

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, March 4, 2026

NEW SUPERINTENDENT RECEPTION

A reception to meet Dr. Jennifer Thomas, incoming SEDOL superintendent, was held prior to the start of the Governing Board meeting.

BUDGET HEARING

A public hearing on the amended FY26 final budget was held prior to the start of the regular meeting.

PRESIDENT PRO TEM

In President Mack's absence and with Ms. Osmond stepping down from the Board, the Board approved Ms. McHugh to serve as president pro tem and run the meeting.

PLEDGE, AGENDA, and MINUTES

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Jennifer Thomas, incoming SEDOL superintendent, was introduced to the Board and the community.

APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS

Information was presented regarding the need to appoint three Governing Board members to a nominating committee to develop recommendations for the offices of Governing Board President and Secretary. The committee should make its recommendations known to Governing Board members 30 days prior to the June meeting. Governing Board members were asked to consider serving on the nominating committee.

APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD

Information was presented regarding the need to establish a nominating committee to recommend appointments to the Executive Board. The committee is composed of one Governing Board member, two Executive Board members and the Regional Superintendent of Schools. The committee should make its recommendations known to Governing Board members 30 days prior to the June meeting. Governing Board members were asked to consider serving on the nominating committee.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAM GROWTH ALIGNED TO THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

Dr. Jimenez-Captain presented the following program highlight:

- Cyd Lash Academy: student made milk carton cars were used to understand the principles of physics, the volleyball team took 4th place for the season and won the Sportsmanship Award, and Autumn G. was the Grayslake Exchange Club/SEDOL Student of the Year!
- Gages Lake School: students continue to lead new staff tours with an emphasis on interpersonal skills, students held a parade to celebrate those returning to home districts, and teachers continue professional

development using UFLI.

- Laremont School: students explored scientific inquiry and worked on functional skills, including hygiene, 83.4% of students met or made progress on 2nd quarter benchmarks, and classrooms are preparing for Trivia Night.
- Fairhaven School: high school students went out into the community to practice communication, social and consumer education skills, students and staff celebrated 100 days of school by dressing up as 100-year olds or wearing 100 items, the school celebrated Raiden being selected as the January STARS Award winner.
- John Power Center: students continue utilizing the Bridges Math Curriculum, students made a quilt while learning about patterns, transition students visited the Lake County Courthouse and met a public defender, and students participated in a glow day to celebrate 100 days.
- Sector: Spaulding students continue to help the SEDOL students complete tasks to earn pennies for their penny boards, students successfully built gumdrop structures to support a book for 10 seconds, and students at Frederick School put together a coffee cart for the school.
- Pre-Voc: students are sorting and shelving a large donation from the SEDOL Foundation for the Backpack Program, students prepared 80 gift bags for the Lake County Institute Day presenters, and Voc Facilitators and Job Coaches presented at Fairhaven School and two sessions at the Lake County Institute Day.
- Regional Safe School Program: eight students demonstrated exceptional work ethic by completing more than than the standard six courses, eleven students were granted early return by their home districts, and over fifty students from seventeen districts were served by the short-term BASE Learning Program.

SEDOL 1st Countywide Specialized 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 Institute Day again next year.

CAAEL 2026 Art Show

Cyd Lash Academy, represented SEDOL again and the good things happening at Cyd Lash Academy at this year's CAAEL Art Show. Our students all walked away winners with special recognition to: Estefan took first place for his Cardboard & Stickhouse sculpture, Matt received Honorable Mention for his Ceramic Skull Hose sculpture, Elisha received second place for her Goku digital artwork, Trey, Matt, and D.Z. received first place for their Chicago's Sports Teams multimedia image, and Emiliano received first place for his Marilyn Monroe drawing. Congratulations to all of you!

FY24 and FY25 AUDIT UPDATES

Ms. Allard reported to the Board that the FY24 audit has been completed and that the FY25 audit is in process.

FY26 AMENDED BUDGET

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 8-12%. 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. The Board approved the amended FY26 budget.

FY27 BUDGET UPDATE

Dr. Thomas presented the Board with budget development and staffing projections for FY27 that were approved at the February 19th Executive Board meeting. The following represents a total expenditure reduction of \$2,346,539.

Refining Budget Development

Goal: Continue to advance SEDOL's mission in a fiscally sustainable manner.

- Factors that led to expenditures exceeding revenues in the last three years:
 - Historical undercharging district student tuitions
 - Failure to maintain current and accurate financial information
 - Misaligned student projections
 - Acknowledgement of financial realities faced by our member districts
- In addition to the newly developed SEDOL restructured tuition model, three proposals were developed utilizing the following guiding principles of:
 - Remaining student-focused
 - Supporting student needs
 - Reductions of staff would occur farthest from direct impact on students
- The proposed options are primarily focused on administrative or non-union positions that do not directly serve students

Staffing Projection Process

- Total students per program are tabulated
- The 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

- The maximum number of students per classroom remain unchanged
- Staffing ratios for related service providers unchanged
- Paraprofessional ratios remain unchanged
- Reductions in classroom teachers will be absorbed through retirements and not renewing contracted agency staff

Budget Reduction Summary

Staffing Adjustments include:

- Student enrollment expense reduction
 - Accomplished primarily through retirements and contract agency staff
- Administrative Reductions of 2.6 FTE
 - Accomplished through RIF, current interim, and shift in positions
- Union Position Reductions of 2.0 FTE
 - Accomplished through retirement, shift in current staff and reduction of contract agency staff

Total Anticipated Expenditure Reduction: \$2,346,539

INFORMATIONAL

SEDOL Foundation

Laremont Trivia Night- Mar 7 SOLD OUT

Pucks for Autism- June 5 - 7

Golf Invitational - September 14

5K Run/Walk - September 19

One Special Night - November 7

Highlights of SEDOL Events

Dr. Hackett, Dr. Schmitt, and Ms. Subry presented at the IAASE Conference on Positive Impact on Students with Significant Needs through Effective Partnership. They discussed how Laremont partners closely with the SEDOL Foundation to turn student needs into meaningful opportunities.

Upcoming Events

March

SEDOL Program Tours	SEDOL campus	March 5th	9:30-11:30
SEDOL Program Tours	Fairhaven, JPC	March 12th	9:30-11:30
Respect Week	SEDOL Bldgs	March 9-13	
SEDOL Spring Break	SEDOL Bldgs	March 23-28	

April:

Smile Illinois Dentist	Fairhaven (JPC)	April 13	All Day
Smile Illinois Dentist	Gages Lake (CLA)	April 24	All Day
Infinitec Student Award Banquet		TBD	5:00 p.m.

May:

Unified Sports Day	Fairhaven	May 1	All Day
Lake County Educator of the Year Banquet	LC Fairgrounds	May 6	5:00 p.m.
Smile Illinois Dentist	Laremont	May 7	all day
Prom	Laremont	May 1	12:45 p.m.
Prom	Fairhaven	May 8	1:00pm
Unified Sports Day	Laremont/Fairhaven	May 8	1:00-2:30
Proud to Be Me Picnic	John Powers	May 15	11:00-2:00
Promotion/Graduation	Cyd Lash	May 15	
Transition Recognition	Laremont/DHH/Cyd		6:00 p.m.
Retirement Ceremony	GLS Community Rm	May 21	4:00 p.m.
Promotion/Graduation	Laremont	May 20	9:30 a.m.
Promotion/Graduation	Fairhaven	May 22	1:00 p.m.
DHH 8th Grade Hawthorn Graduation	Vernon Hills HS	May 29	6:00 p.m.
DHH High School Graduation	Grayslake North	May 21	7:00 pm

OPEN FORUM

- What a great improvement in the microphone and sound system for the meeting.
- Warm welcomes were received by Dr. Thomas from the Board.
- What a positive decision it was to hire Dr. Hackett and Dr. Thomas as co-interims for the past year and a half and through the end of this school year.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other items to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

:sm 3/5/2026

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, June 3, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.