



# 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?
<b>Tim Aune</b> (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
<b>Rowen Elsmore</b> (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
<b>Byron Schwab</b> (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
<b>Morgan Steele</b> (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
<b>Randi Walz</b> (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
<b>Barbara Kessler</b>	<b>Note:</b> Barbara Kessler dropped out in August and will be ineligible, though her name will still appear on the ballot.					
<b>Levies</b>	ISD 197 has two property tax levies on the ballot.					
<b>Operating Levy</b>	A new levy to offset rising costs, raises \$4 million.	<b>Vote Yes:</b> Taxes go up an average of \$153 per year. <b>Vote No:</b> Taxes stay the same, \$4 million in budget cuts required.				
<b>Tech Levy</b>	Existing levy for tech devices, staff, software, infrastructure, training, etc., raises \$2.3 million	<b>Vote Yes:</b> Taxes stay the same, school funding is maintained at existing levels. <b>Vote No:</b> 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](https://MNVotes.org) for registration and voter info, including finding your polling place (which may have changed).