



Judy Hackett, EdD
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Co-Interim Superintendents

Executive Board Meeting Summary
Thursday, February 19, 2026

PLEDGE AND AGENDA

Following the Call to Order/Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance by President McHugh, the Board accepted the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes and financial matters were approved along with the following personnel items:

- ~ Request for Contracts for 8 educational support personnel (ESP) and 1 licensed staff
- ~ Resignations/retirements by 5 ESP and 1 licensed staff

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

STARS Student of the Month

The Board recognized a student from Ms. Ashley Merkel's classroom at Laremont School as the February STARS Student. This student has worked incredibly hard and has made remarkable progress. When he first joined Ms. Merkel's classroom, he used a gait walker with supports, occasionally used eye gaze to look at pictures, and mouthed academic materials. Since then, he has become an active participant in class and has shown significant growth and maturity. He will now occasionally verbally express phrases and continues to use eye gaze along with direct selection to switches to communicate and engage in learning activities. In addition, he has transitioned to using a reverse walker without arm supports. We are very proud of his accomplishments.

Employee of the Month

The Board recognized Ms. Carolyn Smith, registered nurse at Cyd Lash Academy, as February's Employee of the Month. Ms. Smith brings a strong sense of safety, calm, and trust to students each day. She consistently demonstrates exceptional patience, compassion, and clinical expertise in her work. Reliable and dedicated, she provides valuable medical insight during IEP meetings and communicates effectively with staff to support student success. Ms. Smith's commitment to the well-being of every student is evident in all that she does, and she is truly deserving of this recognition.

Special Recognition

The Board recognized Ms. Joanne Osmond as she steps down from the SEDOL Executive and Governing Boards. Ms. Osmond has dedicated more than 19 years of service to these boards, in addition to over 30 years of service on the Lake Villa School District Board. Throughout her tenure, Ms. Osmond has demonstrated exceptional passion and commitment to SEDOL and its students. She has served in numerous leadership roles, including president and vice president, and has been an active member of the finance, personnel, negotiations, and policy committees. She has also been a strong and active supporter of the SEDOL Foundation. Ms. Osmond's leadership, dedication, and unwavering advocacy for students will be greatly missed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

SEDOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) UPDATES

Goal 1: Provide exceptional programs and services to meet the needs of students throughout the SEDOL community (Ms. Andrea Rouse)

Ms. Rouse presented on Gages Lake School curriculum, training, and collaborative team.

Objective C: By June 2026, SEDOL will create systems of support that ensure fidelity of instructional practices.

Goal Highlights: University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) Gages Lake School Implementation
UFLI Foundations is a structured literacy curriculum developed by the University of Florida Literacy Institute. It provides:

- Daily, targeted instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics
- Built-in cumulative review to prevent learning gaps
- Clear lesson structure that supports teacher consistency and instructional fidelity
- Strong alignment with Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 intervention needs

This ensures all students receive high-quality core instruction while also supporting differentiated learning needs. UFLI directly addresses the foundational skills students need to become confident readers:

- Improves decoding and word-reading accuracy
- Builds early reading fluency
- Strengthens spelling and writing connections
- Supports struggling readers through explicit instruction

This proactive approach reduces the need for intensive intervention later and improves long-term academic outcomes.

With the support of the Instructional Services Department, Gages Lake School staff have received targeted professional development focused on the effective implementation of UFLI. Teachers are providing positive feedback and the students are excited to be building literacy skills.

OLD BUSINESS

Lake County Institute Day

On February 19, the Regional Office of Education (ROE) hosted a Lake County-wide Institute Day, bringing together special education professionals from across the region. Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL) led the Special Education programs with the support of Grant Community High School District 124.

More than 1,200 special education educators attended the event, which featured two keynote speakers and over 70 workshops and training sessions. Impressively, more than half of the sessions were presented by SEDOL staff, showcasing the expertise and leadership within the organization.

The day was a tremendous success, and plans are already underway to host the Institute Day again next year.

Update on the FY26 Budget Amendment

At the January 22nd Executive Board meeting, administration shared with the Board that the fund balance percent of revenue was at 8.12%. SEDOL policy states we should be within the range of 8-11%. After recalculations and finding investment figures that were not included in the previous calculations, the fund balance percentage of revenue increased to 22.53%. This is positive however, the administration will continue to move forward with caution and sensitivity to financial demands.

FY27 Budget Staffing Plan

Administration presented the Board with three staffing projections based on actual student enrollment and incoming action requests. The options were discussed in detail and after much discussion, the Board voted and approved one of the options. This option represents an expenditure reduction of \$623,597. The following summary was shared with the Board on how the three projections were determined.

Staffing Projection Process

- Total students per program are tabulated
- Number of classrooms, teachers, paraprofessionals and related service staff are determined based on current formulas
- Total staff needed are calculated and compared to current staffing
- Projections shared with program administrators for review

Summary of Staffing Projections FY27

- Max number of students per classroom remain unchanged
- Staffing ratios for related service providers unchanged
- Reductions in classroom teachers will be absorbed through retirements and not renewing contracted agency staff
- Fewer paraprofessionals are needed because there will be fewer classrooms/students to support.
- Contracted services have not yet been factored in to totals

Summer Project Bid Contract

The Board approved administration's recommendation to award the 2026 Summer Project bid to Efraim Carlson Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$1,139,600.00 to include Base Bid plus six additional alternates.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Update

Mr. Crowley provided an update on the relocation of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program housed at Grayslake High School for the 2027-28 school year. Collaboration has included meeting with the D/HH staff to determine needs for a future site, an informational session with member district partners on January 29th, and an upcoming parent forum tentatively scheduled for March 12th at 6:00 p.m. This forum will be in-person and offer a virtual Zoom option.

SEDOL Program and Services Continuum Advisory Committee

Dr. Thomas provided an update on the programs and services Guiding Principles that this committee feels are important as they move forward in determining future programs and services offered by SEDOL for their member districts.

- Provided in the least restrictive environment
- Driven by student needs
- Provided using evidence-based and research-based methods
- Implemented effectively and with consistency
- Fiscally responsible
- Provided in collaboration with the member districts

A survey was shared with member districts with 22 of the 31 members responding. Information will be shared and more feedback requested at the next elementary and high school district meetings.

NEW BUSINESS

New Chief School Business Official

The Board approved the administration's recommendation to hire Mr. David Shepherd as the new Assistant Superintendent of Business Services/Chief School Business Official with an annual salary of \$165,000. Mr. Shepherd will begin his position on July 1, 2026.

Fairhaven School Emergency Resolution

The Board approved the resolution authorizing the award of an emergency contract to Berger Contractors for sewer repairs at Fairhaven School. The repair is anticipated to cost in excess of \$50,000.

FOIA Request

Dr. Wojcik received the following FOIA request from Mr. Chris Miller, Educator Support Network, on February 9, 2026, and responded on February 10, 2026.

- Copies of any existing records that describe purchasing or contracting approval authority within the school district.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board went into closed session to discuss:

1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.
2. Collective bargaining matters, collective negotiating matters between the public body and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees.

OTHER

Possible Termination

The Board approved the termination of support staff member Chileo Usher during probationary period.

Possible Termination

The Board approved the termination of support staff member Dominique Servant for job abandonment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Finance Committee met February 11, 2026. Much of the information was shared at today's meeting.

The Personnel Committee is scheduled to meet March 3, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. in the Bay Room in the administration building.

INFORMATIONAL

SEDOL Foundation Events

- Laremont Trivia Night- March 7 SOLD OUT!
- Pucks for Autism- June 5-7
- Golf Invitational- September 14
- 5K Run/Walk- September 19
- One Special Night- November 7

Upcoming SEDOL Events

February:

Parent University	Admin Bldg	2.19.26	6:30 - 8:00
SEDOL Foundation/Laremont Presentation at IAASE	Champaign, IL	2.26	

March

Dr. Jennifer Thomas, incoming Superintendent Visit	Wednesday, March 4th pm		
SEDOL Staff Meet and Greet w/ Dr. Thomas	Gages Lake School Gymnasium		3:30 - 4:30
SEDOL Board and Community Welcome Reception	Gages Lake School Community Room		5:30 - 6:30
SEDOL Governing Board Meeting	Gages Lake School Community Room		7:00 p.m.
SEDOL Program Tours (SEDOL campus)	March 5th		9:30-11:30
SEDOL Program Tours (Fairhaven, JPC)	March 12th		9:30-11:30

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- The Board expressed their appreciation for the work that went into hosting the Special Education portion of the Lake County-wide Institute Day.
- The Board expressed their appreciation for the work that went into the staffing recommendation options. They also thanked the staff that may be affected by changes moving forward and their time and dedication.
- The Board expressed their appreciation to Ms. Joanne Osmond and the positive impact she has made at SEDOL.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

2025-26 Executive Board Meeting Schedule *SEDOL Office Bay Room*

Thursday, March 19, 2026 – 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, April 2, 2026 – 8:30 a.m. *FY27 Budget Meeting*

Thursday, April 23, 2026 – 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, May 28, 2026 – 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, June 25, 2026 – 8:30 a.m.

Thursday, July 23, 2026 – 8:30 a.m.

2025-26 Governing Board Meeting Schedule *Gages Lake School Community Room*

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, June 3, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.