

SEDOL

Continuous Improvement Plan

2024-2025

June 2025 Report





SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan 2024-2025 Overview

This past year has been one of promise and transition, of reflection and change, of collaboration and bridge building focused on advancing a positive future of learning and growth for students, districts, and the SEDOL organization.

Beginning in July 2024, the SEDOL leadership team gathered valuable insights and input from several stakeholder sessions across the SEDOL community that contributed to the development of a draft continuous improvement plan to prioritize goals and associated action steps for the year. Stakeholder groups included member district superintendents, special education district leaders, member district business leaders, SEDOL Executive and Governing Board members, SEDOL staff, and several parents. They shared the strengths of SEDOL and the challenges, shaping the priorities for SEDOL for 2024-2025. Another significant source that influenced priorities for the year were the recommendations embedded in the extensive Exceptional Learning Solutions (ELS) report, released in June 2023 after a very lengthy review process. Careful alignment of several priority recommendations from that report were included in this CIP denoted in parentheses after the respective objectives under each goal area. A copy of the CIP approved in August 2024, including the aligned ELS recommendations, is in the appendix of this report.

The driving purpose of this CIP is to lean into ways to best emulate purpose, why SEDOL exists and the careful development of a comprehensive plan that reflects the what and how to effectively intensify our focus in defined goals and steps that advance SEDOL's efforts to strive for the future-focused vision of life planning that benefits students and districts.

The CIP has guided our path to organizational growth this year, with monthly Executive Board and quarterly Governing Board presentations aligned to a designated goal area. Every board

presentation included articulation of the goal/objective focus, as well as data and evidence gathered that contribute to a positive impact on student growth. It is a process of learning and growth that combines several important areas of focus, measurement, and prioritization. Each goal section includes highlights, evidence, and areas of future focus that may require further multi-year efforts to advance the plan successfully. To communicate our progress, SEDOL has provided newsletter updates, frequent staff presentations and professional development sessions, leadership efforts, and ongoing SEDOL Foundation support.

This report describes each of the four pillar goals of the SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan, highlights the action steps aligned to the objectives, evidence, and goal dashboard indicators that give a broader view of growth, completion, progress, and next steps that reflect an ongoing commitment to continuous growth and improvement.

Our Why - Why SEDOL Exists

SEDOL Mission

Exceptional Services for Exceptional Students by Exceptional Staff

Our Focus for the Future

The theme for the year is Building Bridges to the future.

SEDOL Vision

All learners to lead productive, responsible, and healthy lives.



Provide Exceptional Programs and Services to Meet the Needs of Students Throughout the SEDOL Community

Create a customized Student Profile of learning characteristics for each program

Highlights	Evidence
<p>The programs and buildings collaborated and developed clear and concise information to support the development of learner attributes across the SEDOL program continuum.</p>	<p>Learner attributes have been developed for each program and are under review.</p>

Identify and define SEDOL continuum of services/programs that include a working knowledge of programs

Highlights	Evidence
<p>Written descriptions for each of the programs and services provided across SEDOL’s continuum of supports were developed and included in the launch of SEDOL’s new website in December.</p>	<p>SEDOL Website</p>

Identify and create curriculum teams for each program, including college/career

Highlights	Evidence
Staff were surveyed to identify existing curriculum teams and areas where new curriculum teams need to be formed.	Curriculum surveys were developed and completed by staff members.

Develop/clarify SEDOL curricular tools and supplemental resources

Highlights	Evidence
The team's review of curriculum documents determined that all programs have foundational tools, but a need exists for more detailed, consistently organized reporting of curriculum maps, frameworks, and resources across all buildings.	Curriculum Frameworks are developed for Fairhaven, Laremont, John Powers Center, and Gages Lake (SEL). Presentations were provided to staff/Board meetings during 24-25

Develop a professional development plan that aligns with curricular needs

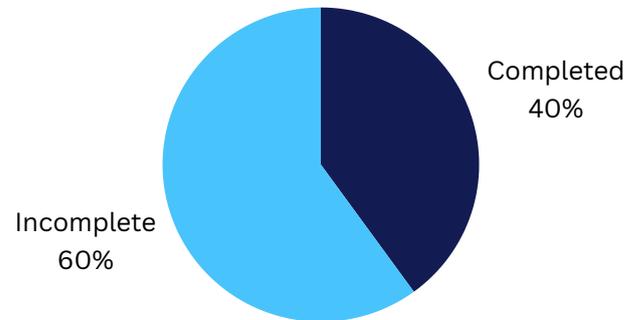
Highlights	Evidence
SEDOL solicited input from our staff, member districts, and parents to identify areas of needed professional development.	A needs assessment survey was developed and shared with staff, member districts, and parents.

Dashboard Indicators

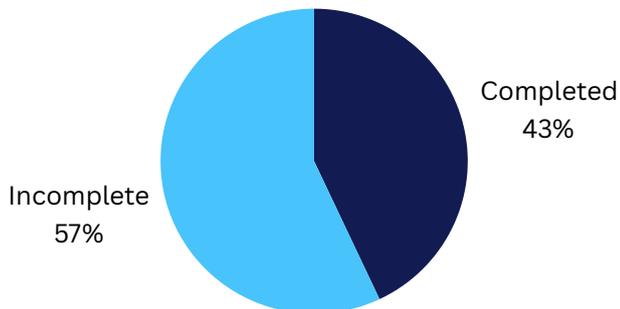
Programs with Customized Student Learning Profile



Programs with Identified Curriculum Teams



Staff Participating in Needs Assessment re:PD Practices



New Staff Participating in Onboarding Training



Future Focus

- Establish uniform curriculum frameworks across all programs to achieve consistency and accuracy by the conclusion of the 2025–2026 school year.
- Strategically collaborate with building curriculum teams to define and implement rigorous academic and behavioral expectations, enabling precise measurement and targeted interventions to address student needs.
- Analyze the retention rate of new staff within each program from the 2024–2025 school year to assess effectiveness in meeting staff needs, thereby ensuring consistent and equitable services for all students.
- Systematically evaluate and refine professional development offerings during the 2025–2026 school year to ensure optimal alignment with stakeholder needs and feedback.



Establish an Effective Equitable Financial Structure that Best Supports Students and District Needs

Achieve consensus of the SEDOL member districts regarding the future tuition model that can best serve member districts

Highlights	Evidence
<p>The team worked extensively with the SEDOL Leadership Team, Tuition Restructuring Advisory Committee, and Steering Committee to develop a more current, understandable, and accurate SEDOL Tuition Program and Services Chart. This chart provides clarity regarding direct, indirect, and membership costs. In a variety of meetings (e.g., Special Education Director, Advisory Committee), January through March 2025, the SEDOL Administration shared the goal of achieving $\frac{2}{3}$ of member district agreement on a new restructured tuition billing model</p>	<p>Advisory Committee Mtgs (Jan 7, 2025, Feb 4, 2025, Mar 4, 2025)</p> <p>Steering Committee Mtgs (Jan 23, 2025, Mar 13, 2025)</p> <p>Executive and Governing Board meetings, agendas, and summaries</p> <p>Timely updates for stakeholders on restructuring progress and timelines.</p>

Refine the staffing model to accurately reflect student needs that reflect equitable and individualized needs

Highlights	Evidence
<p>The team developed a Comparable Programs Chart to serve as a framework to gather comparable specialized programming data across similar school districts, cooperative, and private facilities.</p> <p>It is aligned with the ELS report recommendations that support refinement of a staffing model consistent with identified needs and enrollment trends.</p> <p>A revised timeline for gathering comparable data was developed.</p>	<p>Comparable Programs Chart</p> <p>Comparative data of other programs regarding staffing, program models is in progress.</p>

Create special considerations for staffing hard-to-fill positions

Highlights	Evidence
<p>Historically, SEDOL has conducted exit interviews and surveys to gather feedback from staff departing the district. This year, we introduced a retention survey to better understand the reasons our staff choose to remain with SEDOL. The insights gained will help us identify strengths to highlight and areas for improvement, guiding our efforts to enhance employee retention in the future.</p> <p>A revised timeline for specifying the hard-to-fill positions and the most significant variables impacting this situation is to be established.</p>	<p>Customized staff survey was developed to gather input on staff satisfaction and ways to foster retention.</p> <p>Retention Survey Data</p>

Dashboard Indicators

% of Member Districts Indicating a Clear Understanding of Integrated Program/Fiscal Restructured Model



Completion of an Integrated Staffing Model that Includes a Continuum of Programs/Supports



Completion and Sharing of Instructional Design Model



Completion of SEDOL Fiscal Restructuring Model through SEDOL/Member District Collaboration



Future Focus

- Complete the Advisory Committee work of developing and recommending the revised Tuition Restructure billing model. Currently, there are two work meetings scheduled for July 2025. Continue the Steering Committee review of the Advisory Committee work. There is a Steering Committee meeting set for July 2025.
- Gather all the necessary program/staffing data reflected in the Comparable Programs Chart and use it to comprehensively analyze the various programs.
- Collaborate with ELS consultants to review the progress of CIP plan implementation and associated areas of continued focus.
- Continue collaborative efforts with the SEDOL HR department to address/recruit hard-to-fill positions, and develop creative hiring opportunities in the hard-to-fill positions.



Advance High Standards and Expectations

Identify data collection tools

Highlights	Evidence
Tools that are currently being used for data collection at SEDOL were identified.	A survey was developed and sent to staff for the purposes of identifying existing data collection tools in use at SEDOL.

Develop/provide training for school/program teams regarding the use of tools for data-informed decision-making

Highlights	Evidence
<p>Professional development on the use of data-informed decision-making to drive continuous improvement currently exists in SEDOL.</p> <p>Professional development in this area will be a continued priority and is a future focus area.</p>	During the 24-25 school year, twenty-seven professional development sessions took place that reinforced data-informed decision making to drive continuous improvement.

Develop an IEP guidance manual

Highlights	Evidence
<p>A draft IEP procedural manual was developed that reflects current regulatory and best practice processes.</p>	<p>The draft IEP Procedural manual is in the final stages of review.</p> <p>Once finalized, the IEP procedural manual will be distributed and staff development on its use as a resource will be planned and implemented</p>

Identify crisis team members by building/program/district and related roles

Highlights	Evidence
<p>All building and program medical response team members have been identified, along with the associated training required.</p>	<p>A crisis response plan has been developed to provide consistency and clarity in responding to immediate needs.</p> <p>SEDOL is working toward the Project Adam designation to appropriately respond to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).</p>

Develop a standardized template for crisis team membership and plans

Highlights	Evidence
<p>Each building or program has a written Cardiac Response plan and a Cardiac Response Team identified</p> <p>Crisis Flip Charts have been updated to reflect SEDOL’s move to the Standard Response Protocol next school year (2025-2026).</p>	<p>Updated Crisis Flip Charts will be distributed for the beginning of the 2025-26 school year.</p>

Develop/utilize a debriefing process that provides meaningful feedback

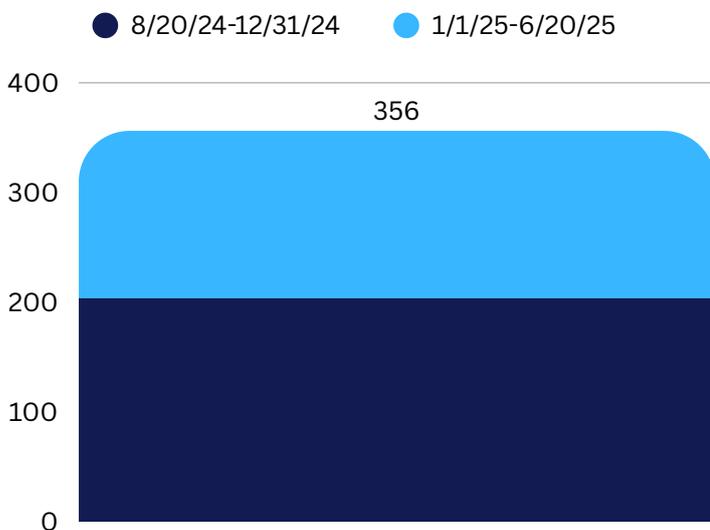
Highlights	Evidence
Medical Response incident report and debrief report completed.	Report format and form developed for Medical Response and Crisis Debrief.

Develop a cadence for review with an identified frequency of review

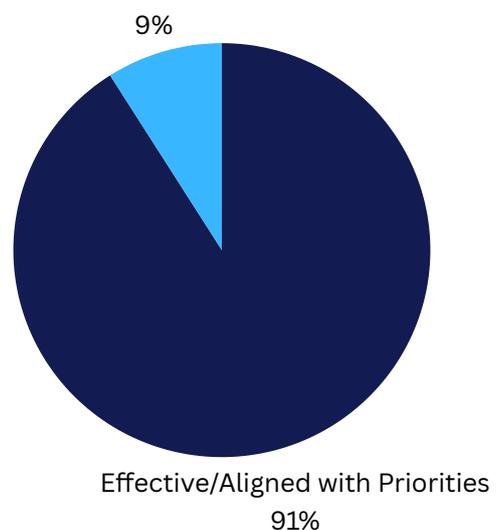
Highlights	Evidence
This school year, SEDOL has provided an increased number of professional development sessions.	Categories of professional development included: Curriculum, Data, Behavior, Potpourri, and specifically for Member District partners.

Dashboard Indicators

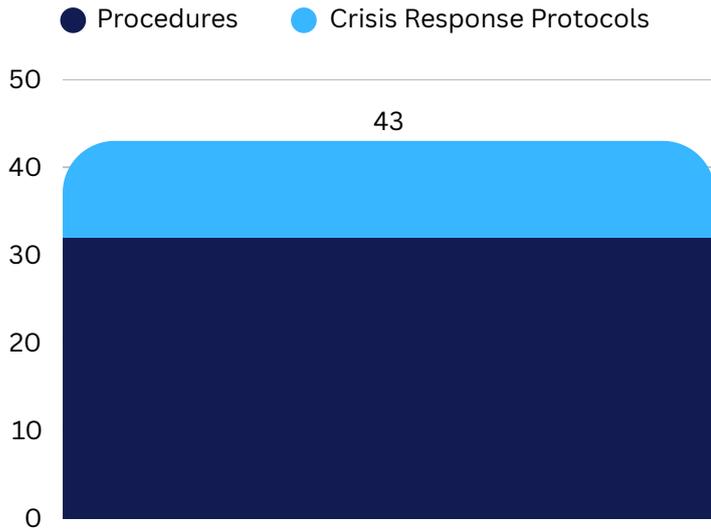
of Professional Development Provided



PD Attendees who Agree that PD was Aligned with Priorities and Effective



of Manual/Tools Developed



Future Focus

- Develop professional development for IEP Procedural Manual.
- Engage in a self-directed cyclical monitoring process aligned to ISBE's monitoring plan in collaboration with member districts to refine best practices.
- Train SEDOL staff and fully implement the Standard Response Protocol and Standard Reunification Method.
- Develop effective practices on data collection and analysis to customize processes and provide associated staff professional development.



Advance Effective Collaborative Team Practices

Develop a comprehensive SEDOL communication/collaboration plan that informs/engages and advances work

Highlights	Evidence
<p>Launched a new SEDOL website with updated content in December of 2024.</p>	<p>www.sedol.us</p>
<p>Developed a crisis communications plan that provides guidance in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will be sending out approved communications • What groups should be included in communications (e.g. staff, parents, member districts, executive and governing boards) • How communications will be sent out (e.g. email, text, phone, and social media platforms) • Templates for developing communications that cover a variety of crisis communications 	<p>The crisis communications plan is accessible to the co-interim superintendents, assistant superintendents, the communications specialist, director of innovation and technology, and members of the communication council to serve as a resource for building crisis communications moving forward.</p>

Blackboard is SEDOL’s mass notification solution that is used to send emails, texts, and/or phone calls to our various stakeholder groups when the need arises.

Additional administrative contacts were added into Blackboard to assist reaching a broader audience when sending communications.

Superintendents and central office administrators from each member district were added to Blackboard notification groups to help keep leadership teams informed of important information from SEDOL.

Two refresher trainings on how to use Blackboard were offered on June 6 and June 7, 2024 for administrators and building-based administrative assistants at SEDOL.

The training focused on how to leverage the use of Blackboard to send targeted communications using email, text, and/or phone call.

Training materials were developed and shared to serve as a resource in using Blackboard.

Create SEDOL brochures that include program descriptions, services, and supports

Highlights

Content has been developed and published on SEDOL’s website that will be used for developing these brochures including:

- Needs served in each program
- A description of each program
- Services provided in each program

Student learner attributes developed by CIP Group #1 will also be used for program brochure development.

Evidence

www.sedol.us

Introduce Feedback Forward Form that supports continued growth process and built-in analysis, common goals, agendas, and schedules

Highlights

Evidence

SEDOL currently seeks staff feedback following professional development opportunities and will build off these practices to address this objective in 2025-26.

We are in the beginning stages with this objective. This is a future focus item.

Dashboard Indicators

Programs with Parent/Student Handbooks

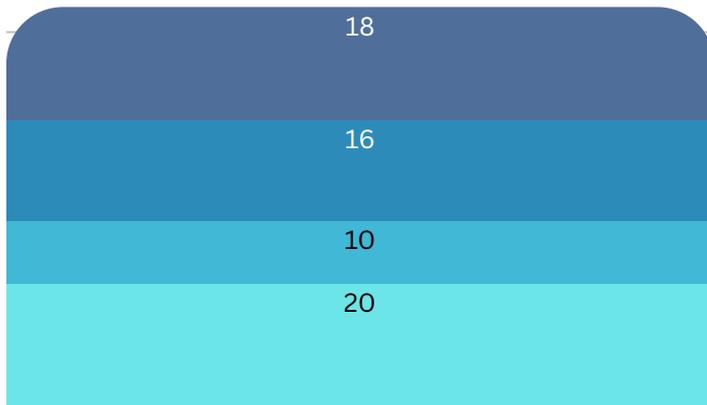


Programs with Marketing Materials



of Collaboration Meetings with Shareholders

- Member District Supt.
- Staff Meetings
- Boards & Committees
- Other



Stakeholder Meetings

Completion/Presentation of the SEDOL Communication Plan



Future Focus

- Completion of the comprehensive communication plan in 2025-2026.
- Collaborate with administrators to finalize program brochures in summer 2025.
- Complete brochures for dissemination at the start of the 2025-2026 school year.
- Develop and Feedback Forward Form for use in Opening Institute 2025 and future professional development opportunities.
- Add Program Learner profile developed by Goal 1 team to SEDOL program webpages.
- Recruit and engage parent representatives to create a parent council to support SEDOL.
- Complete and publish student/parent handbooks for 2025-2026 school year.



Building Bridges for the Future through SEDOL Foundation Efforts

The SEDOL CIP continues to evolve in ways that best support the organization and address the changing needs of students and districts. The SEDOL Foundation plays a vital role in expanding opportunities for students and families. This dedicated group of board members works tirelessly to raise significant funds that enhance SEDOL programs and services through equipment upgrades, facility improvements, family support, and innovative practices. Their compassion and ongoing commitment continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and families.

The next section of this CIP update highlights their tremendous impact.



The mission of the Foundation is to generate and distribute resources that enrich educational, vocational, and social opportunities for children and young adults with disabilities in Lake County.

Through tremendous dedication and effective fundraising, the SEDOL Foundation is advancing the CIP plan by enhancing opportunities for students across SEDOL programs that would otherwise not be available.



Some of the enhancements that have been provided include:

Annual scholarships to students for summer camp programs that focus on recreation and continuity of structure while providing respite for families.

Weekend Backpack Program to support students and their families who experience food insecurity. In 2025-26, 180 families are participating in the Backpack Program. SEDOL's vocational students pack and distribute the backpacks weekly.

A comprehensive MOVE curriculum and training, which is specially designed to support students at Laremont School.

Support for Parent Sessions for SEDOL and member district families to expand understanding of community agencies and opportunities for their students.

The Help Them to Hear program that provides hearing aids and other technologies for students who are deaf and hard of hearing that don't qualify for insurance or state aid.

SibShop, a monthly workshop where siblings of special needs students are provided the opportunity to get to know one another, have fun, and share in similar experiences.

Emergency funds for families in need throughout the year including, but not limited to rent assistance, utility bills, transportation, specialty doctor visits.

The Innovation & Technology Lab at Laremont, which has a variety of assistive and recreational-based technologies.

Funding for American Sign Language classes for parents and caregivers at JPC

Canine therapy at Laremont and in Sector.

Renovation of the Fairhaven and Gages Lake School gyms.

Playgrounds at Gages Lake School and Fairhaven.

Sensory rooms and spaces at Fairhaven, Gages Lake, CLA and in Sector programs.

Grant requests submitted by program staff that are reflective of program needs.

Join us at any of our fundraising events



Ping Pong for the Kids

Heart of Gold Dinner Dance and Auction

Pucks for Autism

Fore the Kids Golf Invitational

Making Strides for Special Kids 5K Run/Walk

One Special Night for Very Special Kids

To learn more about the SEDOL Foundation please visit our [website](#).



Report Summary

This work was a heavy lift during a year of transitions and change and while we are proud of much of what has been developed, advanced, and clarified, we know much of our work lies ahead. We have a stronger understanding of the strengths, the challenges, and the path to advancing our plan to deepen our impact on the work across SEDOL.

In order to keep the focus on education and a more individualized, specialized look at how to best support the diversity of learner needs, it is imperative that we continue to plan, reflect, review, and evaluate our efforts frequently. This report was designed to highlight our successes and growth, aligning evidence that serves as indicators, and in the spirit of continuous improvement, to determine where we stand on the path to educational growth and what future focus areas will best guide the next steps in our journey.

It takes a collaborative and vulnerable group of leaders willing to do hard things, a dedication to a student-centered guide, and support from all the stakeholders who guide the organization. We sincerely appreciate the SEDOL leadership team and staff who work tirelessly every day to support students in their educational plans, member district partnerships, and commitment to engaging in transformative discussions that strengthen the organization and reflect fiscal responsibility without compromising what students need.

It also takes the unwavering support of board members from both our SEDOL Executive Board and Governing Boards, who are dedicated to service, volunteering their time and efforts to support this plan and the future focus to advance our work together. The SEDOL Foundation is another group dedicated to service for the purest of reasons – the exceptional students we serve and how to best support their expanding needs.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership with SEDOL, and we look forward to continued efforts in the days, weeks, and months ahead. In closing, the following quote reflects the importance of growth, reflection, and refinement to build a strong, future-driven bridge to a brighter future for our students.

“We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.” – John Dewey

Dr. Judy Hackett and Dr. Tim Thomas

Co-Interim Superintendents

June 4, 2025

SEDOL Executive Board

Dr. Jason Lind, President, Superintendent – Millburn Community Consolidated School District #24

Carey McHugh, Vice-President, Governing Board Member – Wauconda Community School District #118

Dr. Scott Schwartz, Superintendent – Gavin School District #37

Joanne Osmond, Governing Board Member – Lake Villa Community School District #41

Dr. Lynn Glickman, Superintendent – Community Consolidated District #46

Odie Pahl, Governing Board Member – Gurnee School District #56

Dr. Donn Mendoza, Superintendent – Round Lake Area Schools District #116

Vacant Position, Governing Board Member

Dr. Michael Karner, Lake County Regional Superintendent of Schools

SEDOL Governing Board

Dr. Stephen Mack, President - Community Consolidated School District #46

Joanne Osmond, Secretary - Lake Villa Community Consolidated School District #41

Alberto Segura - Winthrop Harbor School District #1

Marsha White - Beach Park Community Consolidated School District #3

Denise Lear - Zion School District #6

Fred Skeppstrom - Millburn Community Consolidated School District #24

Heather Devine - Emmons School District #33

Josh Cornwell - Antioch Community Consolidated School District #34

Denise Quezada - Grass Lake School District #36

Sarah Ives-Brezinski - Gavin School District #37

Vivian Kueter - Big Hollow School District #38

Brianna Powvens - Woodland Community Consolidated School District #50

Odie Pahl - Gurnee School District #56

Emily Savino - Oak Grove School District #68

Stephen Sticklen - Libertyville School District #70

Rita Benavides - Rondout School District #72

Michael Engle - Hawthorn Community Consolidated School District #73

Eric Billittier - Mundelein School District #75

David Becker - Diamond Lake School District #76

Shawn Killackey - Fremont School District #79

Justin Parker - Aptakisic-Tripp Community Consolidated School District #102

Scott Jewitt - Round Lake Areas Schools District #116

Sue Dickson - Community High School District #117

Carey McHugh - Wauconda Community Unit School District #118

Laura Mellon - Mundelein Consolidated High School District #120

Tony DeMonte - Warren Township High School District #121

Kathy Kusiak - Grant Community High School District #124

Patricia Stephen - Zion-Benton Township High School District #126

Liz Wiczer - Grayslake Community High School District #127

Cara Benjamin - Community High School District #128

Open Seat - North Chicago Community Unit School District #187