



Winter 2015

LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



The 9th Annual Career Fair and Business Expo included nearly 100 vendors and attracted about 1500 visitors seeking employment.



Former Board of Education President Richard Nardini (left) presents former Leyden head football coach Jack Leese with a street sign bearing the seven title-winning coach's name. Leese was inducted into the Chicagoland Sports Hall of Fame in September.



The district's Halloween Fun Fair was a spook-tacular time for witches, goblins, ghosts, princesses, and superheroes of all ages.

Superintendent's Corner



Nick Polyak, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Hello Leyden Family,

If you haven't been to the district's website in a while, I would like to invite you to check out our brand new site at www.leyden212.org. Hopefully you find it much more user-friendly and easy to navigate. My suggestion would be to visit the site, watch some videos and read some stories. You will also notice that both East Leyden and West Leyden have their own unique web pages for building specific content and information. We identified the most common uses of our website and turned them into quick links on the top of the page. Those links include: Calendar, Home Access Center, Lunch Menu, Search Tool, and Language Translator.

Leyden has now been a 1:1 school district that provides a Google Chromebook for each student since 2012. Over the past few years, teaching and learning have evolved into a connected, digitally rich environment for our students. One issue with this model is that not all of our students have regular, reliable internet access when they leave our buildings. With that in mind, we have been exploring some grant opportunities to help address that need.

I am thrilled to announce that we have formed a partnership with Sprint and the White House's ConnectEd Initiative. The district is in the process of acquiring Sprint WiFi hotspots that can be given to students who do not have connectivity when they are not at Leyden. Sprint will provide 3 gigabytes of data service each month to those hotspots for the next four years. After we distribute those hotspots, every Leyden student should then have consistent internet access both in and out of school. Only the student's unique Chromebook will be able to connect to his/her hotspot and, if they use all 3 gigabytes in a given month, they will not lose connectivity. Instead, they will have a slower version of internet connectivity until the next month's cycle starts.

We are very excited about both of these items. The new website should allow our community to learn much more about the amazing things happening at our schools every day. The internet connectivity project will help us ensure equity in educational opportunities for all of our students.

Thank you for all you do to support the Leyden community!

With #leydenpride,
Dr. Nick Polyak

District 212 is One of Chicago's Top 100 Workplaces

For the second consecutive year Leyden High School District 212 has been selected as one of The Chicago Tribune Top 100 Workplaces. The list includes employers in diverse categories such as accounting, healthcare, law, and computers.

Leyden is ranked #35 in the midsize category, and is the only high school district on the list. The two other school districts on the list are elementary districts.

The Top Workplaces are determined by employee feedback. The employee survey is conducted by WorkplaceDynamics, LLP, a leading research firm that examines workplace environments. The company uses a short, anonymous survey to collect information from employees working in places like a hospital, school, corporation, or company.

The assessment measures Organizational Health through the following subtopics: Direction of the Organization, Execution of

Initiatives, and Connections with Employees. It also measures your feelings about your job on the following subtopics: Work Expectations, Relationships with Management, and Pay and Benefits.

A few months ago, Leyden employees were asked to take an online survey that ultimately put the school district on The Chicago Tribune Top 100 Workplaces list. This recognition is based on the 299 surveys completed by Leyden employees. "It is rare for school districts to be nominated for this honor, and even more rare to be selected as a Top Workplace," says Superintendent Nick Polyak.

He adds the most meaningful aspect of this recognition is that it was "determined by the responses from our staff members. We are a top workplace because of the way our staff members interact with each other, our students, and the community."



Q & A with West Leyden's New Principal and New Assistant Principal

On July 1, 2015, former West Leyden assistant principal Tatiana Bonuma became the principal at West Leyden. A member of the Leyden family for nearly a decade, Bonuma is a district veteran. This is what she has to say about her new post as principal.

What are the challenges of being a high school principal?

A comprehensive high school like West Leyden has so much going on all the time. I wish there were more hours in a day to witness all the wonderful things that are happening in classes, activities, and sports.

Any surprises to date, something you didn't anticipate?

So far, no major surprises. This is my ninth year at West, and during that time, I had the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Wagner. Although, I can honestly say I'm surprised every day by students and staff when I see evidence of what we can accomplish at Leyden.

What is your favorite aspect of the job?

There is so much pride that comes from witnessing student success – it is definitely my favorite part of the

job. It's fascinating to see how much students grow in four years. They take on leadership roles and get a chance to hone skills that will prove essential after they graduate.

As principal, what goals have you set for yourself?

My goal is to always be focused on providing our students with the best possible programs, opportunities, and school environment. West Leyden is an amazing school, and it is my mission to continue to cultivate the culture that has been established and is captured in our motto: We are Excellence, We are Service, We are One.

How would you describe West Leyden students?

Our students are the best – polite, hard-working, welcoming, and appreciative. Any time we have visitors in the building, they are in awe of our students.



Pictured: Principal Tatiana Bonuma and Assistant Principal Jason Cummins.

Is there something you'd like to add?

I'm fortunate to be part of a group of faculty and staff who are dedicated to helping students achieve their potential. They are constantly evolving and actively seeking creative ways to engage students and individualize learning. As for our parents, they are supportive of the school, and have done an outstanding job raising honest, hard-working, community-minded young adults.

Jason Cummins took over Bonuma's position as one of two assistant principals at the West campus on July 1. Before joining the Leyden family, he served as the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction at North Chicago Community Unit School District 187 located in suburban North Chicago. This is Cummins' up-to-the-date assessment of his new post at the school.

As an assistant principal, what are your responsibilities?

My major responsibilities are master scheduling and coordination of staff needs and duties, teacher and staff evaluations; coordination of local, state, and national testing and grade reporting; and leading the teacher interview process. I also collaborate with the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction and department chairs; supervise substitute teachers and the absence system; building usage and calendar; and workman's compensation claims.

What has been your biggest challenge thus far?

The biggest challenge has been trying to learn everyone's name – both staff and students. I'm from a much smaller school. It seems every week I meet a new staff member or student I hadn't seen before.

Overall, what do you enjoy the most about your job?

The best part overall has been the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from staff at both campuses. I look forward to having the chance to build positive relationships with students – that's the fun part of this job.

What has surprised you about the school's culture?

I'm really surprised by the amount of #leydenpride there is. The staff and students seem to have a positive attitude with a mindset to always push forward and be the best they can be. The great things that happen at West are always publicized and celebrated. I love that. I've never been active on Twitter until this year. Now I'm hooked.

Is there something you'd like to add?

I'm really grateful to have been welcomed so warmly by the staff and students. It has made my transition to a new district much easier.

The 2015 Homecoming Game A Winner

Eagles Corral Mustangs

The weather was brutal on Friday, October 2. A cold, relentless north wind clipped across the field at the West campus and made it difficult for both football teams when they faced north on the field. But our Leyden Eagles took the wind in stride, and soared to beat the Downers Grove South Mustangs 28-24 in the varsity football homecoming game.



Photo by Pete Skylakos

There was a 7-7 tied score early in the game, but then the Eagles' offense took over and racked up three unanswered touchdowns. The defense dismantled the Mustangs offense with a blocked punt, interceptions, fumble recoveries, and two sacks. In particular, the two sacks in the last two minutes of the game stopped

the Mustangs' late rally and protected the four point lead for a victory.

"There's nothing better than beating Downers Grove South," says head coach Tom Cerasani. "We're very proud of the effort and character that our team showed during the homecoming game."

Faculty Rivalry Plays Out on the Gridiron

Homecoming Tradition Raises \$1,000 For Leyden Family Fund



It's always a hard fought battle when faculty from the East and West campuses compete against each other at the Annual Faculty Football Game, an event that puts teachers head-to-head on the football field.

It was no different this year when on October 1, a crisp autumn evening perfect for football, the teachers set academics aside, laced up their athletic

shoes, and met on the football field at the West campus. Students, staff, and community members showed up as well, displaying colorful posters and chanting slogans, all in support of their favorite teams.

The game is much-anticipated and a favorite with the fans, but there is a serious side to the competition.



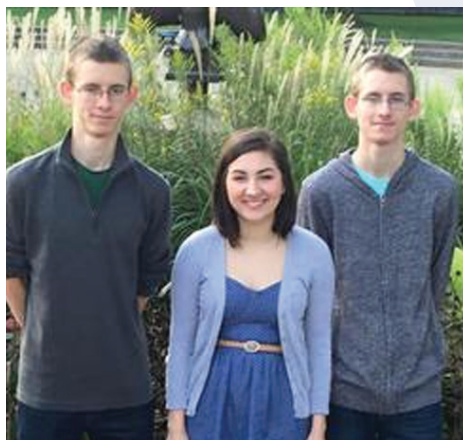
Sponsored by students in Leyden's sports and entertainment marketing classes, the event is a fundraiser for the Leyden Family Fund, an account for Leyden students and their families in need of financial support. This year's game raised more than \$1,000 through donations and the sale of t-shirts and food.

The competition is also about some serious bragging rights, and this time the East campus teachers stormed the field and won the flag football game 28-21. So as of right now, the rivalry simmers: East is on top and West knows there's always next year.

Five 2016 National Merit Commended Students Honored

District 212 recently received notice that five students have been named Commended Students in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program. The students are Robert Doody and Piotr Galusza from East Leyden, and Alexa Roman, Maciej Wojtasik, and Tomasz Wojtasik from West Leyden. A letter of commendation from the school and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation was presented to scholastically talented seniors by the principal from each campus.

About 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation were recognized for their exceptional academic promise. And although they will not continue in the 2016 competition for National Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2016 competition. In addition, some of these students become candidates for Special Scholarships sponsored by corporations and businesses.



From left: Maciej Wojtasik, Alexa Romano, and Tomasz Wojtasik

"The young men and women being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to



From left: Robert Doody and Piotr Galusza

the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success."

West Senior Scores A Perfect 36 on the ACT

Tomasz Wojtasik, a senior at West and a Commended Student in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program, scored a 36 on the ACT exam – the highest possible score.

The ACT is a national college admissions examination that includes 215 multiple choice questions in four subject areas: English, mathematics, reading, and science.

"Tomasz and his family immigrated from Poland when he was nine so English is not his first language," says Karin Dewey, Wojtasik's counselor. "This makes his accomplishment of a perfect ACT score even more noteworthy."

Dewey adds that "Tomasz strives to not only be educated but also to understand and connect with what he learns in and out of the classroom. He is globally conscious and makes it a point to research global issues and understand a variety of different cultures. He is passionate about history and would ultimately like to pursue a PhD in history and teach at the college level."

While the number of students earning a perfect 36 varies from year to year, less than one-tenth of 1% of students who take the test earn the top score. Of the more than 1.92 million high school students who took the test and graduated in 2015, only 1,598 earned a composite score of 36.

One Book, One Leyden The Distance Between Us

In November the district launched the One Book, One Leyden project by distributing copies of *The Distance Between Us*, a memoir by Mexican-born

author Reyna Grande, to Leyden staff members as well as village administrators and community members. The goal is to prompt a community read: participants read the book, pass it on to other people, and then join in the discussions and other activities relevant to the book and Grande's journey.

The project continues through February of 2016 when Grande will visit with students at the East and West campuses on Thursday and Friday, February 18 and 19. The author will also meet with community members at a reception to be held from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on February 18, in the auditorium at West Leyden.





Make a Difference Day

About 650 Leyden students participated in Make a Difference Day, a national day of community service. These students created cheerful, colorful cards for children in hospitals across the USA. The handmade cards will be distributed by Cards for Hospitalized Kids, a national charitable organization that provides hope and joy to seriously ill children. After the cards are distributed, the students will receive a letter specifying where the cards were sent.

Disney's High School Musical

Leyden's production of High School Musical brought the popular movie to life on the small stage with lively music, songs, and dance routines. The cast and crew included students from both campuses.



Boys Soccer Team

After a stellar season that ended 16-5-2, the boys varsity soccer team advanced to regionals, and ultimately won the regional final game 2 to 0 against Lane Tech. This win deemed the team Regional Champions and sent them to the IHSA sectional game where they won 2-0 against Niles North. After a hard fought game, the team lost to #1 ranked Evanston in the Sweet Sixteen.

Modern Languages Festival

Students get into the spirit using props to represent the languages and cultural customs showcased at the Modern Languages Festival held this fall at both campuses. The festivities include ethnic foods, traditional dances, and crafts, and a FIFA soccer videogame competition.



Winter Calendar 2015-2016

DATE	ACTIVITY	TIME
December		
21	Winter Break - No School	
January		
5	Classes Resume	
14	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.
18	Martin Luther King Day - No School	
19	Taste of East East Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
20	Taste of West West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
21	Talent Show West Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
22	Talent Show West Auditorium	4:00 p.m.
23	East/West Residency Days East-Little Theater; West-Entrance 2	8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
25	East/West Residency Days East-Little Theater; West-Entrance 2	7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
27	East/West Residency Days East-Little Theater; West-Entrance 2	7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
29	Orchesis Dance Show West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
30	Orchesis Dance Show West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
February		
3	Ask The Expert Day	8:50 a.m.- 2:30 p.m.
10	Bring Your Parents to School Day	
15	Presidents' Day - No School	
18	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.
23	Inspirational Eagle Awards West Auditorium	6:00 p.m.
26	Turnabout Dance East Leyden Field House	7:00 p.m.

DATE	ACTIVITY	TIME
March		
2	Winter Instrumental Concert West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
4	Winter Play - <i>GEEK!</i> East Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
5	Winter Play - <i>GEEK!</i> East Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
7	Casimir Pulaski Day - No School	
9	Winter Sports Awards Night West Leyden Auditorium	6:30 p.m.
10	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.
11	<i>The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip & GEEK!</i> West Leyden Auditorium IHSA Group Interpretation & Contest Play Presentation	7:00 p.m.
12	<i>The Very Persistent Gappers of Frip & GEEK!</i> West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
12	Winter Choral Festival TO BE DETERMINED	3:00 p.m.
18	Prom Fashion Show West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
21	Jazz Night West Leyden Auditorium	7:00 p.m.
24	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.
25	No School	
28	Spring Break - No School	
April		
4	Classes Resume	
14	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.
21	Fern Awards Reception West Leyden Auditorium	4:00 p.m.
25	West Leyden Spring Art Show West Leyden Eagle's Wing	6:00 p.m.
25	East Leyden Spring Art Show East Leyden Little Theater	6:00 p.m.
28	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 p.m.

Fall Sports Highlights

Girls Volleyball Team

The girls varsity volleyball finished the season 23-12, the best record in Leyden history. The team took first place at the Eagle Invite, second place at the Elgin Invite, and third place at the IMSA Invitational. They captured second place at conference, the best the team has done in many years.

Girls Tennis Team

The varsity tennis team had one of its best seasons in years with a record of 10-3-1 and a strong third place conference finish. The top singles player

was a sophomore Jessica Minkov who finished first in the conference and went on to qualify for the State Finals Tournament at sectionals.

Girls Swim Team

The girls swim team finished the season 6 and 2 – the best record for the past 15 years – and third in conference. The team took second place out of five at the Eagle Invite, and beat Hinsdale South for the first time since 1978. In addition, 12 girls received the straight A award, the best ever achieved by a team.

Girls Cross Country

Girls cross country had a successful season topped off with a second place finish in the West Suburban Gold Conference. In addition, the team took second place at Leyden's Eagle Invite.

Golf

During the regular season the team finished in third place in conference, with wins against Addison Trail and Willowbrook, two teams they had not beat in several years. Gabe Garcia was selected as a member of the All-

Conference Team; and Garcia, Ryan Langer, and Graham Pedersen advanced to the sectional tournament.

Boys Cross Country

The team placed third at the varsity level at the ICCP Invite, and fifth at the conference meet.

Football

The varsity football team finished the season 4-5, with impressive wins against Downers Grove South at homecoming, and Willowbrook on senior night.



Leyden High School District 212
3400 Rose Street
Franklin Park, IL 60131

Leyden Celebrates American Education Week November 16 - 20, 2015

Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility

One aspect of Leyden's mission as a school district is to raise awareness regarding the role public education plays in the lives of students, families, educators, and communities throughout America. And as we have done in the past, we celebrated the National Education Association's 94th Annual American Education Week in mid-November.

This year's theme is "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." Leyden echoes that theme in its mission statement that in essence says our district supports "a community of lifelong learners, who prepare for global change, respect diversity, accept personal responsibility, and pursue a sense of fulfillment."

Mikkel Storaasli, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, says that the district's rich and diverse curriculum meets the needs of each of our students. "It is our goal to prepare our students to excel in a constantly changing society. Our students hone skills in problem solving, creativity, collaboration, and

deciphering information from varied media sources," he says.

In addition to core academics, Leyden offers students the chance to enrich their lives with co-curricular activities including a selection of clubs and organizations, visual and performing arts, athletics, and community service opportunities.

Leyden is assigned with the responsibility of educating students for life after high school. It is both a privilege and a duty, says Superintendent Nick Polyak. "We have 3400 students at Leyden, and each one has different interests, strengths, areas for growth, and plans for the future. It is our responsibility to meet our students where they are, to help them maximize their educational experience, and prepare them for whatever path they choose after high school," Polyak notes. "Through a combination of outstanding students, supportive families, dedicated teachers, and staff members, we continue to make Leyden a place where amazing things happen every day."

"Part of our mission is to groom students for their post-high school lives. We encourage them to discover and explore their passion and use that to advance their goals and ultimately success in life."

-Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Mikkel Storaasli

"A district focused on academic success, leadership development, and community service lives its mission, Storaasli notes. "Part of our mission is to groom students for their post-high school lives. We encourage them to discover and explore their passion and use that to advance their goals and ultimately succeed in life," he says.

Polyak says he is proud of the Leyden family and that celebrating American Education Week is an appropriate way to pay tribute to all individuals who ensure that each student in the district receives a quality education.

Leyden District 212 Board of Education

Board of Education meetings are in the East Campus Board Room.



Front Row: Mr. James A. Lima, Secretary; Mr. Gregory T. Ignoffo, President; Mrs. Gloria Murawska, Vice President
Back Row: Mr. Joseph Trevino, Mrs. Lisa Anthony, Mrs. Sandra Boehm, Mr. Jack Tobin

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

State law requires that we inform you of the dates when our lawn and garden areas will be fertilized. The dates to fertilize and weed and feed will be during the following week:

March 28 through April 3, 2016
June 6 through June 12, 2016

Weed and Feed
Fertilize

East Campus
3400 Rose Street
Franklin Park, IL 60131

West Campus
1000 N. Wolf Road
Northlake, IL 60164