

School District 197  
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, June 1, 2026  
Mendota Heights City Hall, Council Chambers

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held on Monday, June 1, 2026 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. School Board members present: Tim Aune, Marcus Hill, Sarah Larsen, Byron Schwab, Morgan Steele, Jon Vaupel, Randi Walz. Superintendent Peter Olson-Skog was present.

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

**Agenda**

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

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

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**Consent Agenda**

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

- Approval of the May 18, 2026 School Board Meeting Minutes
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Approval of May 2026 Wire Transfers Report
- Administrative Review of Policy 417, Chemical Use and Abuse
- Administrative Review of Policy 533, Wellness
- Approval of ISD 197 FY28 Long Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) Plan
- Approval of ISD 917 FY28 Long Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) Budget

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

*The motion carried unanimously.*

**Listening Session Report**

Two individuals attended the listening session to address topics of student bullying within the district and the Two Rivers High School orchestra program.

## **Recognitions**

The School Board recognized several student groups for outstanding achievements in athletics, leadership, and the performing arts. Student-athletes from the Dakota Hawks Cognitive Impaired (CI) and Physical Impaired (PI) softball teams were honored for their successful seasons, including a State Championship for the CI team and a third-place state finish for the PI team. The Board also recognized Branch Out Transition Program students who participated in the Ambassadors for Respect program, which promotes inclusion, advocacy, and positive relationships within schools and the community. The board concluded with recognition of cast and crew members from the Two Rivers High School production of *Little Women*, whose theater department earned the Hennepin Theatre Trust's highest honor, the Achievement in Theater Award, and received an invitation to perform at the Spotlight Showcase at the State Theatre.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Olson-Skog highlighted end-of-year celebrations and traditions across the district, including commencement for the Two Rivers High School Class of 2026 and the annual senior visits to their elementary school alma maters, where graduates reconnected with former teachers and inspired younger students. The report also recognized the successful return of Fourth Grade Field Day, which brought together students from all five elementary schools for a day of teamwork, leadership, and community-building supported by district staff and student volunteers. District recipients of the Mendota Heights Natural Resources Commission Oak Awards were celebrated, including student leader Wes Hendel, the Two Rivers LiveGreen Club, and Sustainability Manager Meghan Bernard for their contributions to environmental stewardship. The report concluded with appreciation for cultural liaisons, translators, interpreters, and community partners whose efforts have strengthened connections with families and supported students throughout the school year, along with gratitude for the continued partnership of students, staff, families, and the broader community.

## **LiveGreen Update**

Mark Fortman, Director of Operations, and Meghan Bernard, Sustainability Manager, presented an annual update on District 197's Live Green Sustainability Program, highlighting efforts to steward natural resources, reduce environmental impacts, and engage students in sustainability initiatives. Progress in energy conservation, solar generation, waste reduction, water management, and grant-funded projects was reported, including a new bioretention basin at Two Rivers High School, installation of a dishwasher to support reusable trays, and upcoming habitat restoration and prairie planting projects. The district continues to realize financial and environmental benefits from its solar investments, including more than \$1.4 million in community solar rewards since 2020, while also reducing overall energy use and waste generation. The presentation also showcased strong student involvement through Live Green Clubs, environmental stewardship projects, and community recognition for sustainability leadership.

## **Triennial Review on Wellness Policy**

Meghan Bernard, Sustainability Manager, Mark Fortman, Director of Operations, and Sabrina Kintz, Child Nutrition Supervisor, presented an update on the district's 2026 Triennial Assessment of Wellness Policy 533, a federally required review conducted every three years to evaluate implementation of student nutrition, physical activity, and wellness goals. The assessment found that District 197 is meeting its goals in all reviewed areas, including nutrition promotion and education, physical activity opportunities, school-based wellness activities, nutrition standards for foods and beverages, and Smart Snacks marketing requirements. Staff highlighted ongoing efforts to expand healthy meal access, increase student engagement through taste-testing and culturally responsive menu options, support physical activity through district programs and grants, and promote healthy school environments. Future work will focus on incorporating more locally sourced foods, adapting menus to updated USDA requirements, evaluating meal and recess practices, increasing accessibility, and strengthening communication around healthy food guidelines.

### **TriDistrict Community Education Advisory Council (CEAC) Update**

Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education, presented the annual report from the TriDistrict Community Education Advisory Council, which serves as a collaborative body representing School Districts 197, 199, and South St. Paul and is required by Minnesota statute to advise on community education programming, budgeting, evaluation, and community needs. During 2025-26, the council met regularly to review program updates, budget information, and operational initiatives, including early learning, adult programming, and implementation of new registration software. The council expanded its membership to 22 members and maintained strong engagement, with survey results indicating high levels of satisfaction with communication, organization, participation opportunities, and the council's overall effectiveness. The report highlighted the council's ongoing role in supporting lifelong learning opportunities and strengthening collaboration among schools, local governments, libraries, community organizations, and residents.

### **Presentation of FY27 Proposed Budgets**

Brian Schultz, Director of Finance, presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 budgets for the General, Food Service, Community Service, and Debt Service funds as part of the district's annual budget development process. Administration reported that budget resources have been aligned to support the district's Strategic Framework and its commitment to equitable practices, including investments in compensatory education, intervention services, English Learner programming, and achievement and integration initiatives. Additional details regarding each fund's proposed budget were presented during the meeting, with formal approval of the budgets scheduled for consideration later in June.

### **Authorization of Capital Project Levy: Review and Comment**

Superintendent Olson-Skog presented the Review and Comment materials as the next required step in considering a proposed capital projects levy for the November 2026 election. Administration presented the levy as part of the district's long-term financial planning strategy to address ongoing structural budget pressures. The proposed levy would generate approximately \$4.6 million annually for ten years and cost \$14/month for a home valued at \$400,000 (the average value in School District 197). If approved, it would provide dedicated funding for eligible capital expenses such as safety and security systems, cybersecurity, building infrastructure, instructional materials, equipment, site improvements, accessibility upgrades, and transportation assets, thereby reducing pressure on the General Fund and helping preserve resources for classroom instruction and student support. The Board action only authorized the state review process; any decision to place the levy question on the November 2026 ballot will return to the Board for consideration later this summer, with voters making the final determination at the election.

*It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Mr. Hill to authorize the Capital Project Levy Review and Comment as presented.*

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

*The motion carried unanimously.*

### **Adjournment**

*It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Ms. Walz to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m.*

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

*The motion carried unanimously.*

The next regularly scheduled School Board meeting of Independent School District 197 will be Monday, June 15, 2026 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.

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Sarah Larsen  
School Board Chair

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Jon Vaupel  
School Board Clerk