

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Regular Meeting
Monday, November 24, 2025
ISD 197 District Office, Mendota Heights, MN

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held on Monday, November 24, 2025 beginning at 5:00 p.m. pursuant to due notice.

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

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

Agenda

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

Aye: Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel, Marcus Hill, Randi Walz

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0)

Consent Agenda

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

- Approval of the November 10, 2025 School Board Regular Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Administrative Review of Policy 410, Family and Medical Leave
- Administrative Review of Policy 714, Fund Balance
- Final Reading of Policy 501, School Weapons Policy

Aye: Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel, Marcus Hill, Randi Walz

Nay: none

The motion carried (6-0)

Comments to the School Board

There were no comments to the School Board.

American Indian Education Plan Update

The Board received an update on the American Indian Education Program. Presented by Kevin Sheridan, Educational Equity Coordinator, and Nell Barri, American Indian Education Coordinator, the report highlighted continued efforts to expand access, academic support, and culturally affirming programming for American Indian students. Staff reviewed the program's dual focus on increasing academic achievement and improving school climate through culturally relevant materials and activities. Updates included recent accomplishments such as the establishment of Native Student Groups across multiple schools, participation in cultural and college

readiness events, and expanded family engagement offerings. The program's 2025-26 goals outline targeted strategies to support postsecondary preparation, enhance literacy outcomes, create consistent affinity spaces, increase family participation, and strengthen intercultural awareness districtwide. Membership of the American Indian Parent Advisory Committee (AIPAC) for the school year was also shared.

First Reading of Policy 905, Advertisements

A review of Policy 905, Advertising, confirmed that the current policy remains aligned with district processes and matches MSBA's model policy, with no revisions recommended. Although no changes to the policy language are proposed, it is being presented for three readings due to the addition of an addendum outlining board-approved advertising locations from July 17, 2023. The policy underwent review using the district's Four-Way Equity Test to ensure equitable impact. It also requires that all paid advertising be evaluated for alignment with educational objectives and screened for compliance with district policies prohibiting sexual, racial, and religious harassment.

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

Approval of Proposed Academic Calendars: 2026-2027 and 2027-2028

Upon reviewing this agenda item, it was determined that the board will review and discuss the calendars at this meeting and vote to approve the calendars at a future meeting.

The School Board reviewed the 2026-27 and the 2027-28 calendars in draft form, following the district's standard two-year calendar development process in collaboration with the Meet and Confer Committee. Both calendars maintain a post-Labor Day start and reflect efforts to balance instructional continuity, professional learning needs, and considerations for religious and cultural observances. Committee input led to adjustments in the 2026-27 calendar, including shifting professional development days in November and January to improve semester balance, while broader discussions highlighted the challenges of adding new non-school religious holidays within statutory and contractual constraints. The district continues to support religious inclusion through excused-absence guidance and thoughtful scheduling practices rather than adding additional non-student days.

Closed Session

Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 13D.03, the board recessed to closed session to discuss labor negotiations strategy.

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Vaupel to recess to a closed session at 6:05 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 board reconvened to their open meeting at 7:41 p.m.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Hill to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m.

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

The motion carried (7-0)

The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting of Independent School District 197 will be Monday, December 8, 2025 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