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, March 4, 2026

Board Members Present: D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D41-Randy Harnicker, 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 Absent: D34-Dr. Tanya Karner, D38-Vivian Kueter, D46-Dr. Stephen Mack, D50-Brianna Powvens, D56-Odie Pahl, D68-Emily Savino, D70-Kate Grove, and D126-Patricia Stephen

Staff Members Present: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D46-Dr. Lynn Glickman, D116-Dr. Donn Mendoza, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, 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

A Public Hearing for the amended FY26 budget began at 6:50 p.m. and ended at 7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL (Ms. McHugh)

In President Mack's absence and with Secretary Osmond stepping down from the Board, the Board elected Ms. McHugh as president pro tem.

At 7:00 p.m. a quorum being present, Ms. McHugh called the meeting of the SEDOL Governing Board to order on Wednesday, March 4, 2025, at Gages Lake School in Gages Lake, IL. The following Executive Board members were in attendance: Dr. Karner and Ms. McHugh.

Motion to Elect President Pro Tem - VOICE VOTE

Moved by: D79-Shawn Killackey

Seconded by: D24-Fred Skeppstrom

Aye: D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D41-Randy Harnicker, 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 22-0

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Ms. McHugh)

3. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

Motion to Accept/Amend the Agenda - VOICE VOTE

Moved by: D24-Fred Skeppstrom

Seconded by: D127-Liz Wiczer

Aye: D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D41-Randy Harnicker, 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 22-0

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

Motion to Approve Minutes - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D3-Andrea Usry

Seconded by: Sue Dickson

Aye: D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D41-Randy Harnicker, 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 22-0

5. PUBLIC COMMENT (Ms. McHugh)

There was no Public Comment.

6. SPECIAL RECOGNITION (Ms. McHugh)

Dr. Jennifer Thomas, the new SEDOL superintendent beginning July 1, 2026, was introduced to the Board, staff, and the community.

7. APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR GOVERNING BOARD OFFICERS – INFORMATIONAL (Ms. McHugh)

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.

0242 Nominating Comm Jan 8 2026.pdf

8. APPOINTMENT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR EXECUTIVE BOARD - INFORMATIONAL (Ms. McHugh)

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.

0242 Nominating Comm Jan 8 2026.pdf

9. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROGRAM GROWTH ALIGNED TO THE CIP - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Jimenez-Captain)

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, and 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!

10. FY24 AND FY25 AUDIT UPDATES - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Johns/Ms. Allard)

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

Audit FY24 Communication with Governance - SEDOL.pdf

Audit FY24 Management Comments Letter - SEDOL.pdf

Audit FY24 Report - SEDOL.pdf

11. FY26 AMENDED BUDGET - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Johns/Ms. Allard)

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.

The Executive Board recommends approval of the FY26 amended budget as presented.

1. The final budget will be based on a cash basis, which includes Evidence-Based Funding and tuition revenues being calculated accordingly;
2. For final budget purposes, total expenditures in the Education Fund for FY26 be set at **$52,782,408** and that those expenditures be offset by tuition, district contractual and grant revenue, leaving a fund balance of **$10,751,064** (change from $2,931,609**)**;
3. Total expenditures in the Operations and Maintenance Fund be set at **$3,718,226**; in the Debt Service Fund at **$181,800**; in the Transportation Fund at **$861,536**; in the IMRF Fund at **$1,200,000; and** in the Capital Projects Fund at **$3,350,000**.

SEDOL Budget Amendment 1-22-26.pdf (updated)

Motion to Approve Amended Budget - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D73-Michael Engle

Seconded by: D75-Eric Billitier

Aye: D1-Lise McCarthy, D3-Andrea Usry, D6-Denise Lear, D24-Fred Skeppstrom, D33-Heather Devine, D36-Natalie Karner, D37-Sarah Ives-Brezinski, D41-Randy Harnicker, 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 22-0

12. FY27 Budget Update - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Thomas)

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 remains 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

13. OPEN FORUM - INFORMATIONAL (Ms. McHugh)

- 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.

14. ADJOURNMENT (Dr. Mack)

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sara Martinez
Recording Secretary

Approved by:

_____
Carey McHugh
Pro Tem Board President

_____
Open Seat (Dr. Judy Hackett)
Board Secretary