

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Meeting and Work Session
Monday, May 19, 2025
ISD 197 District Office, Mendota Heights, MN

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held Monday, May 19, 2025, at the ISD 197 District Office, 1897 Delaware Avenue, Mendota Heights, MN, beginning at 5:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice.

Chair Larsen called the meeting to order at 5:00 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. Student Representative Patrick Bohmbach was present and Nawal Hassan was absent.

Also present for the meeting was Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent; Sara Lein, Director of Special Services; Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources; Sara Blair, Director of Communications; Dave Sandum, Director of Technology; and Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education.

Agenda

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

- Approval of Minutes of May 5, 2025 Regular School Board Meeting
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Administrative Review of Policy 606.1, Reconsideration of Textbooks or Other Instruction Materials
- Final Reading of Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools
- Approval of Memorandum of Agreement between School District 197 and Riverland Community Health for a School-Based Health Center
- Approval of Field Trip for Branch Out Transition Program
- Approval of February 2025 Accounts Payable Report
- Approval of February 2025 Treasurer's Report
- Approval of February 2025 Wire Transfers Report
- Approval of March 2025 Accounts Payable Report
- Approval of March 2025 Treasurer's Report
- Approval of March 2025 Wire Transfers Report

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Comments to the School Board

Two district parents addressed the School Board advocating for repairs to the high school auditorium, stage/facilities, and technology equipment.

FY 2023-2024 Audit Presentation

Scott LeSage of CESO (Center for Effective School Operations) presented the FY 2023-2024 district audit results. The report was compiled with the help of LB Carlson (formerly Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosovich, and Co.). An independent firm must prepare an annual audit of the district's general fund. LB Carlson prepares and submits it to the Minnesota Department of Education and the State Auditor's office. During the audit process, LB Carlson also reviews the student activity funds and financial management, ensuring the district has the proper procedures in place.

The school district is wrapping up the work and addressing any final questions with LB Carlson. The district expects to receive an unmodified or "clean" opinion on the basic financial statements, which is the highest opinion an auditor can provide. The district has received this rating in previous audits. Physical copies of the report will be available in June. In past audits, the auditors found the district's internal controls to be well-designed, implemented, and functioning correctly. One of the audit's regular findings (and again this year) is related to the segregation of duties in the district's finance and payroll departments. Though this finding could be addressed by hiring additional staff, the district continues to prioritize resources to the classroom and addresses this finding through additional process controls. Additional findings were related to the prompt payment of invoices and internal controls over suspension and debarment. When complete, the full audit report will be available on the district's website at www.isd197.org/district/finance.

Curriculum Review Update – Foundational Curriculum

Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, and Katie Quinlan, Elementary Curriculum and Gifted and Talented Coordinator, presented an update on the Foundational Curriculum review. The review team consisted of K-2 teachers, instructional coaches and an EL/SPED teacher. As part of their review process, the team reviewed READ Act curriculum review rubrics and approved curriculum materials; conducted grade level evaluations of current literacy schedules and instruction routines; adjusted the *Being a Reader* curriculum to accommodate for Foundational skills; participated in ongoing training; completed multiple implementation surveys; reviewed FAST fall and winter screening data; observed Foundational Curriculum in other classrooms; and worked collaboratively to provide implementation feedback.

The three foundational programs that were reviewed were Functional Phonics, Magnetic Reading and UFLI. Magnetic Reading was selected by the team. Magnetic can be implemented with less variability from classroom to classroom. It offers flexible scheduling options to create a comprehensive curriculum with *Being a Reader*. Full curriculum implementation will occur in the 25-26 academic year. Summer training opportunities will be provided to K-2 teachers. The team will revise the *Being a Reader/Being a Writer* scope and sequence. Ongoing training opportunities will be provided throughout the year to address use of assessment and differentiation options.

First Reading of Policy 603, Curriculum Development

Cari Jo Drewitz, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, presented a first reading of Policy 603, Curriculum Development. The policy was last reviewed in January of 2022. The district's current policy was reviewed against MSBA's model policy and the recommended changes are to align with new state statute. The district is already in compliance with these updates. The new language in policy asks the committee to recommend the following:

- Strategies to ensure the curriculum is rigorous, accurate, anti-racist, culturally sustaining, and reflects the diversity of the student population
- Strategies to ensure that curriculum and learning and work environments validate, affirm, embrace, and integrate the cultural and community strengths of all racial and ethnic groups

The advisory committee has developed a rubric to help them do this specific work. Some specific examples of how the committee has used the 4-Way Equity Test this year in their work include:

- Support the development of equitable and engaging Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, offering work-based learning, college credit, and industry certifications for all students
- Prioritize the exploration of Direct Student Supports that address barriers faced by underrepresented student groups, such as how to offer and expand student tutors, middle school FLEX support, and refining transition procedures to equitably benefit students of color, EL students, and students with IEPs
- Provide input on the local literacy plan, specifically with the communication that is provided to parents of students who are at risk of not reading at grade level

This policy will be brought back to a future meeting for a second reading.

Superintendent End of Year Report on Goal Attainment

Superintendent Olson-Skog, and Libby Huettl, Principal of Somerset Elementary, presented the end of year report on the 24-25 Superintendent goals. The goals were initially approved by the board at their September 9, 2024 meeting. The goals and updates are as follows:

Goal 1 - The superintendent will oversee the implementation of operational plans in support of the strategic plan.

- **Goal 1a** - The superintendent will oversee the implementation of operational plans in support of the **social and emotional learning** focus area.
- **Goal 1b** - The superintendent will oversee the implementation of operational plans in support of the **equitable systems and support** focus area.
- **Goal 1c** - The superintendent will oversee the implementation of operational plans in support of the **career exploration and preparation** focus area.

This goal is complete. The operational plans included 21 implementation targets with 60 objectives. The board has received six progress updates on these targets over the course of the school year (two per focus area). The administration is pleased to report the completion of the district's implementation targets for the 2024-25 school year.

Goal 2 - The superintendent will increase staff engagement and feedback through one-on-one interviews with all district staff within 4-6 years. Each year, this will require approximately 150-200 interviews.

This goal is complete. 165 interviews were completed over the course of the year. This included 85 interviews of staff members who were new/newer to the school district. The remaining 80 interviews

were of staff members who were celebrating a 10, 15, 20, 25, 30 or 35 years of service milestone and/or retiring.

Goal 3 – The superintendent will increase alignment and coordination among and between district and site leaders. Specific strategies include implementing the Principal Support Framework and increasing feedback cycles for district and site leaders.

This goal is complete. The Principal Support Framework (PSF) Team continues to lead the development of systems that increase strategic partnerships between principals and the district office along with leadership development initiatives to increase principals’ skills as equity-driven instructional leaders. The PSF team meets regularly both internally and with similar teams from other metro districts, supported by faculty from the University of Minnesota and the University of Washington. This work has led to a variety of initiatives that are intentionally co-created and/or co-selected with site and district leaders working collaboratively. Examples include: a new rubric for principals, embedding cultural competence into their instructional leadership; a refined Principal PLC/CT; Summer Day-Long Professional Development Events; the Minnesota Instructional Leadership Academy; co-created plans to support the most critical principal tasks (Leadership Development, Principal PLCs, Principal Rubrics); designated trusted leads for on-demand feedback; “Speed Dating” feedback rounds; time studies; and increased presence of district leaders in buildings

It was moved by Ms. Steele and seconded by Mr. Vaupel to approve the completion of the 24-25 Superintendent goals and district implementation targets.

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Aune to adjourn the meeting at 6:20 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 on Monday, June 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. It will be held at the City of Mendota Heights Council Chambers, 1101 Victoria Curve, Mendota Heights, MN.

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