



**Mile High Academy**  
**6853 Leetsdale Drive, Denver, CO 80224**  
**Grades: 9-12**  
**Director: Lela Leyman**

After learning about Hope Online's innovative curriculum and student-centered approach, Lela Leyman knew it was the right educational option for students and families in her community. Thus, in 2007 she founded, and has since been the director of, Mile High Academy. Located in Southeast Denver, Mile High Academy promotes academic success for a diverse and at-risk student body.

According to Ms. Leyman, 99% of Hope Online students at Mile High Academy come from low-income homes, most qualify for free and reduced lunch, and many have little parental involvement. Additionally, a few students are challenged by teenage pregnancy or physical abuse. Not surprisingly, these students did not thrive in their previous learning institutions.

"Despite these daily hardships which impede confidence and relevancy for academics among students, we believe that all students can learn, and we promote that belief to students," affirms Ms. Leyman. "Hope Online provides a safe, encouraging environment where students can leave their baggage at the door and focus on their education."

The small class size affords each student one-on-one attention from a highly qualified Hope Online teacher and Learning Center mentor. "After assessing each student's academic skills and needs, Barb Pagano, our Hope Online teacher, customizes the curriculum into an individual learning plan for each student. The tailored curriculum allows students flexibility to master lessons at their own pace without growing bored or falling further behind," asserts Ms. Leyman. "We take pride in maintaining a low adult to pupil ratio," notes Ms. Leyman. "The students develop trusting relationships with their teacher and mentors, and slowly grow to enjoy coming to school."

Whether students suffer from learning disabilities, the effects of an unhealthy home life, or lack of motivation, Hope Online views each student as an individual. "The students are wonderful, kind kids who never received personal or positive attention at school. As a result, they are lost," adds Ms. Leyman. "Hope Online at Mile High Academy helps students create their own stories of success."

## **Learning Center Administration**

### **Lela Leyman - Learning Center Director**

After many years working in the real estate industry, Lela Leyman recognized the impact of education systems on local neighborhoods. As a result, she has dedicated herself to assisting youth build solid academic foundations. Ms. Leyman received a Certification of Computer Programming from CSI Institute in Pennsylvania and earned a Master of Science in International Business from State University in Minsk, Russia.

## **Hope Online Teacher**

### **Barbara Pagano – Hope Online Teacher**

Barbara Pagano is a highly skilled and effective Colorado licensed teacher who brings years of experience to Hope Online. She has worked for the Cherry Creek and Jefferson County school districts, primarily as a secondary education teacher. Ms. Pagano earned a Bachelor of Arts in Home Economics Education from the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, CO and a Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education from the University of Colorado at Denver in Denver, CO.