

School District 197
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools
Meeting and Work Session
Monday, April 21, 2025
ISD 197 District Office, Mendota Heights, MN

A meeting of the School Board of Independent School District 197 was held Monday, April 21, 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 Representatives Patrick Bohmbach and Nawal Hassan were absent.

Also present for the meeting was Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent; Sara Lein, Director of Special Services; Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources; Mark Fortman, Director of Operations; Sara Blair, Director of Communications; and Lisa Grathen, Director of Community Education.

Agenda

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

- Approval of Minutes of April 7, 2025 Regular School Board Meeting
- Approval of Personnel Recommendations
- Final Reading of Policy 506, Student Discipline
- Approval to Rescind Policy 430, Vaccination, Testing and Face Coverings
- Administrative Review of Policy 722, Public Data Requests
- Administrative Review of Policy 807. Health and Safety
- Approval of Termination and Nonrenewal of Probationary Teaching Contracts
- Approval of Field Trip for Two Rivers High School Speech Students in May
- Approval of Field Trip for Two Rivers High School Speech Students in June
- Second Reading of Policy 418, Drug Free Workplace/Drug Free School

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

No one was in attendance to provide comments to the School Board.

Action Item - Approval of FY26 Health and Dental Insurance Recommendations

Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources, presented a FY26 health and dental insurance recommendation. The Labor-Management Committee (LMC) meets throughout the school year to review health and dental insurance supported by the district's benefits consultant (One Digital). It includes union leadership from each bargaining unit, a School Board representative, and school district administration.

School districts must obtain bids every two years under the Health Insurance Transparency Act (HITA). As a self-insured school district, the purpose of the bidding process is to select a third-party administrator who coordinates billing and coverage between the employees and the healthcare providers. The LMC completed the HITA bid process and recommended Health Partners as the third-party administrator. The administration agreed with the LMC and recommended that the board approve Health Partners as the district's third-party administrator.

It was moved by Ms. Steele and seconded by Mr. Aune to approve Health Partners as the FY26 health and dental insurance third party administrator for School District 197.

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

The motion carried (7-0).

Second Reading of Policy 416, Drug and Alcohol Testing

Tye Michaels, Director of Human Resources, presented a second reading of Policy 416, Drug and Alcohol testing. A first reading was presented to board members at their meeting on February 18. To recap the proposed changes presented at that meeting:

- The title of the policy now includes cannabis testing and you will see the addition of that language throughout the policy.
- Under Section II, General Statement of Policy, item F was added as it goes into greater detail about the various forms of cannabis.
- Under Section III, Federally Mandated Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus Drivers:
 - Under B and C, additional definitions and detail were added
 - Under G, additional definition was added as it relates to cannabinoid products
 - Under H, new language was added for school districts to conduct full pre-employment queries through a federal Clearinghouse as required by federal law
 - Under M, a section on personal information was added as it relates to required reporting to the federal Clearinghouse
 - Items Q and R were added as it again relates to language on the federal Clearinghouse
- Under Section IV, Drug and Alcohol Testing for Other Employees, cannabis testing language was added and the definitions section was moved up from where it currently was in the current policy.
- Also Under Section IV, more detail was added as it relates to cannabis testing as well

as a new section required by recent change in legislation as it relates to oral fluid testing.

- The list of legal references was updated.
- This policy references a number of attachments and those are included.

For questions identified by the board at the February 18 meeting, the administration provided rationale as to why it does not recommend changes to what was included in the first reading. These are described below:

- Section I.A -the board expressed concerns about the tone of this section as it relates to permissible recreational use of cannabis. This section is not needed and has been removed.
- Throughout the policy, there are instances that list different types of drugs and alcohol. The board wondered why ‘cannabis’ was included in some areas but not others. Legal counsel reviewed the policy and only recommended adding it in one section, given that its absence in other sections was intentional due to related laws and statutes. The only location where ‘cannabis’ was added in the second reading was Section II.D in the last sentence.
- Board members discussed concerns about cannabis testing and how staff would be able to discriminate between permissible use versus non-permissible use. Legal counsel did not recommend changes to the related portions of the policy, but did offer the following constraints around testing that might alleviate some concerns:
 - *The District may only test other employees for cannabis use in two circumstances: Random testing for employees in safety-sensitive positions (which likely would not be many, if any, employees outside of those who fall within federal drug testing regulations) Reasonable suspicion testing - Reasonable suspicion testing only occurs when the District has some reason to believe that the employee is under the influence, like the employee exhibiting indicators of intoxication or being in possession of cannabis. In addition, if the test results are positive, the employee has the opportunity under both Minnesota law and Policy 416 to explain any positive test results.*

Additionally, the words “and cannabis” were added to the title of the policy, to the title of Section III, and in the description under Section V, Posting. It was also added to the title of Attachment A of the policy. This will be brought back for a third reading at a future board meeting via the consent agenda.

First Reading of Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools

Peter Mau, Assistant Superintendent, presented a first reading of Policy 535, Service Animals in the Schools. This optional policy was adopted in May of 2022. One of the district sites had a student who used a service animal, and staff determined that having a policy to govern service animals in the district would benefit both families and staff. Federal and state laws govern the use of service animals. This policy reflects applicable laws. There are a number of changes to the policy. The changes fall into three categories: rearranging of content, modification of content, and additional content. Changes are made to align with the MSBA model policy language. This will be brought back for a second reading at a future board meeting via the consent agenda.

Adjournment

It was moved by Mr. Schwab and seconded by Ms. Walz to adjourn the meeting at 5:19 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, May 5, 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