



SEDOL News

Superintendent Message

SEDOL's Budget Status

It is important that SEDOL continues open and transparent communication regarding its financial status. As we plan thoughtfully for the upcoming school year, we have engaged in a collaborative budget development process to ensure a stable financial future.

This past October, we shared community correspondence that SEDOL is navigating a projected \$2.5 million deficit for the 2026-27 school year. While we have implemented a one-time tuition increase and adjusted our tuition model, we continue to face financial challenges due to rising operational costs, historical accounting adjustments, and a need to use high-cost contract agencies to fill critical staff vacancies.

Throughout this process, our primary goal is to remain student-centered and committed to the excellence of our programs while achieving fiscal stability.

The SEDOL administrative team is currently refining three distinct options to address the deficit that have been developed through careful consideration of student needs and SEDOL's vision for the future.

The three options will be presented for input and discussion at the upcoming Board Finance Committee Meeting on February 11, and finalized options will be presented at the Executive Board Meeting on February 19, when administration will recommend a specific option for consideration and board action.

Building Bridges to Tomorrow

While we manage these fiscal challenges, our positive momentum toward growth and change continues. We are particularly excited about our upcoming county-wide Institute Day on February 13 that is being planned in partnership with the Lake County Regional Office of Education. This is a bold and special day for SEDOL staff and special educators throughout Lake County to grow professionally and better support the complex needs of our students.

Furthermore, our leadership transition is well underway with meetings and opportunities to meet and plan with Dr. Jennifer Thomas, our incoming superintendent, through upcoming program tours, welcome receptions and opportunities to highlight the incredible work happening across SEDOL. Our ongoing efforts to build bridges for a brighter future continues to be focused on exceptional students and staff.

-Dr. Judy Hackett & Dr. Tim Thomas

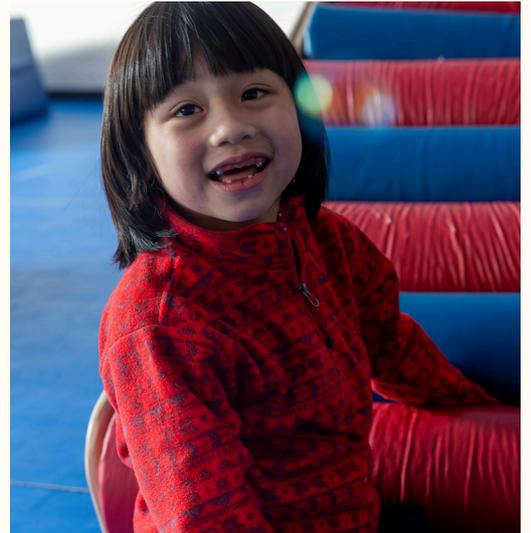




Student Recognition

January STAR Student

Raiden has made meaningful progress with self-regulation and is learning to use coping strategies throughout the school day. He has made exciting gains in communication and independently uses his Alternative/Augmentative Communication (AAC) device to request favorite items and share his needs at school and at home. Academically, Raiden continues to grow by using his AAC device to identify letters and sets of objects, showing increasing confidence and independence. SEDOL is so proud to celebrate such an ambitious and hard-working student this month.



Staff Recognition

Employee of the Month: Alexa Svetlecich

Alexa was nominated by her colleagues as being an exceptional teacher who consistently advocates for her students at a critical time in their high school careers. Alexa is student-centered, hardworking, trustworthy, and reliable, making her a valued team member. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing program at Grayslake North High School is so fortunate to have her dedication, professionalism, and collaborative spirit. Thank you, Alexa, for all you do for SEDOL students each and every day.

SEDOL Foundation

Trivia Night: Where in the world is Larry the Lion?

You don't want to miss out on the Laremont School and the SEDOL Foundation's annual Trivia Night on **Saturday, March 7, from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.!** This *FUN*draiser is raising money to purchase classroom enhancements to benefit Laremont's amazing students. We are excited to return to the **Lehmann Mansion, 485 North Milwaukee Avenue in Lake Villa.** Tickets are \$45 per person or \$450 for a team table of 10 people. Each ticket includes buffet-style food and non-alcoholic drinks. A cash bar is available. **Scan the QR code for more information.**



Thank you for joining us at Ping Pong for the Kids!



Board Meeting Highlights

Want to stay updated with the decisions of SEDOL's Governing and Executive Boards? Keep track of everything with meeting summaries on our website.

[Click here for more....](#)

Continuous Improvement Plan Highlights

Goal 1: Exceptional Programs and Services

At John Powers Center, our Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) program is achieving remarkable results using specialized literacy tools like Really Great Reading and Orton-Gillingham. This targeted approach led to a 66.7% growth in Language Arts on the 2025 MAP assessment. Similarly, the implementation of our new Math curricula, Bridges and Amplify Desmos, resulted in an impressive 83.3% positive growth on the 2025 MAP assessment as well.

To ensure our programs continue to meet the needs of our students, the Continuum of Programming Advisory Committee held three productive sessions in January. Their ongoing work focuses on aligning student needs with programming options at SEDOL while maintaining our commitment to fiscal sustainability.

Goal 2: Financial Sustainability

SEDOL is currently conducting a comprehensive review of staffing models across all SEDOL programs. By evaluating our data alongside other special education cooperatives and private therapeutic day schools, we aim to ensure SEDOL's programming remains both highly effective for students and fiscally responsible.

Goal 3: High Standards and Safety

Student safety remains our top priority, and that commitment extends beyond the school day. Through a collaborative partnership with local fire departments, Camp I Am Me, and the Illinois State Fire Marshal, staff and administration at John Powers Center recently provided 33 students in our D/HH program with specialized "bed shaker" smoke detectors at no cost to their families.



Upcoming Events

Please click the event title to view it's flyer...

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| SEDOL/ROE All Staff Institute Day | Fri., Feb. 13 th from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m |
| Parent University – Listening Session | Thurs., Feb. 19 th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m |
| Welcome Reception for Dr. Jennifer Thomas | Wed., March 4 th from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. |
| Trivia Night: Where in the World is Larry the Lion? | Sat., March 7 th from 6 p.m.- 9 p.m. |

