



SUMMER 2024

LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



Leyden celebrates 100 years! It all starts with a community concert, Friday, October, 4 at the Rosemont Dome, featuring Jonathan Cain, songwriter and keyboardist of the band Journey and Tommy "Mugs" Cain. See page 5 for more information

Superintendent's Corner



Dr. Nick Polyak
Superintendent

There are many things that make Leyden the unique place it is - from our people and communities, to our unified athletic teams, fine arts, and curricular programs. One of those very special things, just so happens to be celebrating its 10 year anniversary, and that is our award-winning, bilingual theater program, Teatro Leyden.

I was excited to attend Teatro Leyden's staging of La Gringa this Spring, as it was a callback to the same play that started the whole thing 10 years ago. In 2014, Bill Mitchell, a former counselor at Leyden, recognized that there was a large group of students missing from our productions. He and others believed deeply in the important life skills built both on stage and behind the scenes. The idea was to take one common script and perform it in English and Spanish, giving more students an opportunity to participate in live theater.

This type of theater, unfortunately, is very rare and unheard of at the high school level. It has brought national interest and visitors to Leyden over the past decade. In 2018, the National School Board Association awarded Teatro Leyden their Grand Prize Magna Award as a top equity program in America. I am incredibly proud of the amazing commitment of our staff to identify and meet the needs of our students, in programs like this and throughout both of our high schools.

With Leyden Pride,
Dr. Nick Polyak

To learn more about the program and its inception, watch a short video documentary about Teatro Leyden by scanning the QR Code



Thank you to our 100th Anniversary Sponsors



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Diamond (\$5,000)

Green Associates (Concert)
Sloan Valve (Gala)
SPM Architects (Picnic)

Gold (\$2,500)

Village of Franklin Park

Blue (\$1,000)

Bear Construction
Henry Bros, Co.
River Grove Lions Club
Rosemont Public Safety Department

Eagle (\$500)

Franklin Park Park District
Building Technology Consultants

Leyden Pride (\$212)

Village of Melrose Park

District announces the hiring of a **new principal** for East Leyden



“I understand the amazing responsibility of leading a school and look forward to the opportunity to do so at East Leyden High School.”

– Dr. Julie Lam

On Thursday, April 18, the Leyden Board of Education approved the hiring of **Dr. Julie Lam** as the new East Leyden principal, effective July 1, 2024. The hiring of Lam is a result of

an extensive search process, including a pre-screening of qualified candidates and a series of interviews with Leyden administrators, faculty, staff and students.

“We are incredibly excited to welcome Dr. Lam to the Leyden Family. Her vast experiences in the classroom and in both building and district administrative roles have prepared her to hit the ground running at East Leyden next year,” said Superintendent Dr. Nick Polyak. “She has demonstrated a strong ability to continue leading the work that has been established at East, while also bringing her own knowledge and expertise to build additional supports that meet the changing needs of our communities.”

Lam currently serves as the director of student learning at Oak Park and River Forest High School, and has also served as an assistant principal of curriculum and instruction and assistant director of secondary education at Oswego Community Unit School District 308. Prior to that, she held roles in her field of science at the Museum of Science and Industry, and began her career as a high school science teacher.

Lam earned a Bachelor of Science from Loyola University, Master of Science from University of Arizona and earned her Doctorate from Northern Illinois University.

“I am filled with joy to join the Leyden team,” said Lam. “I understand the amazing responsibility of leading a school and look forward to the opportunity to do so at East Leyden High School.”

Lam fills the role resulting from current principal Dr. Dominic Manola’s appointment as the district’s assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

Board announces **new student representative**

“For as long as I can remember I have always been fascinated by politics and I feel this is a way to learn more about local politics as they are always overshadowed by bigger events.”

– Jonathan Guerrero

At the meeting in May, the Leyden High School Board of Education announced the appointment of West Leyden rising **junior Jonathan Guerrero** as a student board member. Guerrero will serve as one of two student board members, for a two-year term beginning with the 2024-25 school year. Guerrero joins East Leyden rising **senior Adriel Carrera**, a current student board member.

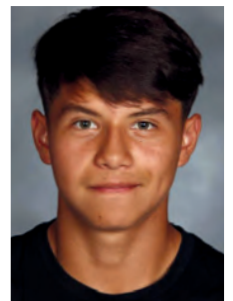
Last year, Leyden began a new student board member process, where one senior and one junior were selected, so that moving forward each year, only one position will need to be filled. This was

done to help improve consistency and provide an easier transition and training opportunities in the future.

Jonathan Guerrero was selected by staff for his interest in politics and community engagement. He is an involved student, who cares about his classmates and the democratic process.

“For as long as I can remember I have always been fascinated by politics and I feel this is a way to learn more about local politics as they are always overshadowed by bigger events,” said Guerrero. “I feel connecting with a

community this way would best help me with the career I choose to pursue if it is in that field.”



To access this newsletter electronically as text-only for easy translation, please scan the QR Code. Share with someone you know who speaks a language other than English or Spanish.

Ecology Club unveils new pocket prairie at West Leyden

“I am incredibly thankful for the participation of many Leyden Ecology Club students, and for the offices of Norma Hernandez and Eira Corral Sepulveda in helping to raise awareness for the restoration of the Illinois natural environment and ecosystem.”

– Liam Fazzi

In April, Leyden's Ecology Club unveiled and planted their new pocket prairie outside the greenhouse at West Leyden High School. **State Representative Norma Hernandez** and **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Eira Corral Sepulveda** were in attendance and helped with planting, while they discussed local environmental issues.

“This project has been in the works for almost a year, and so this is an exciting moment for our students and school community. We were happy for the opportunity to start this prairie in honor of this year's Earth Day,” said Science Teacher Dr. Todd Veltman.

Students began the project at the start of the school year by presenting their plan to **West Leyden Principal Dr. Arturo Senteno** for consideration. After receiving approval, students worked to raise funds to purchase the plants and coordinate with the building and grounds team to prepare the site for the new prairie. The goal of the prairie is to provide a space for environmental and biology classes to engage in science, for local wildlife to enjoy, and for the art/photography classes to use an outdoor studio.

“Ecology club initially began as just a place for us to enjoy nature - We would go on nature walks behind our school and see what we could use binoculars,” said student **Javier Gomez**. “However, we wanted something on a bit of a larger scale and so the prairie project came to fruition because of our passion to help the environment while also wanting to

increase involvement here at Leyden. Gomez continued, “We couldn't be happier with how everything turned out and are so glad the Leyden community has taken such an interest in our club and prairie.”

The Leyden Ecology Club works to deepen student's appreciation of the local environment and help with local ecological projects. They take regular nature walks through the neighborhood and have documented approximately 50 bird species this year within a half mile of school property including a black crowned night heron which is on the state endangered list. The club has also helped the Cook County Forest Preserve collect seeds at the Silver Creek Prairie for its preservation work.



State Representative Norma Hernandez and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Eira Corral Sepulveda





Calling all Leyden graduates, students, families and community members!

Leyden's 100th Anniversary

Saturday, February 8, 2025



Community Concert & Homecoming Festivities October 4 & 5, 2024

The Dome in Rosemont, 7 p.m., Tickets \$10

Jonathan Cain from Journey and His Family Affair Concert, Friday, Oct 4, featuring Leyden Alumni Wall of Fame Recipient Tommy Cain, Indie Band Alexandra John, including Liza and Weston Cain, Madison Cain Lukather and Trev Lukather lead guitarist from the band The Effect. Homecoming football game and special alumni festivities, Saturday, Oct 5, West Stadium.

Sponsored by Green Associates.



Gala February 8, 2025

Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, 6 p.m., Tickets \$100

Dinner, dancing, cash bar, silent & live auction and other special surprises with all proceeds supporting scholarships for current future Leyden students.

Sponsored by Sloan Valve.



Family Picnic May 17, 2025

East Leyden Annex, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., free

Current and future Eagles and families are invited to enjoy a casual daytime event featuring a cookout and plenty of family friendly activities.

Sponsored by SPM Architects.



Leyden High Schools Celebrates 100 Years!

Sponsored by
the Village of Rosemont



www.leyden212.org/anniversary

FAMILY PICNIC

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Leyden hosts Student Summit,

a two-day event for 3rd-8th graders

Each summer, elementary and middle school aged students get together at Leyden during the summer to participate in the Student Summit. Participants rotate to different workshops and get hands-on experience in art, theater, coding, robotics, digital electronics, culinary arts and make new friends from different communities. Breakout sessions are led by Leyden teachers and students who are experts in their designated area. Spots are limited and always sell out, so mark calendars for early spring when the next registration cycle begins for Summer 2025!



One Amazing Story:

Rickardo Montero

With the help of Leyden's new plumbing program, **West Leyden senior Rickardo Montero** will enter the workforce after graduation as a union plumber with a job at a local company. He is one of the first eight Leyden students to participate in this new program, and found his new career through the offerings at Leyden. As a participant

in the program, students had to put in many hours of coursework and were also driving to the west loop neighborhood twice weekly to conduct onsite training at the local union headquarters. This dedication paid off for Rickardo as he was able to start a career before finishing high school.



Para ver los últimos videos de One Amazing Story, escanee el código QR:

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



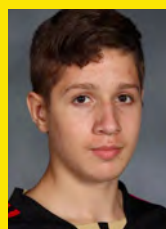
Mrs. Lisa Anthony
Member



Mrs. Sandra Boehm
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia
Member



Adriel Carrera
Student Member (E)



Jonathan Guerrero
Student Member (W)

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

East Campus
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Franklin Park, IL 60131

West Campus
1000 N. Wolf Road
Northlake, IL 60164

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