SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTY
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Judy Hackett, Ed.D.
Tim Thomas, Ed.D.
Co-Interim Superintendents

Minutes
SEDOL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Board Members Present:	D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D33-Regina Chesney (alternate), D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D38-Vivian Kueter, D41-Joanne Osmond, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D56-Odie Pahl, D68-Emily Savino, D70-Kate Grove, D72-Bridget Folliard, D73-Michael Engle, D75-Eric Billitier, D76-David Becker, D79-Shawn Killackey, D102-Justin Parker, D116-Scott Jewitt, D117-Sue Dickson, D118-Carey McHugh, D120-Laura Mellon, D121-Tony Demonte, D124-Kathy Kusiak, D127-Liz Wiczer, and D128-Nina Austin
Board Members Late:	D6-Denise Lear and D24-Fred Skeppstrom
Board Members Absent:	D50-Brianna Powvens, D126-Patricia Stephen, and D187-Open Seat
Staff Members Present:	Becky Allard, Dr. Matthew Barbini, Matthew Crowley, Dr. Judy Hackett, Dr. Yesenia Jimenez-Captain, Dr. Stephen Johns, Sara Martinez, Dr. Tim Thomas, and Dr. Laura Wojcik

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL (Dr. Mack)

At 7:01 p.m., a quorum being present, President Mack called the meeting of the SEDOL Governing Board to order on Wednesday, December 3, 2025, at Gages Lake School in Gages Lake, Illinois. The following Executive Board members were in attendance: Dr. Michael Karner, Dr. Jason Lind, Ms. Carey McHugh, Ms. Odie Pahl, and Ms. Joanne Osmond.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Dr. Mack)

3. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Mack)

Motion to Accept/Amend the Agenda - VOICE VOTE

Moved by: D41-Joanne Osmond

Seconded by: D118-Carey McHugh

Aye D56-Odie Pahl, D41-Joanne Osmond, D118-Carey McHugh, D1-Lise McCarthy, D121-Tony Demonte, D102-Justin Parker, D116-Scott Jewitt, D117-Sue Dickson, D120-Laura Mellon, D124-Kathy Kusiak, D127-Liz Wiczer, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D38-Vivian Kueter, D6-Denise Lear, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D68-Emily Savino, D73-Michael Engle, D75-Eric Billitier, D76-David Becker, D79-Shawn Killackey, D3-Andrea Usry, D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D36-Natalie Karner, D70-Kate Grove, D128-Nina Austin, and D72-Bridget Folliard

Carried 28-0

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Mack)

Minutes GB Aug 6 2025.pdf

Minutes Closed Session Aug 6 2025.pdf

Motion to Approve Minutes - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D116-Scott Jewitt

Seconded by: D127-Liz Wiczer

Aye D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D38-Vivian Kueter, D41-Joanne Osmond, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D56-Odie Pahl, D68-Emily Savino, D70-Kate Grove, D72-Bridget Folliard, D73-Michael Engle, D75-Eric Billitier, D76-David Becker, D79-Shawn Killackey, D102-Justin Parker, D116-Scott Jewitt, D117-Sue Dickson, D118-Carey McHugh, D120-Laura Mellon, D121-Tony Demonte, D124-Kathy Kusiak, D127-Liz Wiczer, and D128-Nina Austin

Carried 28-0

5. SPECIAL RECOGNITION (Dr. Hackett/Dr. Thomas)

5.1 Employee of the Year

Dr. Julie Sweeney-Grana, Audiologist, who was announced in August as the 2024-25 SEDOL Employee of the Year, was presented to the Governing Board. Her positive impact at SEDOL was highlighted.

5.2 Board Appreciation

Dr. Hackett recognized the board for their dedication to education and SEDOL. Each board member received a token of appreciation, which included a student-made craft.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT (Dr. Mack)

There was no Public Comment.

7. SEDOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Hackett/Dr. Thomas)

The Board received electronic and paper copies of the 2025-26 Continuous Improvement Plan approved at the August Executive Board meeting and the 2025-26 Mid-Year CIP Report. Each committee lead presented an update on one of their goal objectives.

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

Dr. Jimenez-Captain discussed the success of using TeachTown's "I do, we do, you do" instructional model. This is a whole team approach to learning and all levels of staff receive training on using this instructional model.

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

Dr. Thomas discussed the SEDOL staffing model. This committee is currently collecting data from comparable programs including private placements and cooperatives to compare with SEDOL's staffing model. Once collected, the data will be reviewed and compared to SEDOL's existing programs and staffing model.

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

Mr. Crowley discussed the new IEP Procedure Manual that the committee put together. He reminded the board that the manual will keep changing as ISBE updates its guidelines. He also explained that even though SEDOL isn't part of cyclical monitoring, we're following the lead of our member districts and reviewing our own procedures in a similar way.

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

Dr. Barbini discussed the importance of families and member districts having a clear understanding of the services SEDOL provides. The committee has been developing building and program brochures that outline each program, the students served, locations, and key contact information. The Board received copies of twelve completed brochures, and it was noted that two additional brochures are being finalized. The brochures will be shared with member districts and made available in SEDOL buildings and programs as a resource for families.

Included in the mid-year report is an update on the impact of the SEDOL Foundation. Ms. Subry shared with the Board that during the first half of the 2025–26 school year, the Foundation contributed nearly $300,000 to SEDOL programs. These funds supported program enhancements, student services, life and vocational skill development, technology and campus improvements, and family and community initiatives.

SEDOL Continuous Improvement Plan 2025-2026 .pdf

25-26 Mid-Year Update CIP GB 12.3.25.pdf

8. RECOMMENDATION TO EMPLOY NEW SUPERINTENDENT - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Mack)

The Board approved the Executive Board's recommendation to employ Dr. Jennifer Thomas as the next Superintendent of SEDOL, effective July 1, 2026. Dr. Thomas was unable to attend the Governing Board meeting however, provided a heartfelt video message that was shared with the Board, staff, and community.

Motion to Employ Superintendent - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D41-Joanne Osmond

Seconded by: D73-Michael Engle

Aye D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D38-Vivian Kueter, D41-Joanne Osmond, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D56-Odie Pahl, D68-Emily Savino, D70-Kate Grove, D72-Bridget Folliard, D73-Michael Engle, D75-Eric Billitier, D76-David Becker, D79-Shawn Killackey, D102-Justin Parker, D116-Scott Jewitt, D117-Sue Dickson, D118-Carey McHugh, D120-Laura Mellon, D121-Tony Demonte, D124-Kathy Kusiak, D127-Liz Wiczer, and D128-Nina Austin

Carried 28-0

9. NEW RESTRUCTURED TUITION MODEL APPROVAL - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Thomas)

Dr. Thomas provided an overview of the recommended Tuition Restructuring Model, the timeline, and the individuals involved in determining the outcome.

The various individuals who developed the new restructured tuition model:

- SEDOL Administration
- Advisory Committee - representative district special education administrators and business officials
- Steering Committee - representative district superintendents

Tuition Restructuring Guiding Principles (developed by Advisory Committee):

- Tuition cost sheets need to be clear and understandable
- Tuition cost sheets need to accurately reflect direct, indirect, and administrative costs
- Administrative costs need to be as equitable as possible
- Administrative costs need to take into consideration district EAV, district enrollment, and average daily enrollment (ADE) in all SEDOL programs

Tuition Restructuring Advisory Committee Agreement on 7.9.25:

- Develop models that are consistent with the Guiding Principles
- Those districts that are greatest users of all SEDOL programs (SEDOL ADE) should pay a higher amount of the administrative cost
- Develop additional models that reflect these ideas
- Formula can be reviewed and modified as needed

The Steering Committee reviewed all 6 options and unanimously agreed with the Advisory Committees' recommendation.

On October 23, 2025, the SEDOL Executive Board unanimously agreed with the Advisory and Steering Committees' recommendation that:

- Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the direct and indirect tuition costs of SEDOL programs will be paid by the districts based on actual usage, reflecting the number of students in each program.
- The administrative costs of the tuition bill will be paid using the following formula: District EAV 25%, district enrollment 25%, and ADE 50%.

Draft numbers are projected to be shared in April and June.

The Board approved the recommendation.

SEDOL Tuition Payment doc for EB & GB 10.17.25.pdf

Motion to Approve New Tuition Model - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D24-Fred Skeppstrom

Seconded by: D6-Denise Lear

Aye D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D38-Vivian Kueter, D41-Joanne Osmond, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D56-Odie Pahl, D68-Emily Savino, D70-Kate Grove, D72-Bridget Folliard, D73-Michael Engle, D75-Eric Billitier, D76-David Becker, D79-Shawn Killackey, D102-Justin Parker, D116-Scott Jewitt, D117-Sue Dickson, D118-Carey McHugh, D120-Laura Mellon, D121-Tony Demonte, D124-Kathy Kusiak, D127-Liz Wiczer, and D128-Nina Austin

Carried 28-0

10. FY26 BUDGET AMENDMENT - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Johns/Ms. Allard)

Dr. Johns and Ms. Allard provided an overview of the timelines to amend the FY26 budget, the reasoning, and the steps planned to address the expenditure/revenue concerns.

Timelines:

SEDOL Executive Board - December 18, 2025

- Draft presentation of budget changes, revenues, and expenditures

SEDOL Executive Board - January 22, 2026

- Approval of budget amendment for submission to Governing Board

SEDOL Governing Board - March 4, 2026

- Adoption of budget amendment for submission to ISBE

There is currently an approximate $2.5 million deficit in expenditures vs. revenues in the education fund.

Reasons for the deficit:

- SEDOL program tuition rate increases over the past 5-7 years did not reflect actual costs, resulting in undercharging and therefore reduced revenue
- Historical accounting errors (due to audits not being completed on time)
- Funding of capital projects with Education Fund cash balance
- The cost of contract agency staff continues to significantly impact the budget
- The actual student enrollment was much lower than the projected total of program enrollments (estimated 529, actual 493), contributing to reduced offsetting revenues, resulting in $2.2 million less revenue

Steps planned to address the expenditure/revenue deficit:

- Currently SEDOL administration is considering options to address the deficit
    - Staff adjustment model- will not be projecting student revenue
    - New administration and tuition formulas will help
    - Not use education funds for capital projects
- A SEDOL Finance Committee meeting will be scheduled to brainstorm possible solutions
- Meeting will be held with SEDOL Advisory Committee to discuss options
- Options will be presented to the Executive and Governing Boards

11. SEDOL 2015 BOND UPDATE - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Johns/Ms. Allard)

Dr. Johns and Ms. Allard updated the Board on the 2015 Bond, stating we are still in good standing.

POST-ISSUANCE TAX COMPLIANCE REPORT- 12-3-25.pdf

12. INFORMATIONAL

12.1 SEDOL Foundation (Ms. Subry)

- Ping Pong for the Kids- February 1
- Laremont Trivia Night- March 7
- Dinner Dance- April 25
- Pucks for Autism- June 12-14

12.2 Highlights of SEDOL Events (Dr. Hackett/Dr. Thomas)

- Food drive across SEDOL for families in need
- SEDOL is hosting the Special education sessions for Institute Day in partnership with Lake County ROE on Friday, February 13
- Building program tours went well; 2nd semester tours planned for 2nd semester
- Parent Institute went well
- IDEA 50-year celebration

13. OPEN FORUM - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Mack)

It was requested that at each meeting at least one program be highlighted.

14. ADJOURNMENT (Dr. Mack)

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sara Martinez
Recording Secretary

Approved by:

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Dr. Stephen Mack
Board President

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Ms. Joanne Osmond
Board Secretary