



2023 ISD 197 Voter's Guide

Candidates (Vote for 4)	Candidate bio (summarized)	Top priorities (summarized)	What sets you apart? (summarized)	Volunteer for the district?	Kids in ISD 197 schools?	Endorsements?
Tim Aune (website)	Retired tech executive, lives in Mendota Heights. Ran unsuccessfully in 2021.	Balance staff retention & budget; community engagement	Finance/entrepreneur background, sense of humor	Yes: concessions, store, parade float	Yes: Branch Out & 12th grade	None
Rowen Elsmore (website)	Digital learning specialist at Jefferson High School, lives in West St. Paul.	Budget & equity policy	Trans woman & renter. Teaching as 2nd career to serve students	No	Yes: 3rd grade	WSP Federation of Teachers; St. Paul Regional Labor; Outfront MN
Byron Schwab (no website)	Retired educator (19 years as music teacher, 17 years as principal), lives in West St. Paul. Incumbent first elected in 2011.	Passing levies & impact of recent legislation	Multiple boards, degrees, professional membership & development; continuity in ISD 197	Yes	Yes: 2 grads, grandkids in 1st & 7th grade	Outfront MN
Morgan Steele (website)	French teacher at Richfield High School, lives in West St. Paul. Ran unsuccessfully in 2021.	Transparent communication & teacher pay	Teacher voice on board, will ask questions & listen before making decisions	Yes: field trips & Somerset PTA	Yes: K & 3rd grade	WSP Federation of Teachers; Outfront MN
Randi Walz (website)	Former educator, now caretaker of kids & various part-time roles, lives in West St. Paul.	Academic achievement & welcoming community	Experience w/ many stakeholder roles (parent, teacher, classroom para, volunteer, etc.)	Yes: library, classroom, boosters, events, etc.	Yes: 5th, 9th, & 11th grade	WSP Federation of Teachers
Barbara Kessler	Note: Barbara Kessler dropped out in August and will be ineligible, though her name will still appear on the ballot.					
Levies	ISD 197 has two property tax levies on the ballot.					
Operating Levy	A new levy to offset rising costs, raises \$4 million.	Vote Yes: Taxes go up an average of \$153 per year. Vote No: Taxes stay the same, \$4 million in budget cuts required.				
Tech Levy	Existing levy for tech devices, staff, software, infrastructure, training, etc., raises \$2.3 million	Vote Yes: Taxes stay the same, school funding is maintained at existing levels. Vote No: Taxes go down an average of \$75 per year, no more student devices, additional budget cuts needed.				



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Election Day is Tuesday, November 7

Go to MNVotes.org for registration and voter info, including finding your polling place (which may have changed).