Special Education Aid and State Aids, with smaller gains in Federal Aid, Local Revenues, and Property Tax. On the expenditure side, salary and benefit adjustments were made from the FY25 Preliminary Budget to align with year-end projections. The district continues to experience rising costs in

Special Education and purchased services, including contracted transportation and special education support services.

Proposed FY26 Budget

The FY26 Preliminary General Fund Budget projects revenue growth, supported by a 2.74% increase in the General Education formula, anticipated growth in Special Education revenue, and a notable increase in Local Property Tax revenue. Expenditures are expected to rise, primarily due to increases in salaries, benefits, and moderate growth in purchased services. Projected General Fund revenue for FY 26 is \$106,113,243 while expenditures are projected at \$104,856,416. The projected total ending fund balance for the start of the year is \$4,673,534. Projected revenue for the Food Service fund budget is \$5,015,300 with expenditures at \$4,933,187 with a total ending restricted fund balance of \$907,788.58. Projected revenue for the Community Education fund budget is \$5,722,582 with expenditures at \$5,835,586 with a projected total ending fund balance of \$875,729.78. Projected revenue for the Capital Project fund budget is \$20,000 with expenditures at \$8,978,837 with a total ending restricted fund balance of \$5,165,453. Projected revenue for the Debt Service fund budget is \$11,860,687 with expenditures at \$11,499,807 with a total ending restricted fund balance of \$2,299,077.

Non-General Fund highlights included:

- The Community Education Fund (Fund 04) and Food Service Fund (Fund 02) are projected to increase fund balances in FY25.
- The FY26 Food Service Fund continues on a positive path, with revenues exceeding expenditures.
- The FY26 Community Education Fund anticipates expenditures exceeding revenues due to a planned chargeback to support General Fund cost containment.
- The Construction Fund (Fund 06) includes updated allocations from the recent bond issue, supporting air quality projects slated for late FY25 and FY26.

Factors that could decrease projection accuracy include uncertainty on federal funding, changes in student enrollment, changes in student needs and programming, changes in reimbursement calculations, legislative changes to the formula allowance, unfunded mandates, and future staff negotiations.

These budgets will be brought back to the board at their June 16, 2025 meeting for approval.

Action Item – Approval of ISD 917 FY 26 Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Levy/Budget

Mark Fortman, Director of Operations, and Scott LeSage of CESO, presented the ISD 917 FY 26 long-term facilities maintenance levy/budget. As a member district, School District 197 is required to approve the long-term facilities maintenance program budget for Intermediate District 917. Each member district approves its proportionate share of the projects in 917's long-term facilities maintenance revenue application. District 197's proportionate share is \$50,694.18. This amount will be included on the property tax levy and paid to ISD 917 after collection from the county.

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Vaupel to approve ISD 197's proportionate share of ISD 917's Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Levy/Budget as presented.

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Update on LiveGreen Sustainability Program

Mark Fortman, Director of Operations; Geno Mazzali, Assistant Director of Operations; and Meghan Bernard, Sustainability Manager, presented an update on the LiveGreen Sustainability Program. LiveGreen is the

district's sustainability program that promotes energy saving, recycling, and other green initiatives throughout the district. Each school helps implement low-cost or no-cost energy efficiency strategies to reduce energy, promote recycling and composting, and focus on conserving resources.

This summer, solar projects will be completed at Friendly Hills, Heritage and Two Rivers. This will reduce electric costs and emissions and will lower utility bills by \$1,252,893 over the 25 years life of the panels. Solar garden subscriptions generate 2,988 kW which has provided the school district with over \$1.2M in credit refunds since 2020. Since 2023, water use is down 42% due to smart irrigation while energy costs are down by 8%. This amounts to savings for the school district. Due to the recycling and organics efforts, 40% of waste has been diverted away from the landfills. The team hopes to increase that percentage with additional efforts. In 2024-2025, the program received five grants totaling over \$875,000. With the work of the LiveGreen program, every school in School District 197 has earned "Energy Star" ratings from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy. Sustainability awareness campaigns and events happen throughout the school year. These events are supported by the district sustainability manager along with the schools and community LiveGreen leaders and teams.

TriDistrict Community Education Advisory Council Update

Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education, presented an update on the TriDistrict Community Education Advisory Council. By law, the school district must have this advisory committee. This combined committee for the West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan, South St. Paul, and Inver Grove Heights school districts supports and promotes the philosophy of lifelong learning and strong communities. Members include community members, community organizations, district parents program representatives, and a school board member who advise the Community Education department staff in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of departmental activities and programs. Meetings this year focused on recruitment, registration process, marketing materials, MDE Community Education State Report, youth focus group data and the 25-26 Community Education budget. Due to the recruitment efforts, both membership and attendance have increased.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Hill to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

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

The motion carried (7-0).

The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting of Independent School District 197 will be Monday, June 16, 2025 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