



Superintendent Message

Special Farewell and Recognition of Joanne Osmond



This February, SEDOL recognized a very special long-time Board member and dedicated advocate for children, Joanne Osmond, who has retired from the SEDOL Board and is moving west. Joanne has dedicated over 20 years of student-driven service on both SEDOL boards, serving in roles as Governing Board President, Executive Board President, Vice President and various committee roles, including Negotiations, Finance and Personnel. Her first and most inspirational role at SEDOL started as an engaged, supportive parent of a SEDOL student who attended Laremont School several decades ago. Joanne’s depth of care and understanding, blended with her strong understanding of business, policy and board work has been influential and instrumental in advancing SEDOL’s mission. She loved supporting efforts through visiting classrooms, participating in events and fundraising events. SEDOL recognized Joanne with the esteemed Bridge Builder Award that recognizes the positive influence of dedicated connections and bridge building across the SEDOL community. We have been so fortunate to have had her guidance and compassionate support for so many years. We wish her the best in her new life adventures out West.

A Specialized Institute Day Success

SEDOL’s first special education Institute Day was held at Grant Community HS District 124 on Friday, February 13th, for over 1200 special educators in partnership with the Lake County ROE and Grant HS District. A phenomenal keynote and over 80 breakout speakers with much of SEDOL’s depth of talent and knowledge, shaped a great day of professional learning and included specialized training for educators that positively influenced their continued professional growth. We also incorporated wellness, complete with strategies, and sharing the impact of having a district emotional support dog. Reflecting our Bridge Building focus at SEDOL, working with tremendous leadership at Lake County and Grant HS, the Institute Day was a great success and an incredible reflection of growing partnerships focused on learning together how to advance efforts for students, families and districts.





Student Recognition

February STAR Student

Over the past few years, Mason has demonstrated what is possible with hard work, a positive attitude, and the support of his family and dedicated school community.

His physical progress has been nothing short of remarkable. He has successfully transitioned from using a gait trainer to mastering a reverse walker. This milestone represents a huge leap in his independence and physical strength, allowing him to navigate his world with newfound confidence.

It is not just his mobility that is on the move—his communication skills are soaring! By increasing the use of his communication device alongside verbal expression, he is sharing his thoughts, making choices, and engaging with his peers and teachers more than ever before. Seeing the happiness on his face as he tackles new challenges is a reminder of why we do what we do at SEDOL.

Congratulations, Mason! Your resilience and "can-do" spirit inspire us all. We can't wait to see what you achieve next!



Staff Recognition

Employee of the Month: Carolyn Smith

Carolyn brings exceptional patience, compassion, and clinical expertise to her role as the nurse at Cyd Lash Academy. Her calm, trauma-informed approach helps students feel safe and supported, even in moments of crisis. She is a trusted and collaborative team member. Carolyn provides valuable insight during IEP meetings and fosters strong communication with staff. Her dedication and unwavering commitment to student well-being make her truly deserving of this recognition.





Board Meeting Highlights

This year, SEDOL utilized \$2.5 million from our fund balance (reserves) to address a budget deficit. While this has provided immediate stability, systemic adjustments were necessary to prevent a similar deficit in the future while continuing to advance SEDOL’s mission of providing exceptional services to exceptional students.

The recent SEDOL Finance Committee meeting on February 11 and Executive Board meeting on February 19th included an in-depth focus and recommendations of a budget option that promotes the financial sustainability of SEDOL. The approved option: proactively addresses SEDOL’s finances, factors in the impact of some declining enrollment, continues to improve processes for staffing and student projections, and does not change existing staffing ratios so that the high standards of support and care for our exceptional students remain the same.

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....](#)

CIP Program Highlights

Empowering Literacy at Gages Lake School

At SEDOL, we are committed to providing exceptional programs and services that meet the unique needs of every student. As part of our 2025-26 Continuous Improvement Plan, we are thrilled to highlight the successful implementation of the UFLI Foundations curriculum at Gages Lake School.

UFLI Foundations is a research-based, explicit, and systematic phonics curriculum designed to ensure all students develop the core skills necessary for reading success. By implementing this high-quality curriculum, we are giving our educators at Gages Lake School the resources they need to make a lasting impact on student literacy. UFLI has been well received by staff and students at Gages Lake School!

This initiative advances SEDOL’s mission of providing exceptional services to exceptional students. A special thank you to the staff and administration at Gages Lake, along with the Instructional Services Department, for making the implementation of UFLI possible.

We look forward to sharing more success stories like this one in future newsletters.



Upcoming Events

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

[Trivia Night: Where in the World is Larry the Lion?](#)

Sat., March 7th from 6 p.m.- 9 p.m.

