

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTY

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Judy Hackett, Ed.D.
Tim Thomas, Ed.D.
Co-Interim Superintendent

Governing Board Meeting Summary Wednesday, June 4, 2025

PLEDGE, AGENDA, and MINUTES

Following the Call to Order/Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance by Co-Interim Superintendent Hackett, the Board accepted the amended agenda.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & MINUTES

The Governing Board appointed Dr. Stephen Mack (Community Consolidated #46) to serve a one-year term as Governing Board President and Ms. Joanne Osmond (Lake Villa #41) to serve a one-year term as Governing Board Secretary. The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on March 5, 2025.

A. Student Recognition

A student from Laremont School was selected by UCP Sequin Infinitec Assistive Technology Coalition Center and on April 24th received the 2025 Outstanding Student Technology Award. The student and family were present and a video from the Infinitec Ceremony was shared.

B. SEDOL ROE Educator of the Year Recognition

On May 7th, the following SEDOL staff nominees were recognized at the ROE Educator of the Year banquet: Elizabeth Alfaro, Dr. Matthew Barbini, Brian Sonders, Megan Swirsley, and Jessica Trudeau. Megan Swirsley was selected as the winner of the Lake County Diverse Learner Teacher category.

Each year, the ROE has a special recognition guests of honor. This year they recognized mental health professionals. Lisa Winston along with other mental health professionals across Lake County, were recognized.

C. Building Bridges Award

Brian Sonder, Cyd Lash Academy Art Therapist, was recognized as an individual who seeks out opportunities that purposely build bridges and connections between students, programs and communities. This is essential in our work with students and it is even more importantly a critical life skills for our students. Mr. Sonders has helped shine a light on talent, recognition and celebration of the many gifts and contributions our students provide to our community. Mr. Sonders goes above and beyond everyday for his students. His students express how they feel comfortable and confident in his classroom. They are free to express themselves through their art and Mr. Sonders encourages them to embrace their creativity. A video of his students expressing their sentiment was shared.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

ANNUAL MEETING ACTIONS

Executive Board Member Appointments

The following members were reappointed to serve another two-year term:

- Dr. Jason Lind, Superintendent, Millburn District 24
- Dr. Scott Schwartz, Superintendent, Gavin District 37
- Joanne Osmond, Governing Board Member, Lake Villa District 41
- Carey McHugh, Governing Board Member, Wauconda District 118
- Governing Board Member – Open Seat

The Board approved Dr. Lind, Dr. Schwartz, Ms. Osmond, and Ms. McHugh to serve another two-year term. Their term will expire in June 2027.

Delegation of Executive Board Authorities

The Board approved the delegation of authorities to the Executive Board for FY26 as delineated in policy 2:38.

Appointment of Treasurer 2025-26

The Board approved Dr. Tim Thomas, Co-Interim Superintendent, to continue as the treasurer for the district.

Establish Meeting Dates

The Board approved the following meeting dates for the 2025-26 school year: August 6, 2025; December 3, 2025; March 4, 2026; and June 3, 2026.

SEDOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Dr. Hackett provided an overview of how the process for the SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan was developed. Recommendations from the Exceptional Learning Solutions team and SEDOL stakeholders guided the development, progress outcome, and future focus. The June 2024-25 Report which was shared with the Board via email and hard copy, reflects highlights and future focus areas to all four goals represented in the report ([view report here](#)).

Goal 1: Provide exceptional programs and services to meet the needs of the students throughout the SEDOL community. (Dr. Jimenez-Captain)

Committee Members: Sarah Carey, Andrew Carlson, Gina Costa, Teresa Hagedorn, Samantha Haney, Yesenia Jiménez-Captain, Kelly Olsen, Andrea Rouse, and Kelly Weakley.

Highlights:

- Continuum of Services- 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.
- Curriculum- Staff were surveyed to identify curriculum teams with a comprehensive review of curricular resources and curriculum framework development.
- Professional Development- SEDOL solicited input from our staff, member districts, and parents to identify areas of professional development to align and complement curricular needs. Requested professional development by stakeholders has been implemented this year as a result.

Future Focus:

- Curriculum Frameworks- Establish uniform curriculum frameworks across all programs to achieve consistency and accuracy by the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year.
- Curriculum Teams- 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.
- Professional Development- Systematically evaluate and refine professional development offerings during the 2025-2026 school year to ensure optimal alignment with stakeholder needs and feedback. Expanded options for our special populations will be included.

Goal 2: Establish an effective equitable financial structure that best supports students and district needs. (Dr. Thomas).

Committee Members: Becky Allard, Matt Crowley, America Hill, Steve Johns, Kurt Preble, Allison Schmitt, and Tim Thomas

Highlights:

- Tuition Model- Achieve consensus of the SEDOL member districts regarding the future tuition model that can best serve the member districts.
- Staffing Model- Refine the staffing model to accurately reflect student needs that reflect equitable and individualized needs.
- Hard-to-Fill Positions- Create special considerations for staffing hard-to-fill positions.

Future Focus:

- Tuition Model- 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.

- Staffing Model- 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 progress of CIP plan implementation and associated areas of continued focus
- Hard-to-Fill Positions- Continue collaborative efforts with SEDOL HR department to address/recruit hard-to-fill positions, and develop creative hiring opportunities in the hard-to-fill positions.

Goal 3: Advance high standards and expectations. (Mr. Crowley)

Committee Members: Jim Arie, Bob Bolin, Matt Crowley, Samantha Haney, Susan Kruckman, Geri-Lynn Montellano, Amy Slobodecki, Erin Tidd, and Amy Timonen

Highlights:

- Data Collection- SEDOL identified current district tools used for data collection and conducted 27 professional development sessions in the 2024–2025 school year to strengthen data-informed decision-making and support continuous improvement.
- IEP Manual- The draft SEDOL IEP Procedural Manual outlines a comprehensive, compliant approach to IEP development and implementation. Featuring over 30 updated procedures, it supports consistency, collaboration, and student success through best practices.
- Crisis Team Membership and Plans- The District-Wide Crisis Flip Chart outlines clear emergency response protocols by defining roles, communication steps, and safety measures to ensure a swift, coordinated response, emphasizing student and staff safety, crisis management, and reunification.

Future Focus:

- Data Collection- Develop effective practices on data collection and analysis to customize processes and provide associated staff professional development
- IEP Manual- Develop and provide professional development that will focus on key updates in the draft SEDOL IEP Manual to ensure consistent, compliant practices that improve student outcomes.
- Crisis Team Plans- Professional development will train staff on the Standard Response Protocol and Reunification Method to ensure clear, consistent, and safe emergency responses. The “I Love U Guys” Foundation’s programs for crisis response and post-crisis reunification will be incorporated into the plan.

Goal 4: Advance effective collaborative team practices. (Dr. Barbini)

Committee Members: Jim Arie, Matt Barbini, Judy Hackett, Joshua Housing, Chris Howes, Sara Martinez, Austin Robertson, Ann Subry, Tim Thul, Jessica Trudeau, and Laura Wojcik

Highlights:

- SEDOL Website- Launched new SEDOL website on December 2, 2024.
- Crisis Plan- Developed a crisis communications plan focused on who will send information and to whom and how the information will be sent (via email, cell phone, website, etc). Prewritten templates have been created to ensure consistency in communication.
- Expand Communications- Added central office administrators from member districts into SEDOL’s mass notification tool (e.g. Blackboard) to expand the reach of communications.

Future Focus:

- Communications Plan- Develop and finalize a comprehensive plan for SEDOL in 2025-26.
- Marketing Materials- Develop and finalize brochures for each school/program that includes: learner profile, services, and supports for the start of the 25-26 school year.
- Expand Communications- Recruit and engage parent representatives to create a parent council at SEDOL.

The SEDOL Foundation plays a vital role in expanding opportunities for students and families. They raise significant funds for SEDOL programs and services through equipment, upgrades, facility improvements, family support, and innovative practices.

Highlights (*just a few of the things funded by the Foundation*):

- SEDOL Wide- Summer camp scholarships, weekend backpack program, and parent support groups.
- Schools/Sector- MOVE curriculum, canine therapy, playgrounds, sensory rooms, gym renovations, innovation/technology, classroom/teacher requests.

- Students/Families- Emergency funds, Sibshop Program, ASL classes, Help Them to Hear, assistive technology.

The board was asked for feedback/questions on the presentation that will serve as valuable information for the updated/revised plan for the upcoming school year.

EXTENDED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT WITH STU

The Board approved the 1-year extended collective bargaining agreement with the SEDOL Teachers' Union (STU).

FINANCE UPDATE AND PRESENTATION OF THE TENTATIVE BUDGET

Audit Update

Dr. Johns and Ms. Allard informed the Board that the FY23 audit and Annual Financial Report (AFR) have been completed. Copies will be shared with both boards. They will be putting recommended safeguards in place going forward. Dr. Johns also informed the Board that the FY24 audit and AFR are in process.

FY26 Tentative Budget

Dr. Johns informed the Board that the tentative budget will be based on anticipated revenue and expenditures, which includes Evidence Based Funding (EBF) and tuition revenue. The tentative budget reflects a 17% tuition increase in the Education Fund, a 9% increase in the Operations & Maintenance (O&M) Fund (includes funds for replacement of a work van/truck), creates a Capital Projects Fund to segregate the construction expenses from the O&M expenses, includes negotiated increases in salaries, and a reduction of major medical insurance of 4.4%.

Additional information shared that affects the tentative budget include but are not limited to an increase in workers' compensation claims, increase in contract with Net56, reduction in transportation reimbursement, and a reduction in the IMRF Levy. The Education Fund currently reflects a \$1.1 million deficit as a result of a 40 student deficit going into the 2025-26 school year. Revue and expenses will continue to be updated as anticipated new students are enrolled in SEDOL programs.

Dr. Johns proposed the following to the Board for the tentative FY26 budget:

- Total expenditures in the Education Fund for FY26 set at \$53,719,723. Those expenditures are offset by tuition, district contractual and grant revenue, leaving a fund balance of \$8,957,473.
- Total expenditures in the O&M Fund be set at \$3,718,226; Debt Services Fund at \$174,175; Transportation Fund at \$861,536; IMRF Fund at \$991,900; and Capital Projects at \$3,200,000.

The Board approved the tentative FY26 budget. A budget hearing will be scheduled for Wednesday, August 6, 2025 at 6:50 p.m., prior to the start of the Governing Board meeting where the final FY26 budget will be presented for approval.

OPEN FORUM

Suggestions, questions/concerns, and future agenda items recommended by the Board:

- The ROE received praise for the Educator of the Year Ceremony.
- The Foundation was recognized for their services that provide funding for so many of SEDOL's families, programs, and building upgrades.
- A brief timeline was discussed for the superintendent search. Interviews with administrators and Board members will be taking place throughout the summer/fall and stakeholders surveys will be sent and meetings scheduled in early fall. The goal is to have this process completed by December.
- It was requested that the Board receive a follow-up on safety concerns previously brought up by staff. Building safety and eloping were main concerns. A follow-up will be provided at the August meeting.
- It was requested that Dr. Johns and Ms. Allard provide updates regarding state/federal funding that may impact SEDOL and member districts. Any insight into the current status would be helpful.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

:sm 6/5/2025

2024-25 Executive Board Meeting Schedule

SEDOL Office Bay Room

Thursday, June 26, 2025 - 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, July 24, 2025 - 8:30 a.m.

2025-26 Governing Board Meeting Schedule

Gages Lake School Community Room at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, August 6, 2025 - 7:00 p.m. *6:50 p.m. FY26 Budget Public Hearing*

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.