LEAP Academy University Charter School and The Rutgers University Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership

A comprehensive model for serving children and families from Birth through College and Beyond
Mission Statement
The mission of the LEAP Academy is to enhance opportunities for the children and families of Camden through the collaborative design, implementation, and integration of education, health and human services, professional development, and community development.
Ten Essential Elements of The LEAP Model
LEAP Academy Charter Schools

- Performance Based Compensation and Professional Development
- Rigorous Academic Program from PreK-College
- Entrepreneurial Governance/Leadership
- Strong Family Engagement
- School Mission aligned to local Community Needs and Vision
- Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions and Community Stakeholders
- Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation
- Comprehensive Health and Human Services
- STEM Focus
- Expanded Year Learning
- Strong Family Engagement
- Performance Based Compensation and Professional Development
- Rigorous Academic Program from PreK-College
- Entrepreneurial Governance/Leadership
- Strong Family Engagement
- School Mission aligned to local Community Needs and Vision
- Partnerships with Higher Education Institutions and Community Stakeholders
- Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation
- Comprehensive Health and Human Services
- STEM Focus
- Expanded Year Learning
Snapshots of the LEAP Academy

• 840 students in grades K-12 served in two school buildings
  – Elementary Grades (K-6)
  – High School Grades (7-12)
  – STEM High School Program (9-12)

• Rutgers-Camden Early Learning Research Academy
  • 12 infants (6 months - 1 year)
  • 20 toddlers (age 1-3 )
  • 90 Preschoolers (age 3-4)
Rigorous Academic Program from Birth through College

• Focus on college preparation for all students.
• Emphasis on science, technology, mathematics and engineering.
• Building educational pipelines from birth through college.
The Rutgers/LEAP Pipeline to College
Expanded Learning Time

- 200 days of instruction
- 7 hours and 50 minutes instructional day (8-4)
- Extended Day (21st century) from 4-7 p.m.
- Saturday Academies
- Summer Program in July
Partnerships with Higher Education and Community Stakeholders

- Rutgers University
- Rowan University
- Camden County College
  - Governance
  - Dual Credit Options
  - Resources such as tutoring, curriculum development and professional development
  - Development of Educational Corridor
Partnerships with Higher Education and Community Stakeholders

- Cooper Medical Center and UMDNJ
  - School Based Health Center
  - Medical Inspector

- Community Partners
  - Resources
  - Leveraging
  - Funding
  - Legitimacy and alignment of school mission with larger community
Core Elements of LEAP’s Family Engagement Framework

- Informed and Collective Decision Making
- School Participation and Civic Leadership
- Comprehensive School-Based Services and Support
- Training, Capacity Building and Personal Growth
LEAP Principles for Family Engagement

- Parents are encouraged to be introspective about their own parenting.

**Training**

- Parents are encouraged to consider what roles they can play to improve the school and the community.

**School Participation**

- Parents are trained to think about future possibilities and expectations, for both their children and themselves.

**Personal Growth**

- Parents are encouraged to provide leadership for change that is beneficial to the school and the community.

**Civic Leadership**
Comprehensive Health and Human Services

- Comprehensive Health Services
- Mental Health and Counseling Services
- Legal Services
- Parent Training and Adult Education
- Early Childhood Education
LEAP BUILDINGS

**Elementary Grades (PK-6):**
639 Cooper Street

**High School Grades (7-12):**
549 Cooper Street
S.T.E.M. high school
High school graduation and College placement rate

- 100% in 2005
- 100% in 2006
- 100% in 2007
- 100% in 2008
- 100% in 2009
- 100% in 2010
- 100% in 2011
LEAP Academy University Charter School

• Plans for expansion include two additional campuses around the City
  – STEM High School
  – Cramer Hill K-8 School
The Context of Charter Schools in New Jersey

Why a Charter School?
What is a Charter School?

- Tuition-free public schools created by parents, educators, and community leaders—open to all students—that operate under a five-year contract, or 'charter.'
What is a Charter School?

- Charter school students are required to take all state tests, and must comply with laws regarding health, safety, civil rights and special education.
What is a Charter School?

- Charter schools are independent and do not answer to a local school district superintendent or board of education. Instead, each charter school is run by its own board of trustees, responsible for overseeing the school and ensuring its success.
What is a Charter School?

• They are free to develop their own curriculum, choose staff, set educational goals, offer a longer school day and school year, and establish their own standards for student behavior.
What is a Charter School?

• In return, a charter school must show within its five-year charter period that it has raised student achievement. Only if the school raises achievement will its charter be renewed. If the school fails, the charter school may lose its charter, which means it will have no license to operate and would close.
Why a charter school?

• focus on results
• are academically innovative
• remain public schools
• enhance educational choices for parents and students
• allow for true decentralization
Why a charter school?

• keep policy decisions on-site
• receive and have full control over all state, federal and local funds generated by their student count
• provide a market driven educational system
The University Vehicle for Engagement
**CAMDEN RESIDENTS**

**Children & Youth**

- Better outcomes for children and youth
  - Strong Early Childhood Programs
  - High Performing Schools
  - Effective K-12 programs
  - Higher high school graduation rates
  - Successful transitions from high school to college/career
  - Academic enrichment programs
  - Social, recreation and character building for children and youth

**Families**

- Better outcomes for families
  - Quality health services
  - Social service programs
  - Adult learning opportunities and Job readiness training
  - Neighborhood based employment opportunities
  - Legal services

**Community**

- Better outcomes for the community
  - Safe schools and neighborhoods
  - Business development
  - Crime prevention
  - Local/community based leadership development
  - Better housing options and support for residents
  - Community Building and Ownership
  - Interagency Collaboration