

November 2020



# LEYDEN

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 212



*In Memory of Maryann Mills  
— Leyden honors the memory  
of our long-time storyteller*

# Superintendent's Corner



Nick Polyak, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Hello Leyden Family,

For almost a year the headlines have been about the extraordinary and unprecedented events happening in schools, our country, and the world. So much of the information being communicated in 2020 has been unsettling.

Taking that into consideration, and knowing I have only a few chances a year to reveal my thoughts, I want to focus on the positive in this newsletter. I'd like to share the sentiments that make me proud and grateful to be part of the Leyden community.

As we navigate the fall season, and look forward to the future, the following are examples of the things I'm thankful for:

- A student body that loves to learn and to give back in service to their communities and the world
- Parents who trust and work with us to help their kids reach their full potential
- A faculty and staff that are second to none, and will do anything for our students and families

- Newly renovated and updated academic and athletic facilities that benefit our students and serve as points of community pride
- A Board of Education that is always committed to "Doing What's Best for the Kids"
- Community members that partner with us to create opportunities for the advancement of our students

When all of these pieces fall into place, you experience the magic that is the core of our high schools. No matter what the world unleashes, we succeed in keeping our focus on our most important asset - our kids.

I am always eager to share information about advances, progress and activities at Leyden. You are part of our achievements, and I thank you again for all you do to support our students and our community.

With #leydenpride,  
Nick Polyak

## West Leyden Senior a Commended Student in the NMS Program

West Leyden senior Brandon Mioduszewski, 17, is a Commended Student in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. The Franklin Park resident recently received a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) congratulating him on his academic achievements.

This year about 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 scorers of the more than 1.5 million students who entered the 2021 competition by taking the 2019 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

"Those named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable natural resource. Recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to 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 Leyden senior Brandon Mioduszewski, is one of 34,000 seniors recognized as a Commended Student in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program. The Franklin Park resident recently received a letter of commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC).

# Leyden Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month

## September 15 - October 15

National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the culture, traditions, and contributions of Latin people whose heritage is rooted in Latin American countries. September 15 is the starting point for the commemoration as it is

the anniversary of Independence Day for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile, and Belize celebrate independence days on September 16, 18, and 21 respectively.

Leyden students and faculty joined the celebration by showcasing Latinx performances, visual, and literary arts. The following activities demonstrate the diverse range of talent represented at Leyden.

### Librarians engage students with virtual presentations

Leyden librarians spoke to students at both campuses about Latinx authors, poets, and the history of the month long celebration. Highlights included a visit from Reyna Grande and Matt De La Pena, authors, who interacted with groups of students courtesy of Zoom. The writers spoke about their life experiences, the challenges they face as Latinx authors and the publication process. They also took questions from students, and encouraged would-be writers to hone the craft by writing and reading every day.



Reyna Grande



Matt De La Pena



Emily Avalos - Panther



Sophia Cabrera - Creature



Estrella Rodrigues - Turtle

### Art students create fantastical ceramic figures

West campus students in teacher Caroline Felix's Ceramics I class created "alebrijes", brightly colored Mexican folk art sculptures that represent fantastical clay creatures - some real, some unknown. A product of the imagination, the artist creates whimsical figures like a donkey with butterfly wings or a dragon with antlers. Commonly associated with Oaxaca, Mexico, the figures are usually fashioned of paper Mache or carved wood. The students' clay figures were painted, but not fired because of remote instruction.

### El Mariachi Monarca de Michoacán

Victor Gomez, a science and bilingual/ELL teacher at East, serenaded his students virtually with a pre-recorded video of his band El Mariachi Monarca de Michoacán on September 15. The goal was to entertain the students with traditional music they recognize, and to underscore the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans on the history and culture of the United States. In addition to Gomez, band members include family and friends.



Victor Gomez, a science and bilingual/ELL teacher at East, serenaded his students virtually with a pre-recorded video of his band El Mariachi Monarca de Michoacán on September 15. The goal was to entertain students with traditional music they would recognize. Pictured from L to R: Vivian Gomez, Andres Gomez, Jose Rangel, Adan Heredia, Victor Gomez, and Steven Hernandez.

## Día de Independencia collages

East campus language teacher Kathryn Voorhees asked her Spanish I students to create vivid collages that celebrate Día de Independencia (Independence Day) in Central American countries. Students crafted the collages by searching images on



Olivia Rutkowski



Anita Hulova

Google, selecting those they liked, and arranging the images to create the artwork. After viewing the collages virtually, students discussed the differences between the festivities, and explained how the celebration is practiced in their country of origin.



Zofia Szumilas



## Teatro Leyden's remote table reading of Wave

Leyden students, staff, administrators, and playwright Nancy Garcia Loza, presented a remote table reading of Wave, Loza's original script written for Teatro Leyden. The play, about a Mexican family facing separation, civil unrest and hope against hope, was transmitted via Zoom on October 7, and was available to students, parents, staff and community members. The activity partnered Teatro Leyden, a performance art, with the Hispanic heritage celebration.

*In celebration of Hispanic heritage month, a cast composed of students, staff, administrators and playwright, presented a table read of Wave, a play written specifically for Teatro Leyden.*

# Leyden Athletes: They've Got Game

The persistent virus that has changed our lives had the potential to shutdown Leyden's fall sports teams. But it didn't. That's because our varsity athletes made adjustments based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and public health guidelines by observing social distancing, wearing masks and maintaining a positive outlook. Student-athletes practiced and competed differently than in previous seasons, but they stayed in the game, and their coaches are proud of their accomplishments.

## Boys Varsity Cross Country

"Our team is built on the idea that we'd have fun while running hard and competing. Given COVID-19 restrictions, the runs where we'd be huddled together talking, laughing, and telling stories were stripped away. But our team rose to the occasion and took precautions seriously so we haven't had a positive COVID case. This year it was clear that our dedicated runners are great student-athletes and great young men who are willing to adapt, overcome, and improvise. They were successful because they chose to commit to the sport and their teammates, and they honored that commitment."

— Brad Henning, Varsity Head Coach

## Girls Varsity Cross Country

"Because of masks and social distancing it was difficult to see our girls' happiness during joyful moments or their pain during tough workouts. But we supported each other, and balanced the emotional aspects. I'm very proud of this team for its persistence and for competing when they knew no state championship would occur for us this year. Our girls have worked hard and continued to do so heading into conference and regional meets."

— Thomas Cartwright, Varsity Head Coach

## Girls Varsity Swimming and Diving

"The swim team did an amazing job of adapting to COVID guidelines. Having a new eight lane pool with a separate diving well at East definitely helped as it allows two girls to swim in a lane, one at each end of the pool. The season was short, but the team still managed to perform best times. Diver Lily Dodgers took first place for diving, Ashley Rozycki took first in the 500 freestyle, and for the first time in over 20 years, the team took second place at the West Suburban Conference Gold Championship meet. It is an exciting year for the team, but the things the girls miss the most are activities we used to do outside of the pool, like team picnics and dinners."

— Chris Cook, Varsity Head Coach

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Boys Varsity Cross Country Team



Girls Varsity Cross Country Team



Girls Varsity Swimming Team



Varsity Diving Team

### Varsity Golf

“The golf team faced the new protocol routine for every practice and match, checking temperatures, wearing masks and social distancing. Golfers handled everything just fine. Unfortunately, the pandemic caused us to not be able to enter any tournaments this year, and our schedule was limited to just conference teams. The good news is that we were able to play, and the golfers did their best at all times.”

— Steven Siekierski, Varsity Head Coach



Varsity Golf Team

### Girls Varsity Tennis

“The girls tennis team had 45 team members on the 2019-20 roster and only 23 for this season. COVID hurt our numbers, but for the most part, we were able to field enough girls for two teams. We had inexperienced girls on the varsity roster, but hopefully this will pay off in the next couple years. This year’s team was full of energy and excited that we were able to have a season. They also had the added bonus of our eight new lighted courts at East Leyden – a great facility.”



Girls Varsity Tennis Team

## 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

*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.*



Mrs. Sandra Boehm  
Member



Mr. Cesar Garcia  
Member



Ms. Amanda Le  
Student Member



Ms. Cassandra Diaz  
Student Member

As required by S.B. 898, you may go to Leyden’s website to view our budget at: [www.leyden212.org](http://www.leyden212.org)

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