

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTY
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Dr. Jennifer Thomas
Superintendent

Minutes
SEDOL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
Thursday, August 27, 2026

Board Members Present: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Board Members Absent:

Staff Members Present: Dr. Jennifer Thomas, David Shepherd, Dr. Matthew Barbini, Matthew Crowley, Dr. Yesenia Jimenez-Captain, Sara Martinez, and Dr. Laura Wojcik

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

The regular meeting of the SEDOL Executive Board was called to order at 8:30 a.m. on August 27, 2026, at the Administration Building in Gages Lake, IL.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Ms. McHugh)

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

Motion to Accept the Agenda - VOICE VOTE

Moved by: D56-Odie Pahl; seconded by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

4. CONSENT AGENDA - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D56-Odie Pahl; seconded by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

4.1 Minutes

Public and closed session minutes of the regular meeting of July 23, 2026.

[Minutes - Jul 23 2026 EB Mtg.pdf](#) 

4.2 Financial Matters

Paid Accounts Payables:

[FY27 AUG26 Executive Board Meeting Summary.pdf](#) 

[Executive Board - Payroll Summary.pdf](#) 

[AP Board Check Register 08-27-26.pdf](#) 

[Paid AP Manual Check Register 07-17,24,31-26.pdf](#) 

4.3 Personnel Matters

Recommend employment of the following applicants, with work assignment and start date as indicated, subject to completion of the physical examination and forms, as required by Section 24-6 of the School Code, successful completion of a criminal background investigation as required by Section 10-21.9 of the School Code, a Child Abuse Registry check, and submission of all forms, documents, and certifications as required by law and/or requested by SEDOL for the position.

[August 27, 2026 Personnel Recommendations & Vacancies.pdf](#) 

[August 27, 2026 Addendum.pdf](#) 

5. RECOGNITION (Dr. Thomas)

5.1 2025-26 Employee of the Year Ashley Merkel, Laremont School Teacher

6. PUBLIC COMMENT (Ms. McHugh)

There was no Public Comment.

7. SEDOL CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) UPDATE- ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Thomas)

Administration presented an overview of the SEDOL 2026–27 Continuous Improvement Plan, outlining the four goals and briefly explaining the objectives. The Board received a copy of the new plan for review. The Board approved the plan and it will be shared with families, staff, the Governing Board, and member districts. It will also be available for viewing on the SEDOL website.

Goal #1- Provide exceptional programs and services to meet the needs of students throughout the SEDOL community

Goal #2- Establish an effective equitable financial structure that best supports students and district needs

Goal #3- Advance high standards and expectations

Goal #4- Advance effective collaborative team practices

Timeline

- July to mid-August 2026: Develop CIP goal objectives and dashboard indicators. Finalize the CIP plan for 2026-27.
- August 27, 2026: 2026-27 CIP Plan presentation to the Executive Board.
- Sept. 2026-May 2027: Data collection and monitoring goals with regular reports to Executive and Governing Boards.
- June 2027: Year-End CIP Report

Motion to Approve Plan - ACTION NEEDED

Moved by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind; seconded by: D56-Odie Pahl

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Summer Project Update - INFORMATIONAL (Mr. Shepherd)

Mr. Saum, Director of Operations, provided the Board with an update on summer facilities projects. He reported that multiple contracts were completed last week, with projects taking place throughout SEDOL buildings. The Gages Lake School canopy and glass replacement projects have been delayed, with an anticipated completion date of September 21. Mr. Saum is currently developing the project list for next year.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Curriculum Purchase - ACTION NEEDED (Dr. Jiménez-Captain)

Dr. Jiménez-Captain presented an Everway curriculum proposal for approval. The curriculum will include Unique Learning Systems and News2You plus a three month pilot of L3 Skills, Positivity, and Symbol Stix. The total cost of the curriculum is \$66,594.47 and will cover multiple programs throughout SEDOL. The Board approved this request.

[Everway Quote 388966.pdf](#) 

Move to Approve Purchase - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind; seconded by: D56-Odie Pahl

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

9.2 1st Days of 2026-27 School Year - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Thomas)

Dr. Thomas shared photos from SEDOL's opening week, highlighting the district-wide Institute Day held at The Chapel, which featured keynote speaker Ali Hearn. Photos also highlighted staff throughout SEDOL's building programs and students on their first day of school. Dr. Thomas shared that it has been an exciting start to the new school year!

9.3 Emergency Resolution - ACTION NEEDED (Mr. Shepherd)

The Board approved the resolution authorizing the award of an emergency contract to McDonough Mechanical Services for the replacement of the main boiler at Laremont School. Three quotes were received, and McDonough Mechanical Services submitted the lowest quote. The cost of the repair is anticipated to exceed \$50,000.

[Emergency Resolution Laremont Boiler.pdf](#) 

Motion to Approve Emergency Contract Resolution - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D56-Odie Pahl; seconded by: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

10. CLOSED SESSION - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

Motion to Enter Into Closed Session - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: ROE-Dr. Michael Karner; seconded by: D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

The Board enter into closed session at 9:07 a.m. to discuss:

1. The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

Motion to Return to Public Session - VOICE VOTE

Moved by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind; seconded by: D56-Odie Pahl

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

The Board return to public session at 9:13 a.m.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Possible Termination - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

The Board approved the termination of support staff member DeLorean McKinney for job abandonment effective August 20, 2026.

Motion to Approve Termination - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D24-Dr. Jason Lind; seconded by: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya

Aye: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, ROE-Dr. Michael Karner, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Carried 7-0

12. INFORMATIONAL

12.1 Bereavement (Dr. Thomas)

Marilyn Bobb, a former SEDOL administrative assistant, passed away on August 6, 2026. Marilyn worked in the Administration Building from August 1976 until her retirement in June 2007.

12.2 SEDOL Foundation (Ms. Subry)

- Golf Invitational - September 14
- 5K Run/Walk - September 19
- One Special Night - November 7
- Ping Pong for the Kids - February 7
- Laremont Trivia Night - March 6
- Pucks for Autism

12.3 SEDOL Events (Dr. Thomas)

- Curriculum Night
 - September 10th
- SEDOL Building Tours
 - September 17th at Laremont School, Gages Lake School, and Cyd Lash Academy
 - September 18th at Fairhaven School and John Powers Center
- [American Sign Language Classes](#)
 - Fall session starts September 23rd at John Powers Center
- Laremont School Resource Fair and Trunk or Treat

- Saturday, October 3rd from 10:00 - 1:00 p.m.

13. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (Ms. McHugh)

Ms. McHugh thanked Dr. Jiménez for providing monthly highlights on the programs. She noted that it is wonderful to see photos and hear about the activities and accomplishments of the students and programs.

14. ADJOURNMENT (Ms. McHugh)

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sara Martinez
Recording Secretary

Approved by:

Carey McHugh
Board President

Dr. Jennifer Thomas
Board Secretary