

SPECIAL EDUCATION DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTY
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Dr. Jennifer Thomas
Superintendent

Minutes
SEDOL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
Thursday, September 24, 2026

Board Members Present: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Board Members Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

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 September 24, 2026, at the Administration Building in Gages Lake, IL.

The Board observed a moment of silence in memory of a Laremont School student who passed away on September 8, 2026.

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: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

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: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

- 4.1 Policy Matters
Policy revisions were approved.

[Combined Policies.pdf](#) 

- 4.2 Minutes
Public and closed session minutes of the regular meeting of August 27, 2026.

[Minutes Aug 27 2026.pdf](#) 

- 4.3 Financial Matters
Paid Accounts Payables:

[FY27 September Executive Board - Accounts Payable Summary.pdf](#) 

[FY27 September Executive Board - Payroll Summary.pdf](#) 

[Paid AP Board Check Register 09-24-26.pdf](#) 

[Paid AP Manual Check Register 08-07,14,25-26.pdf](#) 

- 4.4 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.

[September 24, 2026 Personnel Recommendations & Vacancies.pdf](#) 

[September 24, 2026 Addendum.pdf](#) 

5. RECOGNITION (Dr. Thomas)

- 5.1 STARS Students
The Board recognized a student from Alicia Brite's Transition classroom at Laremont School as the September STARS student. While this student has struggled in the past with communication, daily living skills, and gross motor skill, her ability to communicate, trust stuff, and willingness to work on gross motor skills has grown significantly. For the first time, with assistance and help of an E-Pacer, she was able to walk 20 feet and is now up to 120 feet!

- 5.2 Employee of the Month
The Board recognized Smita Chatlani, Academic Specialist, as September's Employee of the Month. Smita was nominated by sixteen staff from Gages Lake School. She has demonstrated exceptional planning and coordination, has developed and organized essential instructional guides, resources, and curriculum materials. She provides hands-on classroom support and demonstrates a strong commitment to educator success and student learning.

- 5.3 September Staff Recognition
- IT Professionals

6. PUBLIC COMMENT (Ms. McHugh)

There was no Public Comment.

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

Dr. Thomas and Mr. Shepherd presented on:

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

Objective A: By June 2027, SEDOL will collaborate with member districts to review implementation of revised tuition model and evaluate the implementation of S-Fund

S-Fund General Information

- Creates a revenue source for students attending public day schools.
- Encourages student participation in public school specialized programming through districts and co-ops.
- S-Fund combines funds used to reimburse both private and public day programs.
- Rules are regulated by ISBE.
- Tuition regulated by Purchased Care Review Board.
- Currently S-Fund anticipated to be fully implemented using PCRB tuition rates

S-Fund Challenges

- Allocation for S-Fund plus private schools has increased, but not enough to cover the number of programs that were added by S-Fund (172 programs).
- Proration of the combined private & public reimbursement is currently 63%. In FY23, proration was 98%. In FY24 proration was 91%. Has gone down each year.
- Of SEDOL's 31 member districts, 16 districts saw an increase in reimbursement with the implementation of S-fund and 15 districts saw a decrease in reimbursement with the implementation of S-fund.
- Currently S-Fund is anticipated to be fully implemented using PCRB tuition rates beginning July 2027.
- PCRB still operating 2 years in arrears for tuition - Looking at the impact this has on the funding of our programs

S-Fund Work in Progress

- SEDOL is working with ISBE and region co-op CSBOs on questions of discrepancy in PCRB tuition to actual cost.
- SEDOL is in contact with consultants from both ISBE and PCRB.
- SEDOL is working with Cooperatives across the state on balancing implementation of S-fund while balancing non-tuition based programming with a co-op.
- SEDOL Member Districts, Executive Board and Governing Board are being kept in the loop regarding efforts to implement S-fund.
- We continue to work on both the S-fund model as well as monitor the implementation of the current tuition model to be ready for all contingencies regarding funding for the 2027-28 school year.

Mr. Crowley presented on:

Goal 3: Advance high standards and expectations.

Adjective C: By June 2027, SEDOL will increase staff proficiency in emergency response protocols through implementation of the Standard Reunification Method (SRM), therefore enhancing the district's overall capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Standard Reunification Method

- Non-Union administrative building staff engaged in training.
- Developed an understanding of the 6-step sequential release process. This process will ensure an accountable chain of custody.
- SEDOL Administrative Team conducted a site visit of a reunification site. Also looking into alternate sites.
- Begin planning work for the development of reunification kits, as well as classroom based "go bags".
- Next Steps: Building specific rally points, staff training, and tabletop exercises.

Verkada Guest Management

- Integrated under the same ecosystem as our security cameras and access control
- Provides extra barrier between visitors and office staff during screening process
- Ability to enter OOPs or "restricted lists"

SEDOL ID Badges

- Color coded lanyards for staff, visitors, vendors
- Updated images that provide access to buildings
- To be worn at all times on campus/school grounds

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1 Donation Approval - ACTION NEEDED (Mr. Shepherd)

The Board approved the \$1000 donation from the Illinois Foundation of Deaf Children.

Motion to Approve Donation - VOICE VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

9.2 Annual Student Behavior Committee - INFORMATIONAL (Mr. Crowley)

The next meeting of the Annual Student Behavior Committee is scheduled for October 5th at 3:30 p.m. Topics will include: Policy 7:190 Student Behavior and associated administrative procedures, restraint and time out (RTO) data, and NEST data (Fairhaven School).

9.3 Disposal of Old Bus - ACTION NEEDED (Mr. Shepherd)

The Board approved the disposal of the old bus. Administration will look into options for disposal/sale.

Motion to Approve Request - ROLL CALL VOTE

Moved by: D56-Odie Pahl; seconded by: Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

9.4 FOIA - INFORMATIONAL (Dr. Wojcik)

Dr. Wojcik received twenty FOIA requests and responded to all twenty in the appropriate timeline.

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

Motion to Enter Into Closed Session - ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

The Board enter into closed session at 9:02 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.
2. Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal.

Motion to Return to Public Session - VOICE VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

The Board returned to public session at 9:12 a.m.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Possible Termination - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

The Board approved the termination of support staff member Savannah Fleece effective August 17, 2026.

Motion to Approve Termination - ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

11.2 Possible Termination - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

The Board approved the termination of support staff member Patricia McGraw effective September 24, 2026.

Motion to Approve Termination - ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

11.3 Co-Interim CSBO Contract Extension - ACTION NEEDED (Ms. McHugh)

The Board approved contract extensions for Dr. Johns and Ms. Allard for up to an additional 30 days at \$1000/day. They will continue to help with the transition of business department matters.

Motion to Approve Contract Extension - ROLL CALL VOTE

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

Aye: D24-Dr. Jason Lind, D56-Odie Pahl, D118-Carey McHugh, and Dr. Sandra Keim-Bounds

Absent: D75/120-Dr. Corey Tafoya, D37-Dr. Scott Schwartz, and ROE-Dr. Michael Karner

Carried 4-0

12. INFORMATIONAL

12.1 SEDOL Program Highlights (Dr. Jiménez-Captain)

Highlights were shared from SEDOL buildings, vocational sites, and sector programs.

12.2 SEDOL Foundation (Ms. Subry)

- 5K Run/Walk- October 4 (rescheduled)
- One Special Night- November 7
- Adopt a Family- November/December
- Ping Pong for the Kids- February 7
- Laremont Trivia Night- March 6
- Pucks for Autism- June 2027
- Golf Invitational- September 2027

12.3 SEDOL Events (Dr. Thomas)

SEDOL Fall Program Tours

Highlights were shared from the September 17 tours of Cyd Lash Academy, Gages Lake School, and Laremont School, as well as the September 18 tours of Fairhaven School and John Powers Center. The tours provided an opportunity for member district superintendents, special education directors, district specialists, and board members to learn more about the programs and services offered at each school.

Lake County Resource Fair

On September 18, SEDOL co-hosted the Lake County Resource Fair with the Lake County Regional Office of Education (ROE), Mother's Trust, and the Lake County Community Foundation. Nearly 50 community social service agencies participated in the event, providing valuable resources and connections to attendees. SEDOL's Bob Bolin helped organize the event and helped bring together the participating agencies and community partners. One of the day's highlights was the keynote presentation by Amanda Clay.

SEDOL Events

Resource Fair	Laremont School	10.3.26
Trunk or Treat	Laremont School	10.3.26
Homecoming	Laremont School	10.9.26
Homecoming	Fairhaven School	10.16.26
Halloween Extravaganza	John Powers Center	10.22.26
Parent University	Understanding the IEP	Date TBD
Parent/Teacher Conferences	SEDOL Bldgs	10.22.26 (p.m.) and 10.23.26 (a.m.)
Boo Bash	Fairhaven School	10.29.26
Halloween Parade	Laremont School	10.30.26
Halloween Parade	Fairhaven School	10.30.26

13. EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (Ms. McHugh)

Dr. Lind shared, and Dr. Keim-Bounds agreed, that the tours were a great way to see the students and spend time interacting with them. He noted that it was especially nice to see the students receiving the services and opportunities they need to learn and grow.

14. ADJOURNMENT (Ms. McHugh)

With no other items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sara Martinez
Recording Secretary

Approved by:

Carey McHugh
Board President

Dr. Jennifer Thomas
Board Secretary