

Executive Summary

PLSAS Town Hall Meetings – February 5, 10 & 25, 2026

Nearly 150 staff, families, and community members participated in recent Town Hall sessions to better understand the district's financial picture, share perspectives on why they choose Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, the challenges facing the district, and ideas for strengthening academic success moving forward.

Why Families Choose PLSAS

Participants consistently described a district defined by:

- A strong sense of community and belonging
- High-quality, caring teachers and staff
- A strong academic reputation
- Opportunities such as E-STEM, Spanish Immersion, MNCAPS, Special Education, and robust programming in academics, the arts, athletics, and career pathways
- Inclusive programming that supports diverse learners
- Children who are happy, supported, and thriving

Many families shared that they intentionally moved to the district and remain deeply invested in its long-term success.

At the same time, participants expressed growing concern about sustaining these strengths amid financial pressures and program reductions.

Key Challenges Identified

Several consistent themes emerged regarding barriers to academic success:

Misinformation & Political Division – Inaccurate information and increased polarization are creating confusion about district decisions and funding realities, making it harder to build shared understanding and trust.

Funding Instability – Declining enrollment, unfunded mandates, and limited local flexibility are creating structural financial strain. Many participants noted confusion about how school funding works and a desire for clearer communication.

Rising Class Sizes & Staffing Gaps – Larger classes and limited classroom support make it more difficult to personalize learning and meet increasing student needs.

Increasing Student Complexity – Post-pandemic academic gaps, behavioral needs, more IEPs, and broader learner diversity require greater adult support and intervention capacity.

Teacher Retention & Morale – Burnout and compensation concerns raise fears about losing high-quality educators.

Program Reductions – Loss of advanced programming, electives, and schedule flexibility has created concern about narrowing opportunities.

Balancing Innovation & Fundamentals – Questions about device usage, AI, and instructional balance. Many participants expressed a desire for more paper-and-pencil learning, reduced screen time and iPad dependence, and a return to physical textbooks alongside continued innovation.

Suggested Priorities for Improvement

Community input clustered around three primary areas:

1. Strengthen the Classroom Experience

Reduce class sizes, increase paraprofessional and mental health support, and retain high-quality teachers.

2. Restore & Expand Opportunities

Reinstate advanced and enrichment programming, expand real-world and career pathways, and ensure differentiation for all learners.

3. Build Trust Through Clear Communication

Clearly explain funding realities, what levy dollars would fund, and the impact on programs and staffing. Community members emphasized connecting school quality to property values to engage voters without children and offering tiered referendum options that show clear tradeoffs.

Overall Takeaway

- Families value PLSAS deeply and want to protect what makes the district strong. There is strong interest not just in improvement, but in partnership.
- Across all sessions, one central question emerged: How do we personalize learning, protect excellence, and communicate clearly about what it takes to sustain it?
- Participants expressed a willingness to engage, advocate, and be part of the solution. Many emphasized that parents do not simply want to be informed — they want to be mobilized as champions for our schools, ready to share accurate information and support a clear, transparent path forward.