



# SEDOL News

Superintendent Message

## Celebrating Partnerships and Looking Ahead

At the March Executive Board meeting, we recognized incredible SEDOL partners with the 3rd SEDOL Bridge Builder Award for their amazing effort serving as a model of a positive, inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all who attended the recent Lake County ROE Institute Day for over 1200 special educators. Everyone involved in the collaborative partnership between Grant and SEDOL contributed to a special kind of success reflected in a caring facilitation of a warm learning environment for all participants. Overwhelmingly positive feedback and appreciation were received by participants regarding the special professional learning opportunity.

The Grant Community HS District team, led by Superintendent Dr. Jeremy Schmidt and members of his leadership team, Beth Reich, Brian Mullen, Tom Furlan and Josh Staples, donated their time and special resources that made a difference, and most importantly, what comes naturally to them, kindness, care and support to advance professional learning for our county educators. After our SEDOL EB recognition, we also attended the Grant HS Board meeting that evening to thank their Board for their role in fostering such a special culture that engages students, staff and leaders in ongoing efforts to learn and grow. We look forward to continued opportunities to work with such a special team and district partner.

Another important focus for our EB meeting included a brief update on open Board positions on both the SEDOL Executive Board and SEDOL Governing Boards. Notification has been sent to both Boards with 2 open positions available in the Governing Board and four positions open on the Executive Board. We are so appreciative of the Board members who volunteer time and effort, which provides guidance and ongoing support that influences growth across the SEDOL organization during such an evolving phase of change.

March included several community engagement events designed to provide opportunities to see SEDOL day programs in person and to spend time with Dr Jennifer Thomas, the new SEDOL superintendent, who will start on July 1, 2026. A welcome reception held prior to the March GB meeting reflected her depth of passion for working with exceptional students. There are several important transition steps that Dr. Thomas will participate in with the SEDOL team to ensure a smooth transition.



Student Recognition

## Creativity in Competition: Cyd Lash Shines at CAAEL

The Coyote Den of Cyd Lash Academy was transformed into a vibrant gallery this month as students debuted their latest masterpieces for the annual Chicago Area Alternative Education League (CAAEL) Art Show. With entries pouring in from classrooms across the campus, the competition was as fierce as it was inspiring, showcasing a profound range of talent, vision, and hard work.

After a rigorous round of voting, 10 standout pieces were selected to represent CLA for final recognition. We are incredibly proud to announce that 7 students from SEDOL distinguished themselves among the best, earning prestigious honors for their artistic contributions.

**Our Award Winners:**

Sculpture:

- First Place - Estefan
- Honorary Mention - Matt

Drawing:

- First Place - Emiliano

Multimedia:

- First Place - Trey, Matt, & D.Z.

Digital:

- Second Place - Elisha

*Congratulations to all our artists for proving that creativity knows no bounds at Cyd Lash Academy!*



Missed the Art Show?  
Scan to hear our  
students talk about the  
experience!



Staff Recognition

## Employee of the Month: Tim Thul

Congratulations to Tim Thul, SEDOL's March Employee of the Month. Tim is a part of our Operations and Maintenance team and goes above and beyond, making a lasting impact through both creativity and collaboration. From redesigning Laremont School's mascot, Larry the Lion, to elevating program materials and reports, his work, especially the "Building Bridges" logo, brings SEDOL's mission to life. Behind the scenes, Tim also partnered with Net56 and SEDOL Tech to improve the performance of the Ever Alert Boards at JPC, demonstrating his commitment to both innovation and problem-solving.





## 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....](#)

CIP Program Highlights

### Launch for Pre-K

SEDOL is thrilled to highlight the "Flight Path" of our Launch for Pre-K curriculum, which continues to provide a comprehensive, whole-child approach to kindergarten readiness for students in our early childhood programs. Our new curriculum is designed to engage students through a vibrant daily routine that includes intentional instruction in emerging literacy and math, sensory exploration, and fine motor art projects. By centering our classroom framework on structured schedules and essential "Hello" and "Goodbye" circles, we ensure that every student receives the high-quality support they need to start their academic journey with confidence.

### Cyd Lash Academy

At Cyd Lash Academy, students are supported holistically with an emphasis on preparing them for a successful transition back to their home district. Academically, curriculum mapping is used to ensure our programs maintain the rigor and alignment required by member-district expectations. Additionally, students who need extra assistance receive targeted reading and/or math interventions through Lexia and iReady. Our strong academic foundation is complemented by a vibrant school culture, including a premier art program, physical education experiences featuring a ropes course and rock climbing, and meaningful extracurricular involvement through the Chicago Area Alternative Education League (CAAEL). Go Coyotes!

### Deaf and Hard of Hearing HS Relocation

A brief update on the transition plans underway to secure a new HS site for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) high school program was provided to both boards this month and continued efforts to engage with stakeholders - students, parents, districts and SEDOL team will help design a student-centered plan. Collaborative efforts continue and timely updates will be provided to the SEDOL community.

[Continuous Improvement Plan](#)

SEDOL Foundation

### Supporting SEDOL Students

Trivia Night was a tremendous success! The Laremont School community came together to raise over \$16,000 in support of curricular tools, educational applications, and school assembly programs. The Lehmann Mansion provided an ideal setting for an evening filled with engaging trivia, excellent food, exciting silent auction items, and plenty of laughter. Congratulations to Team "It's All About the Kids" for earning first place and year-long bragging rights. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year on March 6.

Looking ahead, our next event is Pucks for Autism. We are currently seeking volunteers to assist with scoring hockey games during the weekend of June 5-7 at four locations: Gurnee, Glacier (Vernon Hills), Pleasant Prairie, and Mt. Prospect. Additional details, including volunteer sign-up opportunities, will be shared via a link by mid-April. Proceeds from this event will directly support programs serving students with autism.

