



FALL 2025

LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



Leyden celebrates their 2025 Wall of Fame recipients!

story on page 4



Dr. Nick Polyak
Superintendent

Superintendent's Corner

Dear Leyden Community,

At Leyden, our mission has always been to provide every student with the tools, opportunities, and support to thrive—both in high school and beyond. To fulfill that mission, we continually reflect on how our schools are organized and how we can better serve our students today and into the future.

Over the past several months, our Board of Education, students, staff, parents and community members have engaged in important conversations as part of our strategic planning process. As we work on reviewing the insights and recommendations coming out of that engagement process, our administrative team will be charged with crafting a plan to guide our commitments to students over the next five years. We expect to start the 2026-27 school year with that document, which we are calling our "Flight Plan."

In addition, we are also implementing another new initiative for the start of that same school year, as we reviewed our boundaries for East Leyden and West Leyden. Our internal boundaries have historically split up graduating 8th graders from three elementary school districts. After careful study and partnership with

the impacted middle schools, adjustments are being made to our internal boundaries to keep kids from the same schools together as they transition to our high schools.

We recognize that boundary changes can be challenging for some families. We are committed to open communication, transparency, and support throughout this transition. Our goal is to make the process as smooth as possible while keeping what's best for the kids at the forefront.

Taken together, our strategic plan and these boundary adjustments reflect a larger truth: Leyden is future-focused. We are building systems that allow us to adapt, grow, and innovate, while staying true to the community values that define us. With your partnership, we will continue to create schools where students are challenged, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your trust and your engagement in this process. It is through our collective efforts that Leyden is able to provide a high school experience that aims to educate, enrich and empower our students.

With Leyden Pride,
Nick Polyak, Superintendent

Girls flag football debuts at Leyden



On August 25, girls flag football, a new sport at Leyden, debuted on our new stadium turf field. This marked the first game of the athletes' inaugural season, as they joined the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) as a sanctioned sport for the fall season.

Girls flag football is one of the fastest-growing sports at the high school level, with more states sanctioning it each year and participation numbers steadily climbing. Schools and athletic associations are recognizing the demand, giving female athletes new opportunities to compete, build skills, and showcase their talent on a bigger stage.

Leyden modifies internal boundaries for the 2026-27 school year

Starting with the 2026-27 school year, Leyden High School District will modify its current internal boundary between East and West Leyden in an effort to unify middle school attendance patterns. This change will impact three of Leyden's partner middle schools including Mannheim, Hester and Rhodes, whose students are currently split between the two high schools.

In an effort to avoid the splitting of social groups and established relationships, all Hester and Rhodes Middle School students will attend East Leyden, and all Mannheim Middle School students will attend West Leyden. Students who attend Leyden's LIFE High School, Transition High School, Transition program and BRIDGE program, will continue to be served at West Leyden, regardless of address.

"We have an opportunity to shift our boundaries to help improve the social experiences of our students," said Superintendent Dr. Polyak. "We are grateful for the support of our partner middle schools, who are in favor of this change in the interest of what's best for the kids."



**EAST SIDE OR WEST SIDE:
WE ARE ALL EAGLES!**



DEVON AVENUE

**ROSEMONT
(78)**

294

**LINCOLN
(81)**
East

**MANNHEIM
(83)**
West

**HESTER
(84)**
East

**RIVER
GROVE
(85.5)**
East

**NORTHLAKE
(87)** West

**RHODES
(84.5)**
East

NORTH AVENUE

This change will begin with the freshmen class of 2030, at the start of the 2026-27 school year. All sophomore, juniors and seniors will remain at their designated high schools, unless they elect to transfer with the changing boundaries. Transportation will continue to be provided for all students who qualify for bus service, regardless of which high school they attend.

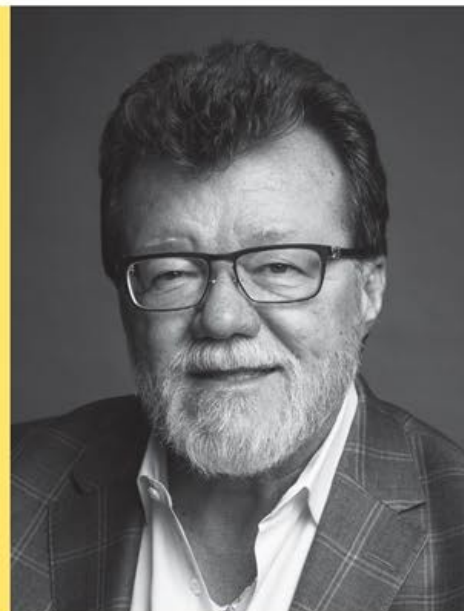
All other Leyden partner schools, including River Grove, Rosemont, Lincoln and Northlake Middle School students, will not be impacted by this modification.

To view our videos, review frequently asked questions, or to submit a comment/question, please visit www.leyden212.org/boundaries

Watch video



Leyden inducts four alumni into its Wall of Fame



On Thursday, September 25, the Leyden High School District 212 Board of Education inducted four worthy alumni onto its Wall of Fame, after a rigorous selection process. Please join us in celebrating: **Angelina Fakhoury-Siverts** (East Leyden) Class of 2003; **Rick Heidner** (West Leyden) Class of 1978; and **Glen Pietrandoni** (East Leyden) Class of 1974; **Sergio Farfan** (West Leyden) Class of 2014.

Angelina Fakhoury-Siverts – East Leyden

Angelina was the first ever female football player in our West Suburban Conference during her playing days. Currently, she serves as the Vice President of Patient Care Services and Chief Nursing Officer for City of Hope Cancer Center-Chicago. She has won a variety of awards and formerly served as Director of Inpatient Nursing and the Emergency Department at Loyola Gottlieb Hospital.

Rick Heidner – West Leyden

Rick grew up in the King Arthur apartments and worked as a maintenance person there from ages 11-16. He began working in the auction business with his uncles and started REH Industries putting pay phones and video games in 7-11s, restaurants, and laundromats. He started JJ Peppers Food Stores in 1984 and both Gold Rush Gaming and Ricky Rockets Fuel Centers in 2012. Today, he and his family employ more than 700 people and he volunteers regularly in our IncubatorEDU program at Leyden.

Leyden initiates strategic

School community invited to share insights to guide the next five years

Starting this summer, Leyden launched a strategic planning process which includes gathering insights from parents, students, staff and the school community. This research and planning phase will take place throughout the fall semester. Upon the presentation of the findings, Leyden will design a multi-year strategic plan to guide the efforts of the next five years.



During the first week of September, students and staff had the opportunity to share input on the future of Leyden, through a series of focus groups. Then, in October, parents and community members will also have the opportunity to engage with the strategic planning team to provide insights to help guide our school district.

To read current updates on the process as it occurs, visit www.leyden212.org/about-us/overview/strategic-plan



Glen Piatrandoni – East Leyden

Glen served as the Senior Director for Virology for Walgreens and was responsible for the company's HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis programs. He worked with the White House National Office on AIDS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the US Department of Health and Human Services.



Sergio Farfan – West Leyden

Sergio is a full time artist who started designing and selling apparel online when he was a Leyden student. Today, he has worked with the Chicago Bulls, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, and he has been commissioned to create artwork for world class cellist YoYo Ma. Sergio has exhibited his work across the United States and across the world.

planning process



One Amazing Story:

Watch video



Noelle Lowther

Jonathan Guerrero

Zuzanna Karyta

Student board members share their voices

To kick off our One Amazing Story series for the new school year, we start with the incredible impact of student voice through the experiences of our two student board members Jonathan Guerrero and Zuzanna Karyta. These leaders bring unique perspectives, fresh ideas, and authentic insights that help shape decisions affecting every student in our schools. We also get to know Noelle Lowther, one of the first two students who joined the Leyden Board. She shares in their vision of listening to students to help improve the high school experience for everyone.

Leyden's Marching Band featured on CBS send-off



The Leyden High School Marching Band had a special moment in the spotlight on Friday, August 15, when they performed live on CBS News Chicago during the late afternoon newscast. The band was invited to help celebrate the behind-the-scenes heroes of the station as they marked their retirement. One of the retirees had long wished for a marching band sendoff and Leyden made that dream come true with a lively and heartwarming performance, bringing music, smiles, and a whole lot of school spirit to the CBS studio!

Watch video



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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
3400 Rose Street
Franklin Park, IL 60131

West Campus
1000 N. Wolf Road
Northlake, IL 60164

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



Zuzanna Karyta
Student Member (E)



Jonathan Guerrero
Student Member (W)