



SUMMER 2022

LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



Our twelve Inspirational Eagles!
Learn more about them on page 5 and online.

Superintendent's Corner



Nick Polyak, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Hello Leyden Family,

Education is a people business. At Leyden, we have approximately 3,400 students, over 600 employees, and tens of thousands of parents, families, and community members. Collectively, we all make up the Leyden Family and the Leyden Community. Individually, every one of those people has a story - and those stories are amazing!

For the past year, we have been trying to tell those stories with a monthly YouTube feature called One Amazing Story. Each month, we have featured a different student, employee, or

community member. Each video is a few minutes in length and they allow you to get to know that person on another level.

I invite you to scan this QR Code to watch the last year's worth of videos. Make sure to also subscribe to our YouTube channel so that you can see the monthly One Amazing Story as well as all of the other outstanding content showcasing what is happening at Leyden all year long. Thank you for your continued partnership as we strive to Educate, Enrich, and Empower our students and community!

With #leydenpride,
Nick Polyak

Victoria Valentine named Special Education Teacher of the Year

Leyden's very own Victoria Valentine was just named the Special Education Teacher of the Year by the Illinois State Board of Education. This is a highly competitive process, recognizing the best in the teaching profession in the state. While Victoria was originally nominated for the Outstanding Early Career Educator, a category for those with less than four years of experience, she was instead named the Special Education Teacher of the Year, reserved for those with more than five years of experience!

Since 2019, Valentine has been a part of the Leyden family, dedicating nearly three years to our students. When asked about her how teaching at Leyden has been different from past experiences, Valentine stated, "Leyden's belief in teachers taking their curriculum and classroom dreams and running with them is something that I



Victoria, pictures with her boyfriend Stuart Naue (left) and her parents Jeanne and Ronald Valentine (right).

have not experienced in other school districts...They did not bat an eye when I asked for another cabinet, wheelchair accessible countertop, and a doorway to connect the rooms."

What appears to set Valentine apart is not only her love for teaching, but her clear and ever present love for the students. "My teaching philosophy has always been student-centered,

tapped into emotions, and focused on building independence", said Valentine. "My students are what inspire me to work my butt off. Seeing the families persevere through the hardships of the pandemic pushes me to work towards the highest quality of support we can provide during their time in this program."

When asked what advice she would give to teachers hoping to one day achieve such an award, Valentine said, "The wraparound perspective is the way to go in special education because it truly takes a village. Working with the entire team of classroom aides, other teachers, families, service providers, medical professionals, and administrators helps you find the best outcomes for students...When the team is all working towards the same goal, it can make more of an impact than if you were doing it alone."

New District Leaders

District 212 announces the hiring of Faith Cole as director of student services

On Thursday, April 28, the Leyden High School District 212 Board of Education approved the hiring of Faith Cole as the director of student services, effective July 1, 2022. Cole fills the vacancy resulting from current Leyden administrator Dr. Brian Mahoney's transition to the role of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.



Faith Cole

"I am honored to be welcomed into the Leyden Family and continue on supporting their history of success."

strong path that has been established to meet the needs of our communities. She will work directly with Leyden's student services and special education departments as well as helping to facilitate the district's Equity and Justice Leadership Team."

Cole currently serves as the director of student services at Oak Park District 200. Prior to that, she served in numerous other roles at Oak Park District 97, including director of multi-tiered system of supports, principal, assistant principal, lead teacher mentor and classroom teacher.

Cole earned her Bachelor's from Lewis University, Master's from Northeastern University and is currently pursuing her educational doctorate from Walden University, which she expects to complete in May of this year.

"I am thrilled about the new opportunity, but sad because it means leaving the place and people that have meant so much to me," said Cole. "However, it is the success we have enjoyed as a school community during that time, as well as the growth I have made both personally and professionally in Oak Park, that motivated me to pursue this position in Leyden 212. I am honored to be welcomed into the Leyden Family and continue on supporting their history of success."

District announces assistant superintendent Brian Mahoney transitioning into the role of assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction

On Thursday, April 28, the Leyden High School District 212 Board of Education announced the transition of Dr. Brian Mahoney's from assistant superintendent of student services and special education to the role of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

In his current role, Mahoney is responsible for oversight and development of comprehensive and innovative programming and services to meet diverse student needs. He works directly with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to ensure all students have access to comprehensive academic and social

emotional curriculum and programs to ensure integration between student services and academic programs.

Prior to coming to Leyden, Mahoney served as the Special Education Division Chair of Lyons Township High School. Prior to that, he served in numerous other roles, including Assistant Principal, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services, and Special Education Teacher.



Brian Mahoney

Mahoney earned his Bachelor's from Illinois State University, Master's from Governors State University and Doctorate from Loyola University Chicago.

Mahoney's vacancy will be filled by Faith Cole, effective July 1, 2022.

One Amazing Story

video series continues

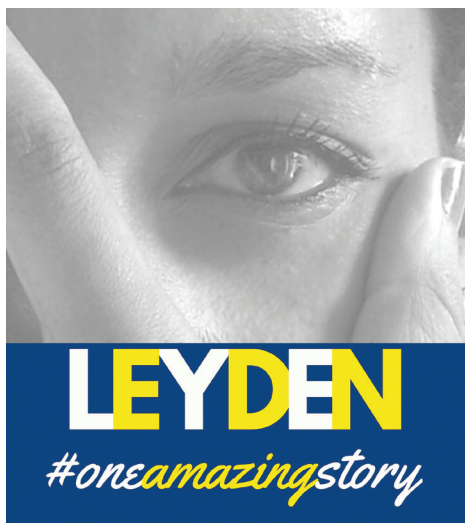
Cai Li, Leyden senior transfer student

Have you met Cai Li? Maybe not, because she just transferred into Leyden this year as a senior after attending private schools all her life. She recently earned the Dominican University Presidential Scholarship through exceptional academic performance and involvement outside of the classroom.

Cai Li's is a story of adapting to change, overcoming challenges, and championing fellow female students to pursue opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math



(STEM). She says "we've just started to close the gender gap in stem and other male-dominated fields, so now is a perfect time to explore a career in one of those respective areas. By doing so, young women not only contribute to creating change for the better, but also get to pursue their dreams."



Anna Reed, Leyden educator and artist

For Anna Reed, an art teacher at Leyden, it took years for her to realize that you have to give yourself the title of "artist." Through her own journey of applying and attending graduate school, she deeply related to her students as she remembered what it is like to navigate your future. She taught herself how to evolve as an artist and educator, and she understands

both the benefits of being self-taught and also seeking to elevate from the experiences you have with those around you.

This month, she closes an exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry, which she shares as a surreal experience. As an artist, you spend much more time than people think, just applying and trying to get your work seen. This is what makes Anna Reed, this month's One Amazing Story: her commitment, her tenacity, and just, HER...as an artist.

To watch the video,
scan the QR Code:



East Leyden Key Club builds "little library"

With the assistance of a grant, East Leyden Key Club built a "little library" for the entire community to enjoy near entrance 21 on King Street. The goal of the program is to promote reading and provide a free book

exchange for all. Community members can pick up a book or leave a book in the "little library" cabinet. Books are open to everyone, and are for all ages and interests.

Inspirational Eagles

named for 2021-2022
school year



On March 8, 2022, Leyden celebrated twelve of our finest students for the Seventh Annual Inspirational Eagle Awards. These Awards go out to students for accomplishments in improving or maintaining academic excellence, attendance, behavior and overall citizenship. They are nominated by faculty, and are chosen for their incredible stories of triumph over adversity.

Congratulations to the following Inspirational Eagles: Mia De Leon, Sierra Gibson, Xander Kieffer, Valentina Ly, Guise Salas, Grace Wardisiani, Patrick Gadocha, Alejandro Gonzalez, Eveline Ibarra, Azul Rios, Alondra Rodriguez and Rodolfo Torres.

To read their
incredible stories,
scan the QR Code:



To order a paver,
please visit www.leyden212.org/pavers
or scan the QR Code:



LEYDEN PRIDE PAVERS

Leyden High School District announces the inaugural sale of Leyden Pride Pavers to commemorate the new concession stand at the stadium. This is a great opportunity to pay a tribute to teachers, coaches, teams, families and students, celebrate a milestone such as graduation, or memorialize a loved one. As Leyden approaches its 100 anniversary in 2024, the Leyden Pride Pavers are a great way for our school community to be a part of the tradition!

Pavers feature up to three lines of text, 13 characters each including spaces. In this initial offering, pavers will be discounted to a cost of \$75 each, for all orders placed prior to August 1. After that, the standard paver cost will remain at \$100 each.

Funds raised through the purchase of pavers will benefit the Leyden Foundation, which exists to support student needs that reach beyond the capacity of the school district.

- Leyden Pride Pavers
- Dedicate a brick that will be a part of Leyden for generations.
- Pay tribute to teachers, coaches, teams, family or children
- Celebrate a milestone
- Memorialize a loved one
- Highlight a business or organization
- Three lines of text
- Standard Brick \$100
- *\$25 discount until Aug 1

Visit www.leyden212.org/pavers
to purchase a legacy brick.

State Winners - Congratulations to our Champions!



eSports

Leyden is happy to share **Caleb Ruiz, David Hernandez** and **Daniel Jiminez**, three sophomore students at West won Leyden's first eSports State Title in Fortnite!

There were 18 different schools, represented by 32 teams of 3 players, 96 total players (some schools had more than one team qualify) for the state final. State final consisted of six 25 minutes rounds.

1st Place went to Leyden followed by Barrington High School and then Salem High School.

There were approximately 88 teams that competed during the regular season - the top 32 qualified for the state title tournament. This is our first year of esports and our first year of competing.



BRIDGE Team

It's with great pride we announce our BRIDGE Leyden Basketball team won the State Championship!

This season led by coach **Teagen Lyke**, the team had an undefeated record of 4-0. During the state championship, the team won their first game by a whopping 20 points. The championship game score was a nail biting 42-41 with Leyden Bridge taking the victory over the TNT Firecrackers. This year there were 90 teams total that qualified for state!

The students that competed were:

Emmanuel Deacon, Gianluca Bravo, Jonathon Gonzalez, Dominic LaRocco, Lester Martinez, Daniel Ramirez, Alexander Juraszek, Sammy Termine and **William Torres**.



Transition Team

Leyden Transition Basketball Team finished in 2nd place in the state championship! The team is coached

by **Roger Reiner**. Students that competed: **Peter Malinowski, Robert Delgado, Ramon Gonzalez, Victor Garcia, Christina Colon** and **Giovanni Mendoza**.

Leyden District 212 Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are in the East Campus Board Room



Mr. Gregory T. Ignoffo
President



Mrs. Gloria Murawska
Vice President



Mr. James A. Lima
Secretary



Mr. Joseph Trevino
Member



Mrs. Lisa Anthony
Member



Mrs. Sandra Boehm
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia
Member



Daniel Lechuga
Student Member



Izabella Laniewski
Student Member

Leyden High School District 212 is an equal opportunity institution, committed to compliance with all applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination. This includes prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, order of protection status, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, homelessness and marital/parental status, including pregnancy.

As required by S.B. 898, you may go to Leyden's website to view our budget at: www.leyden212.org

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West Campus
1000 N. Wolf Road
Northlake, IL 60164

Thank you to those who contributed photos to this edition of the newsletter.