SEDOL NEWS

OCTOBER 2026



JOHN POWERS CENTER

THE GREAT APPLE CRUNCH EVENT

Students enjoying their apple treats with BIG smiles!

RECOGNIZING SEDOL'S STAR STUDENT



OCTOBER

MEET YETXIER!

Yetxier is a fantastic example of what it means to be a STAR Student! As a new student transitioning into middle school, he stepped right into his new environment with ease and quickly established himself as a positive role model for his peers.

Yetxier exhibits high independence every day—confidently managing his schedules, mastering daily routines, and taking ownership of his independent work. On top of his incredible work ethic, Yetxier brings a wonderful, kind presence to our community. With his contagious smile, great personality, and fantastic sense of humor, he builds strong, positive relationships with everyone around him.

We are incredibly proud of Yetxier and are thrilled to celebrate his well-deserved recognition as our STAR Student!



HIGHLIGHTING SEDOL'S EMPLOYEE OF MONTH

OCTOBER

MARY BUDDE RAGAN

We are excited to recognize Mary Budde Ragan, Social Worker in our Sector Program, as Staff of the Month! Mary brings so much heart, creativity, and dedication to her work each day.

Whether she is leading a social skills group, working with students individually, creating visuals, or carefully tracking progress, Mary takes the time to truly understand each student and what will help them thrive. Her attention to detail and creative problem-solving make a lasting difference.

Mary's compassion extends beyond her work with students. She is always willing to share her expertise, lend a helping hand, and bring a positive, caring presence to those around her. She gives so much of herself to our school community, and her kindness and dedication do not go unnoticed.

Congratulations, Mary! We are incredibly grateful for all that you do and feel so fortunate to have you as part of our school family!



SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT



Building Connections Through Strong Communication

Clear, empathetic, and transparent communication is at the heart of everything we do at SEDOL. It builds trust, strengthens relationships, and ensures that every family, staff member, and partner across our 31 member districts feels informed, connected, and heard.
We keep our community engaged and informed through a variety of official channels:

- **Automated Alerts:** Receive timely phone calls, texts, and emails directly to your registered contact details for urgent updates and weather-related closures.
- **District Website (www.sedol.us):** Your central hub for official news, program updates, event calendars, policy guidelines, and emergency website banners.
- **Social Media:** Follow us on Facebook (@SEDOL.us) and Instagram (@SEDOL_IL) to celebrate daily classroom breakthroughs, staff recognitions, and student milestones!

Winter Safety & Emergency Preparedness

As winter approaches, the safety of our students and staff remains our top priority. When severe weather impacts our region, SEDOL leadership collaborates closely with area superintendents to make timely closure decisions. We carefully evaluate regional safety while addressing the unique health and specialized transportation needs of our students.

DR. JENNIFER THOMAS
SEDOL Superintendent



If a weather closure occurs, updates are broadcast immediately via automated alerts, homepage website banners, and social media posts.

For a complete look at our closure policies, program-specific rules, and communication steps, please review our SEDOL Communication Protocols Overview.

Whether sharing celebrations, answering questions, or relaying time-sensitive updates, our commitment remains constant: keeping our SEDOL community connected, informed, and engaged. Thank you for your continued partnership!

Sincerely Dr. Jennifer Thomas.







SEDOL Homecoming



What a super cool theme for this years Homecoming! You could say everyone had a RAD time!

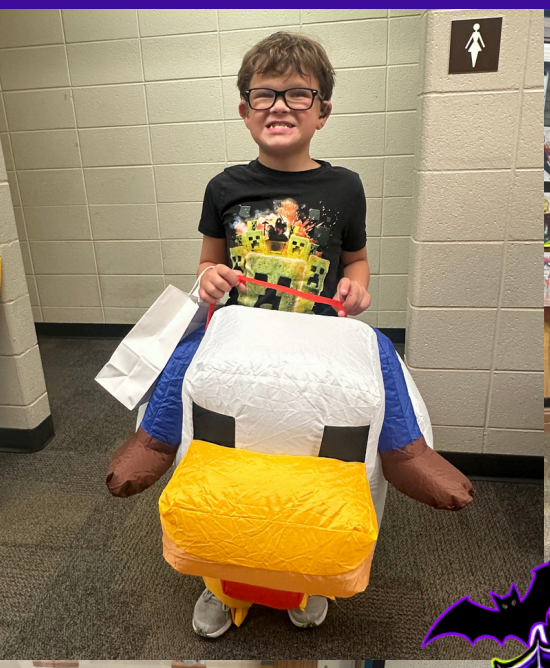




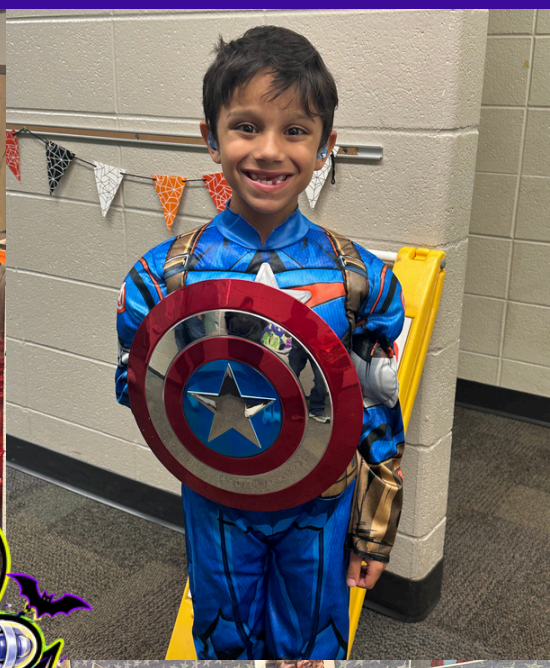





THE GREAT APPLE CRUNCH
CRUNCH, CRUNCH, CRUNCH is all we heard at THE GREAT APPLE CRUNCH EVENT!
JOHN POWERS CENTER





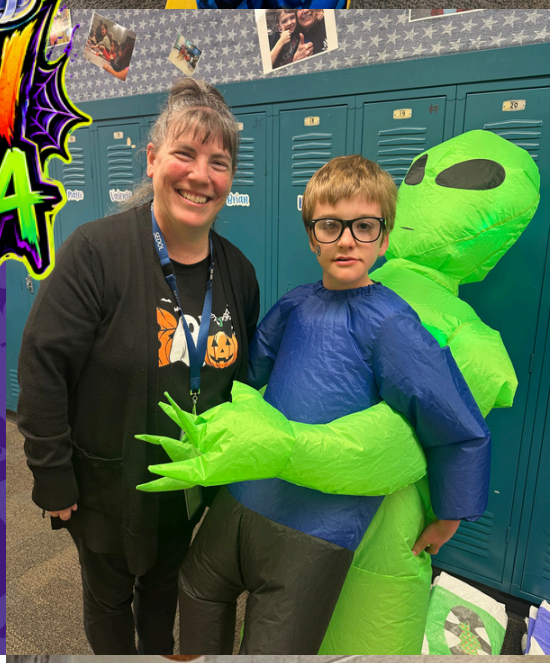




HALLOWEEN EXTRAVAGANZA

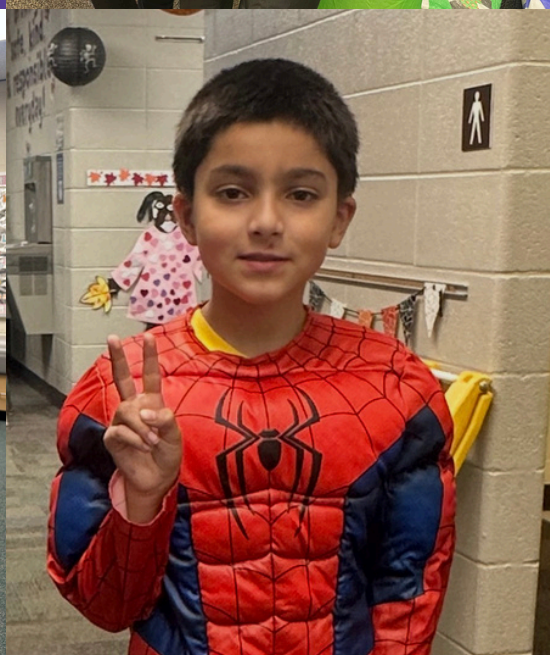
What a Spoooktacular time at the JPC Halloween Extravaganza!

JOHN POWERS CENTER













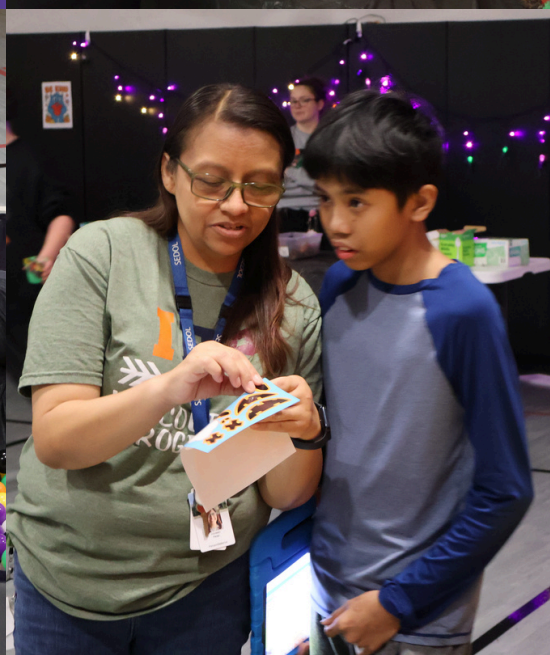












BOO BASH

Fairhaven students having a BOOTASTIC time at the BOO BASH?

FAIRHAVEN FALCONS







LEADERSHIP EXPO

What an honor to have such great leaders visit with us. Thank you for all you do to support our community.

LAREMONT LIONS












SEDOL
MONSTER
MASHUP
All of our schools
Halloween festivites in
a fun Monster Mashup,
ENJOY!

2026 - 2027

CIP PLAN

At SEDOL, continuous improvement is at the heart of everything we do to empower our students, support our dedicated staff, and serve our district communities! Here is an exciting look at the positive progress being made across our 2026–27 CIP Goals:

GOAL 1

Building Mobility & Mealtime Independence (Goal 1 C)

Implemented during the previous academic year with the generous support of the SEDOL Foundation, the MOVE curriculum continues to yield positive student outcomes. Building directly upon this successful implementation, SEDOL staff presented updates to the Executive Board regarding the development of specialized MOVE mealtime assessments for students at Laremont School. Aligned with the ILS Essential Elements, these comprehensive assessment instruments are designed to guide mealtime procedures to enhance student safety, physical comfort, and independence.

In response to the evolving needs of the student population, heightened emphasis has been placed on mealtime safety and individual support requirements. Over the summer, staff developed a standardized dining assessment and management plan. This comprehensive evaluation framework established an individualized baseline for each incoming student, outlining current capabilities and specific goals toward safe, independent dining. Synthesizing existing diagnostic tools, substitute information resources, and contemporary research, the team constructed a structured continuum detailing the stages of progression from fully supported feeding to independent eating. This standardized approach ensures that newly assigned staff can readily review a student's profile, understand typical mealtime expectations, and maintain safety protocols. The assessment criteria encompasses positioning, levels of assistance, food consistency, adaptive utensils, communication methods, and dietary preferences. This initiative addresses the need for a streamlined dining protocol modeled after the structured framework of the MOVE assessment.

AI-Powered Learning Supports (Goal 1 C)

Historically, SEDOL teachers have incorporated daily orientation activities into classroom routines to support the development of functional and general-purpose vocabulary. A key role of the speech-language pathologist (SLP) is to reinforce and expand upon the concepts introduced by classroom teachers. Music provides a highly motivating and engaging medium for teaching, practicing, and retaining these concepts.

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GOAL 1 - CONTINUED

Traditional “Morning Meeting” activities often incorporate songs, visuals, and repetitive routines to teach and reinforce vocabulary related to days of the week, months of the year, seasons, weather, and emotions, including feelings vocabulary that supports emotional regulation and self-awareness. For younger learners, a wide range of commercially available materials and online resources are available to support this instruction. However, these materials are typically designed for early childhood and elementary-aged students, and are often not developmentally or socially appropriate for older learners.

Many secondary and transition-aged students at Laremont continue to require instruction and support in these foundational orientation and self-management concepts. Despite the ongoing importance of this instruction, there is a significant lack of age-appropriate songs, visuals, and activities designed specifically for middle school, high school, and transition-aged students.

The purpose of this project is to utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and resources to develop a variety of age-appropriate materials, including music and visual supports, for use during Morning Meeting activities with secondary and post-secondary students. Instruction in calendar concepts, seasons, weather, and emotions supports important functional outcomes, including transition readiness, emotional regulation, self-advocacy, community participation, vocational independence, and daily living skills.

The SLP and Music Therapist will collaborate to create engaging materials across a variety of musical genres. These materials will provide teachers with additional age-appropriate options to help motivate older students while continuing to reinforce essential functional vocabulary and communication concepts during morning meeting activities. A google folder containing individual folders for the 5 target topics, with links to the options created, has been shared with the building staff so that it is accessible to all. Staff will access and implement as they see fit - to coincide with their daily routines.

Students will identify and use calendar, season, weather, and feelings vocabulary during daily routines and structured communication activities aligned to CC.K-12.L.R.6. They will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening domains.

GOAL 4

Enhancing Community Connection & Communication (Goal 4A)
We are actively elevating how we connect with our SEDOL families and community!

- **Two-Way Family Communication:** We are beginning the process to evaluate various mass notification systems in order to introduce two-way, text-based communication. This initiative will make family-school connection smoother, faster, and more accessible than ever, with a recommendation heading to the Executive Board in March.

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GOAL 4 - CONTINUED

- **Engaging Short-Form Video:** To bring the joy of our classrooms directly to your screens, we have launched a new cadence of short video reels on SEDOL's social media channels! Two reels are already live—be sure to check them out on SEDOL's Facebook and Instagram Account and follow along!

Empowering Decision-Making Through Programming Transparency (Goal 4B)
We want every family and district team to have clear, comprehensive information when planning for student success.

- **Updated Website Resources:** We have updated our online program information to align with our detailed program brochures.
- **Leveraging Educational Content:** At our October 8 general administrative meeting, leadership collaborated on new ways to leverage our program brochures so teams can make well-informed, confidence-inspiring decisions on behalf of our students.

Celebrating Impact & Foundation Partnerships (Goal 4D)
Our partnership with the SEDOL Foundation continues to create wonderful opportunities for our students!

- **Highlighting Foundation Contributions:** We are proudly showcasing the incredible impact of the SEDOL Foundation! From celebrating fun community events like the annual Golf Outing and 5K to highlighting amazing projects like the Sensory Garden at Fairhaven, keep an eye on our social media channels and dedicated newsletter section for inspiring Foundation stories.

Together, these continuous improvements are helping us build brighter futures and stronger connections across the entire SEDOL community!

SEDOL FOUNDATION SUPPORTING SEDOL STUDENTS

Making Strides for Special Kids: A Day of Community, Celebration, and Support!

On Sunday, October 4, more than 250 runners, walkers, and young sprinters laced up their shoes and gathered at beautiful Independence Grove in Libertyville for the SEDOL Foundation's Making Strides for Special Kids Run/Walk.

With sunshine overhead, smiles all around, and plenty of community spirit, the event was a fantastic success! Participants of all ages came together for a shared purpose: supporting SEDOL students and celebrating the power of inclusion, connection, and community.

The excitement extended beyond the course! Young participants and families enjoyed the creative talents of a balloon artist and the playful magic of a strolling bubble artist, adding extra fun and unforgettable moments to an already special day.

The event would not be possible without the generosity and dedication of our sponsors, the enthusiasm of our participants, and the incredible fundraising efforts that help make our mission possible. Over $50,000 was raised to help support opportunities for SEDOL students to shine!

Together, we are making strides toward a brighter, more inclusive future for our students. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's event such a memorable success!











SEDOL™ FOUNDATION

Thank you to everyone who came out and supported our students!











↓ NOVEMBER ↓

7

SEDOL FOUNDATION ONE SPECIAL NIGHT
The Ten Hotel - Gurnee, IL
One Special Night
6:30PM - 10:30PM
CLICK LINK

12

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
SEDOL Administration Building - Bay Room
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
8:30AM

14

PUNS NIGHT (SEDOL FAMILIES ONLY)
SEDOL Administration Building
IDHS ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
5PM - 8PM

25-27

THANKSGIVING BREAK
SEDOL Calendar
ENJOY YOUR THANKSGIVING BREAK!

FOR MORE INFO VISIT: WWW.SEDOL.US