



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO
Piqua High School teacher Leann Buchanan works in her classroom last week.



Front and center in a changing world

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PIQUA — In today's fast-paced multimedia world, education is not just a traditional classroom in a traditional school building. Piqua High School intervention specialist Leann Buchanan who is the instructor for Piqua's Second Shift School and Virtual Academy is right at the forefront of this changing world.

Buchanan attended Piqua Catholic until her family moved to Tipp City when she was in 7th grade, and she graduated from Tippicanoe High School in 2004. She was in the symphonic choir and spent many hours performing in concerts and competi-

tions.

"I wanted to become a special education teacher," she said. "I had a friend whose brother had Down syndrome, and I really wanted to help kids who had special needs." Buchanan credits her parents with pushing her to better herself and never give up on her goals. "Also, my junior English teacher at Tipp was Mrs. Pearson, and she pushed me," Buchanan said. "I didn't realize it at the time, but her high expectations helped me get through college."

Buchanan enrolled at Xavier University and majored in special education. "I chose Xavier because it was the perfect size and there was a strong religious background,"

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she said. "And, it was a beautiful campus." She earned her bachelor's degree in special education K-12 in 2008.

At XU, she served on the Counsel for Exceptional Children, a student organization for the betterment of special education. She was a member of Koinonia, a small group of students who met monthly and discussed religious issues.

Buchanan landed her first job as a 7th grade intervention specialist for Fairfield Schools. This lasted for two years, then, she and her husband moved back to the Troy area. She was hired by Piqua City Schools to be an inter-

vention specialist and director of the Second Shift school program. Buchanan is actually an employee of the Miami County Educational Service Center, assigned to Piqua High School.

Second Shift students come to school at 2:30 in the afternoon and stay until 5:30. School bus service is provided. "This is another, and in some cases the last opportunity, for these students to be successful," she said. "It's a small group setting without the daily pressures of a regular school day." Currently, there are 10 students in Second Shift. "The set up and numbers give me a unique opportunity to spend

a lot of time with each student," she said. "I can listen to them and be there for them to help them through their struggles."

Last year, the Virtual Academy was started so students could stay at home and work on classes through an online school. "It allows students to still be a part of

Piqua High School, but do their school work at home," she said. "For a student with a stress problem or a student who is pregnant or has a child, this is a wonderful solution to earn credits and not fall behind." All these students are Piqua High School students and can take part in activities and events.