



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

My entire career at Rutgers Camden has been about being an “Engaged Scholar” within the Community. As an applied scholar, I understood that the role of research universities needed to be about engagement in creating innovative efforts to reinvigorate our civic mission, to call on faculty, students, and administrators to apply their skills, resources, and talents to address important issues affecting communities, the nation, and the world. This Annual Report is part of a series of strategies for disseminating our engaged scholarship work to our stakeholders and partners.

One will argue that as a university, we have significant academic and societal influence, world-class faculty, outstanding students, state-of-the-art research facilities, and considerable financial resources that have the credibility and stature needed to help drive institutional and field-wide change more rapidly and in ways that will ensure deeper and longer-lasting commitment to civic engagement in Community. In particular, because research universities “set the bar” for scholarship across higher education, they are well-positioned to promote and advance new forms of scholarship that link the intellectual assets of higher education institutions to solving public problems and issues.

My journey at Rutgers Camden has provided me with the opportunity to build a leadership agenda for renewing our Civic mission of higher education through the Center for Community Leadership and its impact on our city’s most valuable resource, its children. I have created a new *scholarship of discovery* in harmony with the educational needs of our Camden city children, through the Leap Academy University Charter School, which is a successful model to transform urban schools. I master the *scholarship of integration* of different disciplines of study by applying them to community development, education and public policy through the creation of new academic programs, grants and applied research that is relevant to community and their educational needs. I learned the most from *scholarship of application* by building an educational pipeline from Infancy to College along Cooper Street (with 100 % graduation and college placement for all its graduates from LEAP). And from the *scholarship of teaching* where we have 100 plus college students participating in service learning courses through various academic units all related to engaged scholarship we take away the most important lessons of teaching: *service learning leads to student engagement and effective instruction, it helps students*

improve academically and develop stronger ties to their schools, communities, and society.

Over the past years, the CLC has engaged in a number of international academic and dissemination efforts. The work with the Centro para Puerto Rico and with the Kinesis Foundation has stimulated new partnerships around improving public education and increasing student academic outcomes in Puerto Rico. Similar synergies are being forged with colleagues and institutions of higher learning in Brazil, and Cuba. The work for improving the conditions of those that are poor and disenfranchised has become a common link that is nurturing these partnerships.

We remain motivated and committed to our work here in Camden and beyond. The next two years will bring further expansion of the LEAP Academy into other neighborhoods in Camden, beginning with the LEAP Environmental Campus in Cramer Hill. This project is being planned in collaboration with the Cramer Hill Development Corporation and will incorporate a number of elements that are fundamental in supporting community development in this Camden neighborhood. We will also be up-scaling our LEAP model as part of the engaged scholarship work to other parts of the world.

Our commitment to Engaged Scholarship through service-learning, community-based research, has helped burnish the image of our research university that, in recent years, has suffered from questions about its role in community. By speaking publicly about engaged scholarship — and encouraging other institutions to implement similar approaches to research — research universities not only help to promote these models but also, send a message to the public that they are responsive to community needs and committed to contributing more meaningfully and directly to society problems and issues at the local, national, and international levels.

Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, Ph.D.,
Rutgers Board of Governors Distinguished Service Professor
Director, Community Leadership Center
Founder & Board Chair, LEAP Academy
University Charter School



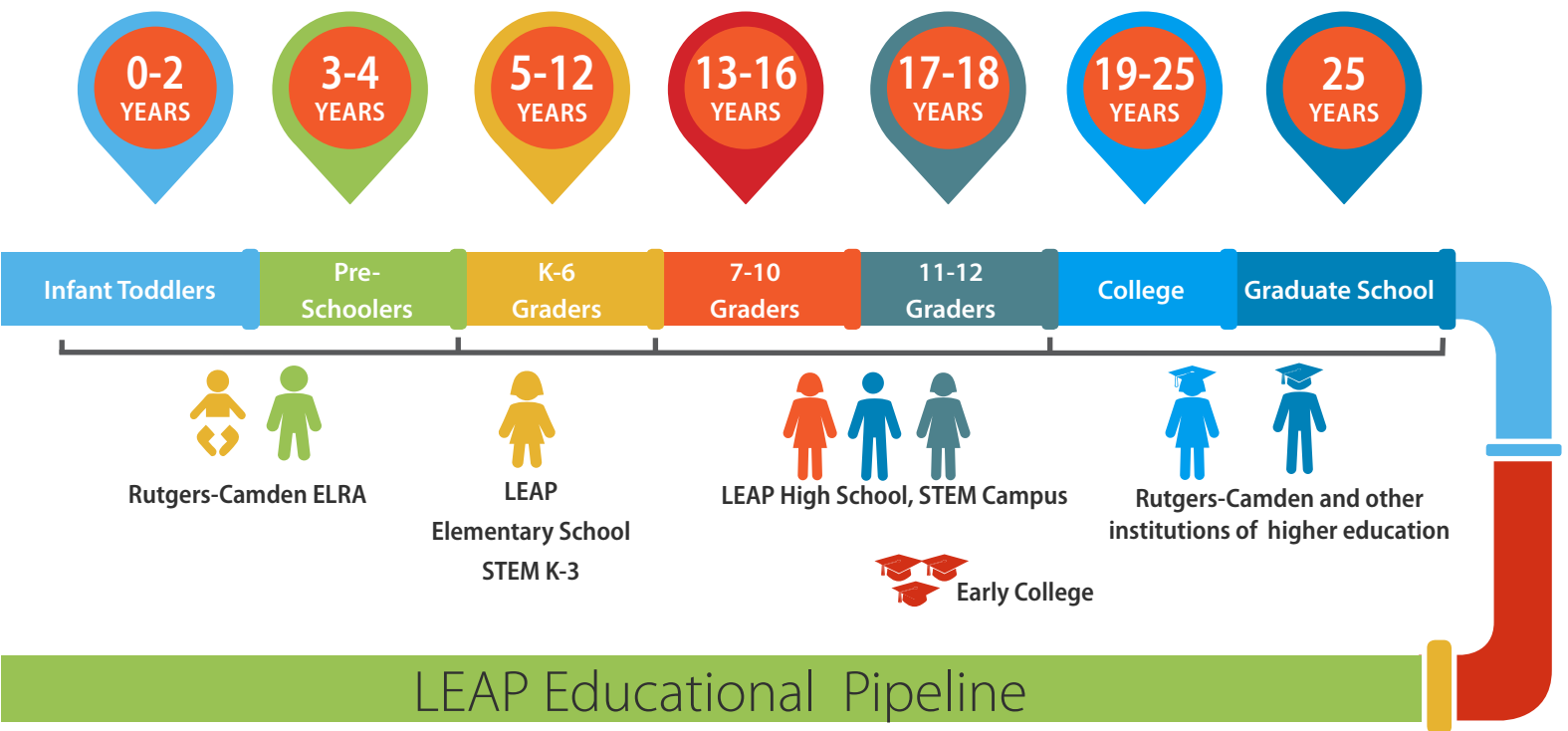
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EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Creating Educational Pipelines from Birth to College

Quality education is at the core of the CLC's work and connects many of the programmatic efforts spearheaded by our staff. The combined work of initiatives such as the Early Learning Research Academy, the Rutgers/LEAP Centers of Excellence, the YES Institute, and the AIM High Academy shepherds the Center's education portfolio. The alarming rates of high school drop outs and the broken pipelines to higher education for minority students set the context for the CLC's efforts in building education pipelines that begin in infancy and lead to college and graduate school.



The curriculum for success starts with infants and toddlers learning basic skills and advances into language, writing, and computer literacy as a part of the Pre-K program at the Early Learning Research Academy.

It continues at the LEAP Lower School with an enhanced focus on college preparation at an elementary level. This early intervention is critical for success and enables the children to understand that college is the goal they are working to achieve.

By the time students enter high school they are able to grow within their skill set and can attend either the Upper School or the STEM campus (Sci-

ence, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). Students can receive early College Access in both schools through a dual enrollment program offering them the chance to take classes at Rutgers University, Rowan University, and Camden County College.

Achieving the goal of attending College, immediately after graduating from high school, puts urban students on the fast track for success. LEAP students have gone on to attend a wide variety of colleges and universities, including Rutgers, Howard, Cornell, Brown, and Drexel Universities.



A Focus on Infants, Toddlers, and Pre-Schoolers: The Early Learning Research Academy

September 2012 marked the first year anniversary of the John S. and James L. Knight Early Learning Research Academy. Serving 126 children as young as 8 weeks old through 5 years, ELRA seeks to bridge the achievement gap for minority students by providing specialized learning and enrichment at an early age.

The Knight building has created an environment in which to launch initiatives that combine solid practice agendas and applied research efforts—priorities that lead to needed policy changes and broad improvements in early-childhood education.

A \$100,000 grant from the John E. Morgan Foundation provided needed funds to support curriculum and professional development for the early years program. In addition, the president of PNC Bank contributed funding and books for a bilingual Literacy Library to be used by infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers.

Quality Instructional Services for Children and Families: *At the heart of ELRA is the whole development of young children.*

Working in partnership with Bright Horizons, one of the premier early-learning organizations in the U.S. (and around the world), ELRA has successfully established a rigorous curriculum that builds on the actual needs and strengths of children. Every day, a dedicated staff works individually with children to ensure that adult-child bonding relationships are nurtured and become the foundation for learning and development. Families are an important element for the ELRA process and conversations with parents occur daily. Parents also participate in specialized programs like the Baby Academy to learn more about the developmental stages of their children and how they can best support and sustain high achievement and growth.

ELRA pre-schoolers participate in a rigorous program offered through a partnership with the Camden Board of Education's Early Childhood Division. A Dual-Language Program exposes students to two languages, as teachers work with ninety 3 and 4 year olds in developing critical early cognitive skills, as well as early writing and reading. A team of child psychologists and learning specialists work with each child to assess progress and deficits in learning and developmental milestones, such as language acquisition, motor-skill development, attention-deficit disorders, delayed emotional and/or cognitive development, and early reading and writing. Staff ratios allow for individual attention to each child's needs. Children are encouraged to explore, work in teams, use age appropriate technology, listen, share and problem-solve.



I think that the Early Learning Research Academy has a great comprehensive program. The staff does so much with the children. The students have different tasks that they must complete at home and in school. They learn how to read and write in both Spanish and English and I think that is great. Every day, my daughter comes home and she surprises me with the things that she knows. I love it!

Luis Rodriguez, Parent of Gisselle Rodriguez

Ongoing professional development training for Teachers and Paraprofessionals: *ELRA staff is its most valuable resource and varied opportunities are offered to strengthen their skills sets while exposing them to new approaches and professional resources.*

All Preschool teachers at ELRA are P-3 certified as required by NJ State Law. ELRA requires all Assistant Teachers to have a Child Development Associate Certification when hired or completed within the first year of work.

The ELRA building is designed to provide spaces for staff to share, observe and engage in development activities. Observation rooms allow for staff to observe model lessons and videotape equipment provides first hand recordings of classroom lessons and activities. The combination of applied learning with content training forms the foundation for staff development.

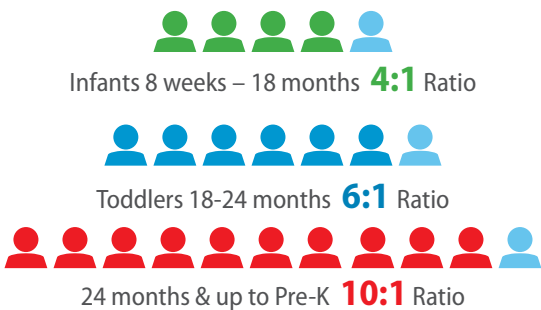
Applied Empirical Research: *A research agenda that is aligned to finding ways to improve child development outcomes and inform practice and policy around early childhood development is a major component of ELRA.*

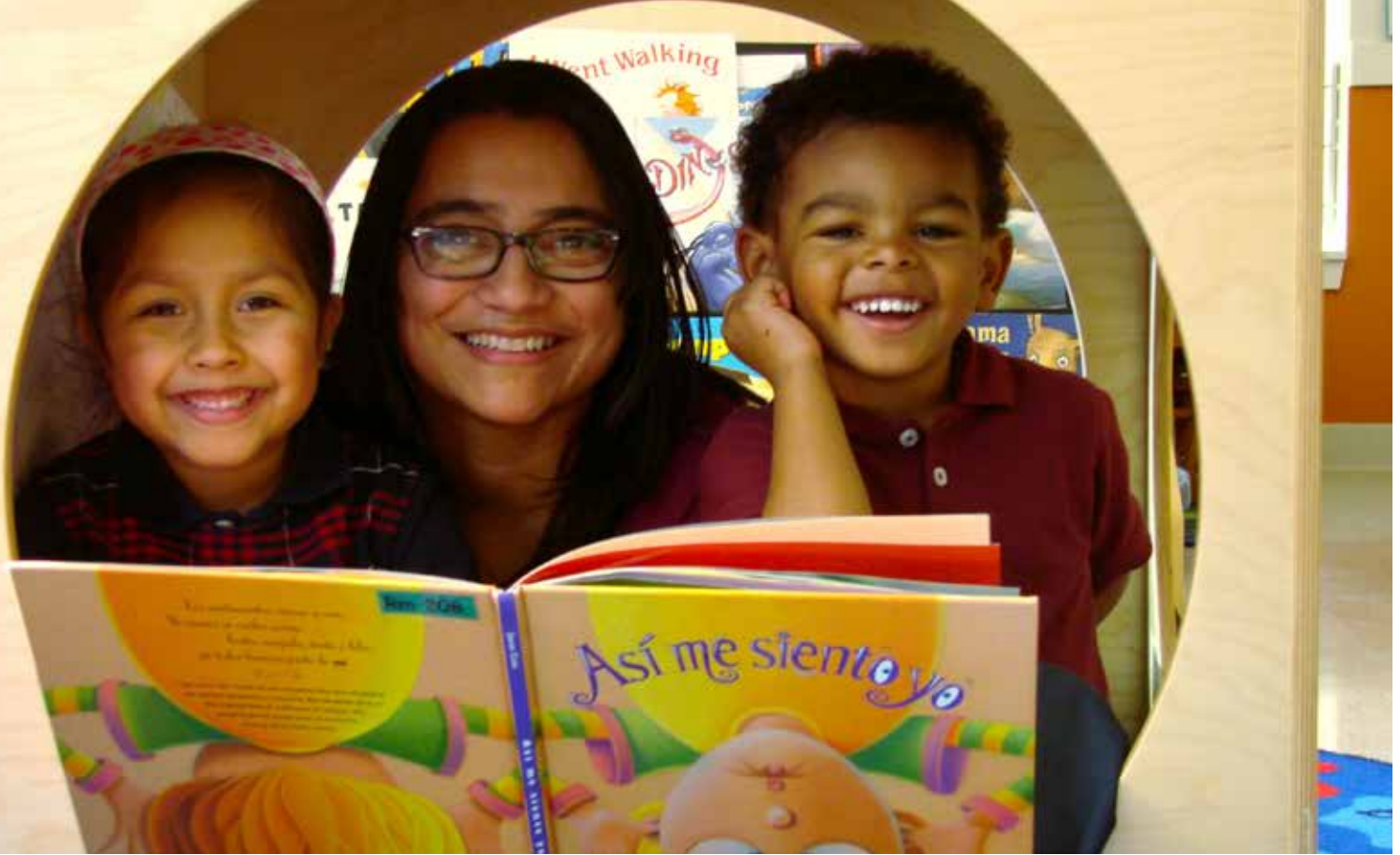
State-of-the-art observation rooms are at the core of ELRA's research resources. Through a contribution from the Rutgers–Camden Dean's Office, funds were awarded to acquire Observer XT software from Noldus, an international company that specializes in developing technology solutions for the study of human behavior. Using this software, researchers can observe and monitor parent-child interactions, maternal sensitivity, speech behavior, the delivery of dual language instruction, and behavior and classroom dynamics.

This infrastructure makes the ELRA facility a lab for our students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and faculty to learn and engage in multidisciplinary research around issues of childhood development and school readiness. Working with Cooper Learning Center, comprehensive assessments of the children have been completed and will continue to be compiled as a longitudinal data base is established. Following the pipeline model that frames the joint work of ELRA and LEAP, these children will be followed through high school and beyond.

Dr. Benedetto Piccoli and Dr. Santiago are collaborating in the first research study on how development of skills affects school readiness in minority urban children. Their focus is on the creation of a comprehensive interdisciplinary study to understand the role played by the appropriate development of motor, social emotional and language skills in young urban minority children towards school readiness. Data will be collected by a number of sources: ELRA observation rooms (using video recording and coding software), non-invasive medical devices (pedometers, accelerometers), school records, and Cooper Learning Center assessments (various developmental tests).

TEACHER/INSTRUCTOR TO STUDENT RATIO:





Maritza Lopez

3rd Year at Early Learning Research Academy (ELRA)

Pre-school Teacher

8 Years at LEAP Academy, Elementary School Teacher

B.A., Elementary Education, Rowan University

I began working at LEAP in February 2002 as a 2nd grade teacher. Through the years I have taught 1st, 5th and Kindergarten. I have been a pre-school teacher for three years now. Prior to working at LEAP Academy and ELRA, I was a full time mom of three wonderful sons and a part time retail store employee.

I have always wanted to work with children. While I was raising my sons, I always volunteered at their school, tutored children after school, and even coached baseball for a few years for the Cramer Hill Little League as well as volunteered with the Cramer Hill Rockies Football League. Once my youngest son started pre-school, I decided to go back to school and earn my degree in teaching. I am currently teaching three through five year olds in the pre-school program at the Early Learning Research Academy.

From the first day I walked in to LEAP for my Demo lesson, the teachers and staff were welcoming before I even knew I had the job. That has not changed. The children also make me love coming to work every day.

The students at ELRA are always eager to learn. We offer them the tools to succeed and they take it to heart and make every effort to achieve.

I still have contact with previous students and it was such a beautiful feeling to see my first class graduate last year. As they walked out of the auditorium, some stopped to share a word, hug, and even tears of joy.

I feel that here there is a sense of family. Once you walk in these doors you are not alone; you are part of a family. I also feel that we give the children a focus from pre-school through high school on continuing their education. We work on collaboration and partnerships between parents, teachers, administration, the community, and the children themselves. The students at LEAP are always eager to learn. We offer them the tools to succeed and they take it to heart and make every effort to achieve.

They are open to learning new things and push themselves to do better. The moment when they are able to understand a concept or complete a task for the first time and express their excitement about it, makes it worth coming to work every day.

RUTGERS/LEAP CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Developed as part of the LEAP Academy charter, The Rutgers/LEAP Centers of Excellence provide the vehicle for channeling university support for the school, while also providing a setting for university students and faculty to engage in applied and service learning opportunities. These school based health centers focus on various key programmatic and evaluation areas, including providing pre-college and academic services for students, professional development for teachers, support programs for parents and families, and technical assistance in areas of fundraising and governance.

Together, these programs make LEAP Academy more than just a school — they transform it into a comprehensive community hub for learning and development.

Center for College Access

The Center for College Access offers LEAP Academy students college awareness and readiness programs designed to increase the number of students in Camden who successfully pursue college education. Since 2005, the College Access Office has helped all eight graduating classes of LEAP Academy achieve 100% college acceptance for all students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COLLEGE PLACEMENT RATE

396 GRADUATES

100% 2012

100% 2011

100% 2010

100% 2009

100% 2008

100% 2007

100% 2006

100% 2005



The College Access staff at LEAP focus efforts on four core areas:

1 Academic plan for every student. College Access staff meet and develop individualized academic plans for every student. This is done through ongoing discussions with the principals, teachers and parents. These plans form the basis for the provision of support programs, referrals to other units within the LEAP Academy, and connections to other opportunities that provide for exposure, enrichment and remediation if needed.

2 Students receive individualized support with the college application process, SAT preparation, and help with Financial Aid. Since 2010, the College Access staff secured **\$3 million** in scholarships for LEAP graduates. LEAP students were admitted to colleges and universities across the country. Through a grant from the Kinesis Foundation, LEAP Academy sophomores, juniors and seniors received SAT preparation from the Princeton Review.

3 Exposure to early college is part of the regular programming with students visiting colleges and colleges visiting LEAP. Every year, LEAP students have the chance to visit several colleges during three intensive day trips. The students enjoy these special tours where they can walk each campus and see what the school is like first-hand. In total, the class of 2012 visited thirteen college campuses on three separate college and university tours in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the Washington, D.C. area.

4 Dual enrollment. College Access staff ensure that LEAP high school students participate in dual programs to improve their academic skills and to learn more about the college experience. For many, College Access starts with taking classes in a dual enrollment program.

Last year, eighteen LEAP Academy High School juniors and graduating seniors participated in credited dual-enrollment college courses at Rutgers, Rowan, and Camden County College, amassing a total of eighty four early college credits. The courses included biology, psychology, political science, art history, sociology and microeconomic principles.

Through an extended day program and partnership with Camden County College, all fifty seven graduating seniors took a Literature and Mathematics Academic Enrichment course instructed by Camden County College professors.

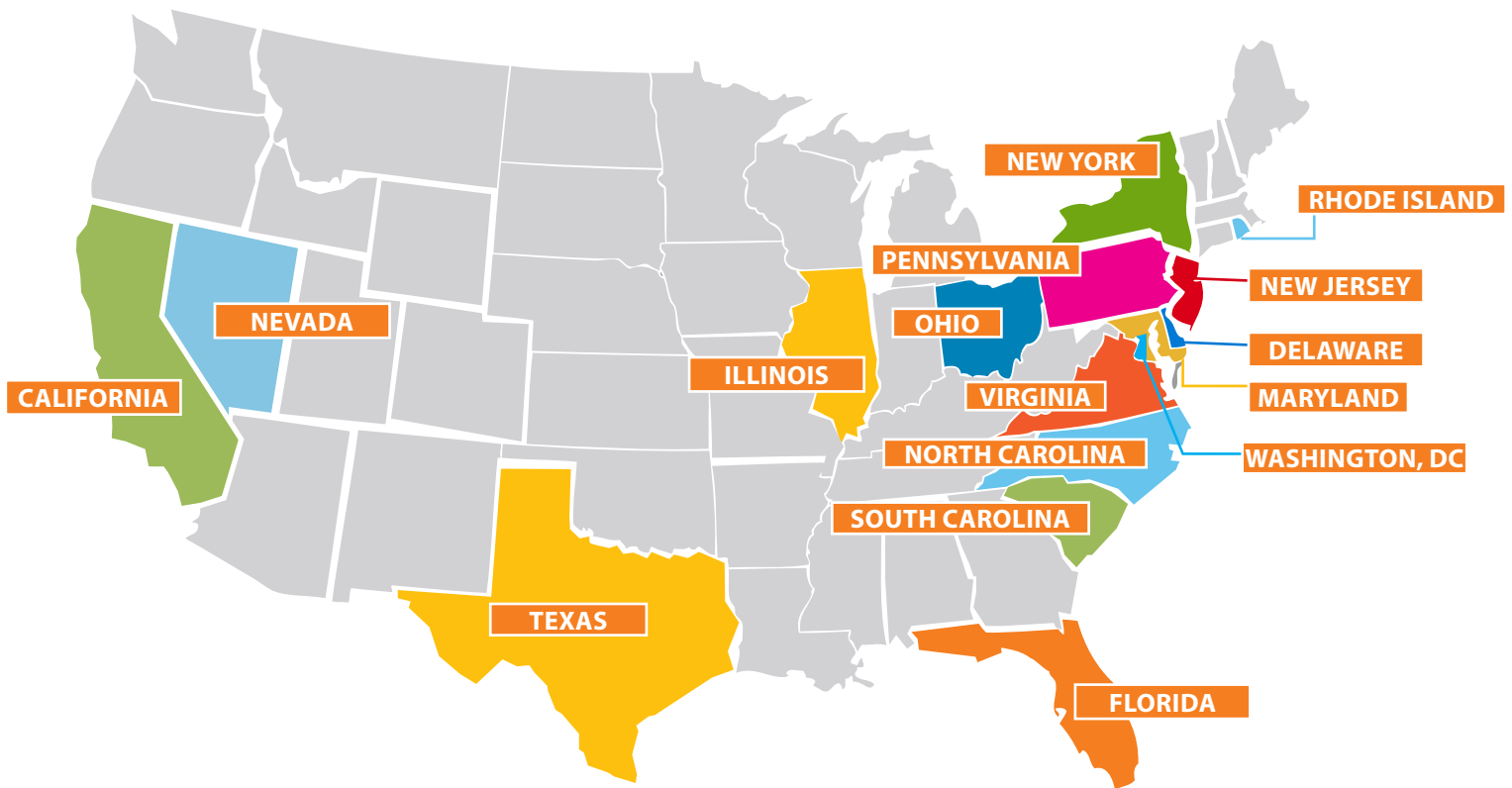
SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORTERS

- Akman Family Foundation Scholarship
- Alfredo Santiago Rutgers Endowment Fund
- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Theta Pi Omega Chapter Student Scholarship
- Alvah and Doris Veit Foundation
- Battleship NJ Camden Resident Scholarship
- Carmen Garcia Bright Futures Scholarship
- First Congressional District Scholarship
- LEAP Academy Foundation Scholarship
- NAACP Camden County East Branch Scholarship
- Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
Chi Upsilon Graduate Chapter Student Scholarship
- Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Scholarship
- Rutgers University-Camden Black Law Students
Association Marshall Brennan Moot Court Scholarship
- San Juan Bautista Scholarship Fund
- Supreme Council of America Education Scholarship

37 of the **57**
graduating seniors in the class of 2012 enrolled
in four-year colleges or universities
(approximately 65%).

20 graduating seniors in the
class of 2012
enrolled in various two-year institutions
(approximately 35%)

Colleges and Universities accepted by LEAP Students



CALIFORNIA

- San Jose State University

DELAWARE

- Delaware State University
- Wesley College
- Wilmington University

FLORIDA

- Bethune Cookman-University
- Florida A&M University

ILLINOIS

- DePaul University

MARYLAND

- Morgan State University
- University of Maryland-Eastern Shore

NEW JERSEY

- Bloomfield College
- Caldwell College
- College of St. Elizabeth
- Drew University
- Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Felician College
- Georgian Court University
- Kean University
- New Jersey City University

- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
- Rider University
- Rowan University
- Rutgers University
- St. Peter's University
- The College of NJ
- William Paterson University

NEW YORK

- Berkeley College
- Cornell University
- Long Island University
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- University of Rochester

NEVADA

- University of Nevada Las Vegas

NORTH CAROLINA

- Saint Augustine's University

OHIO

- Cleveland University
- Xavier University

PENNSYLVANIA

- Alvernia University
- Art Institute of Philadelphia

- Bloomsburg University
- Cheyney State University
- Drexel University
- Lancaster Bible College
- LaSalle University
- Lincoln University
- Morgan State University
- Philadelphia University
- Temple University
- The University of the Arts
- Villanova University
- West Chester University
- Widener University

RHODE ISLAND

- Brown University

SOUTH CAROLINA

- Benedict College

TEXAS

- Abilene Christian University

VIRGINIA

- Virginia State University

WASHINGTON, DC

- Catholic University of America
- Howard University

The College Access staff at LEAP

College Access staff get to know every single student at the LEAP Academy and are visible in every building and grade level of the school.



KHARY GOLDEN

*6th Year at Leap Academy
Director of the Center for
College Access*

*BA, Political Science, Minor
African American Studies, and
MA, Public Administration,
Rutgers University- Camden*



VICTORIA ENGELSTAD

*Program Associate for the
Center for College Access*

*B.S., Architecture,
Catholic University of America*

The thing that I enjoy most about working at LEAP Academy is knowing that we are on the cutting edge of innovative approaches to education, and the student support services we are able to provide are unmatched in the city of Camden.

I sincerely believe that each of LEAP Academy's students is capable of achieving success, regardless of what obstacles they face, both in and out of the classroom. I feel that the LEAP students will one day become the building blocks in the movement to rebuild, revitalize, and renew the city of Camden.

Students at LEAP Academy respond so enthusiastically to everything college-related. Our students' dreams of college motivate them in their younger years, and they are dedicated to the application process by the time they are seniors. In my short time at LEAP, I have seen what an incredible impact this school has on its students and their families. I have seen two individual students go from homelessness to college acceptance. One went to an Ivy League university, and the other received a full scholarship to one of New Jersey's prestigious state colleges.



BARBARA DUNLAP

*Asst. Director of
Administration, STEM K-12*

*B.A., History and
M.P.A., Education Track
Rutgers University-Camden*



KRISTEN CUCINOTTA

Lower School Counselor

*B.A., Psychology, Richard Stockton
College of New Jersey
M. A., School Counseling,
The College of New Jersey*

At the STEM High School College Access office we work with the students to improve their college readiness by having them complete career surveys, develop five year plans, and learn about the wide variety of careers available to graduates with a STEM degree.

At the Elementary School level, STEM K-3 students learn the basics about what it means to get a college education. This is reinforced in the classroom by their teachers as well as through special presentations delivered by high school students who are conducting college access research.

The goals of the College Access Center at Lower LEAP are to build a college-going culture based on early college awareness and to maintain high expectations by providing student support and conveying the conviction that all students can succeed in college.

The students thoroughly enjoy discussing the multitude of possibilities that they have awaiting them once they graduate from LEAP Academy. They show a strong enthusiasm for the future that awaits them and thrive on discussing their goals and aspirations.



Reaching students regionally: The Aim High Academy

For the last two years, the Community Leadership Center has sought to expand its college preparation approach to students regionally. The vehicle for this outreach is the AIM High Academy, an effort supported by the NJ Commission on Higher Education through a grant in the amount of \$129,000. Each summer 40 rising 12th graders from schools throughout the region are selected to participate in this three-week summer residential program aimed at preparing and motivating them to attend and succeed in college.

Selected students move in to the Rutgers–Camden dormitories in early July and embark in an intensive program that combines academic college preparation, career awareness and leadership development through a series of classroom, experiential and college readiness experiences. The daily program includes college-level writing and math/science courses that are developed by university faculty and taught by graduate level students. Dr. Benedetto Piccoli, Joseph and Loretta Lopez Chair Professor of Mathematics, and Dr. Shanyin Fiske, Associate Professor of English, work in developing course syllabi and providing supervision to the graduate students that teach the courses.

These academic experiences are supplemented by an intensive SAT preparation course offered by Princeton Review and a series of college tours and college readiness seminars that cover important topics such as financial aid, time management, study skills, and the admissions process. Last year, the Aim High cohort traveled to Princeton University, Rutgers University-New Brunswick, Howard University, Georgetown University, Drexel University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

On Saturdays, students participate in outdoor leadership development programs with activities at Fairmount Park in Philadelphia to build teamwork and also to unwind after a demanding week. The Aim

High Academy's three-week program will conclude with graduation on Friday, July 26th.

Participants in the program are required to have at least a 3.0 grade point average and be a first-generation college student that is, their parent(s) or guardian(s) do not have a four-year college degree. In addition the students must be highly recommended by their teachers and school administration and have the full support and participation of their parent(s) or guardian(s).

All students in the program have applied to colleges as seniors in high schools and students from the first cohort are already in pursuit of their college degree.

The best measures of success are embedded in the students' own comments about the program:

"I had so many questions and was very confused on how to prepare for college, and this class covered a major part of it. The financial aid info and guest speakers were extremely helpful."

"It helped me look inside myself and gave me courage as well as confidence to do anything."

RUTGERS YES INSTITUTE AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Tutoring and incentives for academic performance are paramount to ensure that LEAP students receive all the support they need to not only graduate from high school and enroll in college, but to also do well while a college student.

The Rutgers YES Institute provides ongoing tutoring services to LEAP students that are struggling with core academic subjects. A mix of certified teachers and college students pair up to work with students individually or in small group instruction. Twenty-two tutors are currently working at LEAP through the YES Institute. They serve one hundred and thirty-two students.

Parents also participate in seminars designed to prepare them for the college years. Workshops about financial planning for college and exposure to the realities of a college career are among the opportunities offered.



ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT / CAREER AWARENESS

Leadership development, academic honor societies, experiential and service learning, career awareness, and summer programs are among the main efforts spearheaded by College Access staff to enrich the academic experiences of LEAP students.

Last year, 92 LEAP students from grades 2-11 were inducted into the Alfredo Santiago Rutgers Scholar Program. This honors-based program guarantees LEAP students will receive a full scholarship to attend Rutgers University upon high school graduation. They are challenged to maintain academic excellence with a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, participate in after school programs, model leadership and citizenship, and show commitment to education.



CLC HIRES NEW COORDINATOR TO SUPPORT LEAP ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND CULTIVATION

Elvin Martinez, a full-time College Access staffer, works with LEAP alumni to ensure that they stay focused and receive support as they travel the challenging college years. In November of 2012, the LEAP Academy Alumni Association was formed. Services provided through this effort include alumni tracking, structuring of individual support, leveraging scholarships and financial aid, connections for jobs and internships, connections to mentors, leadership development, and reconnection of alumni to current LEAP students.



From top to bottom:

- 1) Parent participation in the LEAP Academy contributes to student success in school.
- 2) The Alfredo Santiago Rutgers Scholar Program recognizes the achievements of LEAP students.
- 3) Elvin Martinez, far left, joins LEAP graduates at the first meeting of the Alumni Association.



My husband and I think that the Parents Academy is a good way to interact with other parents. We are very proud to say that our daughters attend Leap Academy's STEM Program. We think that the STEM program provides forward thinking activities, which prepare them for higher education. My husband and I believe the school has offered a great opportunity for our daughters to attend college.

Keli Robinson, Demetrius Robinson, Jordayn Wilburn, Dominique Wilburn, 11th Grade

PARENTS ACADEMY

In the past fifteen years of operation, the LEAP Academy University Charter School has successfully established a legacy of accomplishment with its students out-performing other Camden City schools and demonstrating consistent growth in overall performance. One of the key reasons identified for this success, by both state and private evaluations, is LEAP's remarkable level of parental engagement. This is an important factor with the potential for replication at other schools.

Since LEAP Academy's inception, efforts have been made to include the parents as a vital resource for the development of the school. First, focus groups were conducted with parents throughout the city to identify what they believed were the challenges and problems faced by their children in Camden schools. They also shared their hopes and aspirations for their children's education. Next, a core assembly of parents took an active role in developing a LEAP Working Group. As a result of this team's recommendations, a Parents Academy was developed to provide ongoing training and to enhance participation among all parents. This effort was funded by the Prudential Foundation and the curriculum and structure for the Parents Academy remains a standard unit at LEAP Academy today.

The original planning process set a strong foundation for sustaining and increasing parental engagement with the school. Structures were created to involve parents in different ways, including participation in the governance organization of LEAP through membership in the Board of Trustees, working as employees by receiving on-the-job training in various positions, serving as volunteers through creation of a Parent Resource Center dedicated to leveraging parental participation in programs and activities, and developing individual potential as active learners through multiple programs in the Parents Academy.

PRINCIPLES FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



TRAINING

Parents are encouraged to be introspective about their own parenting

SURVEY OF LEAP FAMILIES

Research studies provide evidence that the level of parental involvement with schools has a direct connection to how students perform and is of paramount relevance to the work of teachers and administrators. The importance of parents' presence and interaction with schools is more poignant when looking at poor and minority students for whom schools become the best way for compensating for the lack of opportunities and exposure experienced by the children and families they serve. Families in Camden, New Jersey are among the poorest in the United States (U.S. Census, 2010) and have been exposed to environmental and structural conditions that make them vulnerable and isolated from the pathways that lead to prosperity.

The LEAP Academy experience expands the roles of schools from one that focuses exclusively on parent-child-school interactions around a child's academic achievement, to one that is grounded in lifting families up by creating schools that can also improve the social, human, and cultural capital of parents. In the case of the LEAP Academy, efforts to provide sustaining support for families are viewed in terms of a reciprocal process between school and community. In this case, the community supports the school, while the school extends itself from the traditional realm of education to a more inclusive context. This broader view focuses on strengthening families and communities by creating structures, services, and opportunities that promote sustainable community well-being and social bonding.

While existing educational research has mainly focused on the performance of students in schools, very little research has been produced about how schools can have an impact on the outcomes of parents and families. To further enhance understanding of this impact, the Community Leadership Center developed a survey under the direction of Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago to assess how family participation in the LEAP Academy has impacted the lives of parents and their children. Administered in August and September of 2012, a total number of 345 parents responded. The survey looked at key demographics such as: age, ethnicity, income, and education level. It also took a comprehensive view of the parents' ability to improve their cognitive skills, nutritional health, and self-confidence. An analysis developed by LEAP Academy's external evaluators highlights four main conclusions:

1. Overall, respondents reported that their relationships with LEAP have assisted them in a variety of ways, especially in social and emotional interactions with their children.
2. Parents reported that they are enthusiastic and motivated participants with the school and that their interaction with LEAP has helped increase the dialogue with their children and their own sense of self-confidence.
3. Parents reported that their interaction with LEAP in many activities and programs led to personal improvements, particularly in their aspirations for their children's lives.
4. Parents reported improvements in their own capacity to sustain their children's quest to achieve, particularly, they attribute improvement in a number of skills and competencies that are linked to their children's growth including supporting their children's development in cognitive knowledge and skills in reading, writing, reading comprehension, and mathematics.



SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

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



PERSONAL GROWTH

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



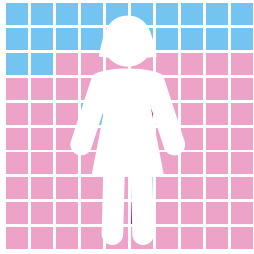
CIVIC LEADERSHIP

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

DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF PARENTS AT LEAP

GENDER

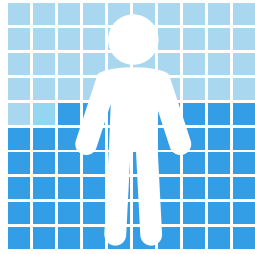
88%



FEMALE

AGE

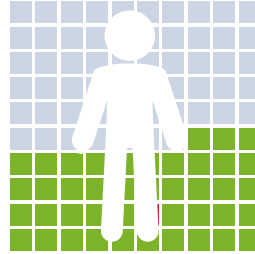
68%



AGES 25-40

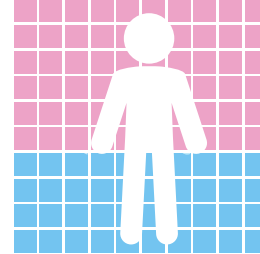
ETHNICITY

53.8%



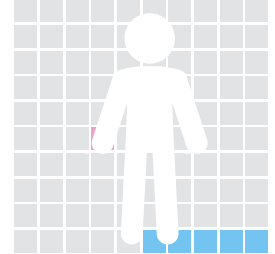
HISPANIC AMERICAN

40.4%



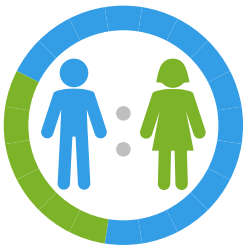
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN

5.8%

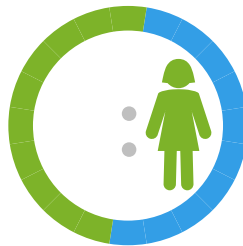


OTHER

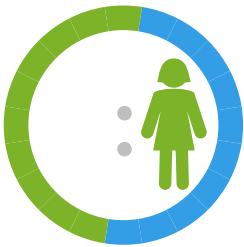
MARITAL STATUS



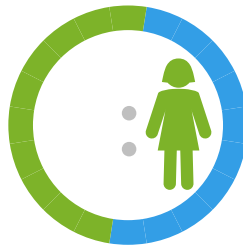
40.4%
Married/Civil Union



6.7%
Divorced



51.5%
Single



1.5%
Widowed

EMPLOYMENT STATUS



59.7%
Full-Time



12.8%
Part-Time

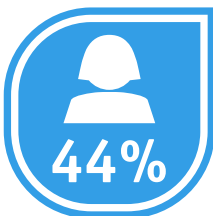


22.6%
Not working



4.9%
Other

EDUCATION AND INCOME LEVELS



44% of the respondents had an educational level of "high school diploma and some college, but no college degree"



The estimated household income for most families was less than \$30,000

SOURCE: 2012 Parents Survey, Rutgers / CLC

PARENTAL IMPROVEMENT

40%

More than 40% of the parents found that their cognitive knowledge in reading, mathematics, and writing improved “much or very much.”

50%

More than 50% of the respondents found that their personal health and nutritional habits were either “much or very much” improved.

25%

Parental self-confidence and self-esteem improved by more than 25% in each instance.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The survey discovered that the LEAP experience enabled parents to have better communication with their children. According to approximately half of the respondents, this ability “increased a lot” enabling them to talk more with their children about:

What is happening in their lives **46.8%**

Personal ethics – e.g. right and wrong, personal responsibility **48.6%**

Difficulties or problems that they may be experiencing **48.8%**

How to avoid getting into trouble **49.1%**

Their aspirations for them as they grow up **53.8%**

PARENTAL OUTLOOK

The parents own feelings “improved a lot” about their aspirations concerning:

Their children’s lives and careers **56.7%** Their own life or career **45.5%**

The welfare of their family **47.1 %**



HIGHLIGHTING THE SUCCESS AT LEAP ACADEMY

LEAP Academy is the main focus of the CLC's Educational and Community Development portfolio. The school was developed in partnership with Rutgers University and this relationship has been nurtured, sustained and expanded over the years. The relationship of LEAP and Rutgers has transformed the Educational Corridor in downtown Camden by having educational institutions working with children from infancy through college all on one street.

Last year, LEAP opened the new STEM Campus. The new campus is dedicated to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning. The \$12.5 million, 39,000 square foot building is located on Cooper Street across from LEAP's two other campuses—the LEAP Upper School (grades 7 to 12) and the LEAP Lower School (grades K to 6).

The LEAP STEM facility accommodates 240 students who demonstrate skill and desire a career in one of the STEM disciplines. On a daily basis, students in the program participate in activities that include: interactive simulations using a smart board, building models, utilizing computer devices to collect and analyze data, engaging in multi-step problem solving strategies based on real-world scenarios, and understanding the natural connection of various disciplines in practice.

At the elementary level, an additional 240 K-3 students are located at the STEM campus. Here science and math exposure is integrated into the overall curriculum and students participate in a Dual Language (English and Spanish) curriculum.

The building also includes a fabrication lab and modern physics and chemistry lab facilities. In addition, the campus has an auditorium with integrated technological features and the ability to hold large groups of students.

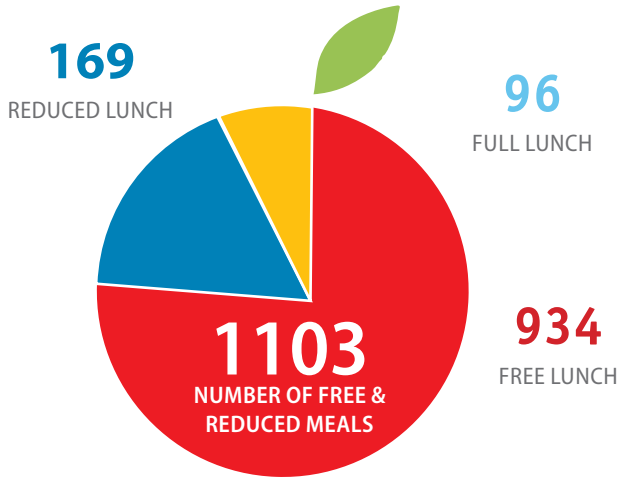
With a focus on college readiness, LEAP Academy's primary measure of success is the consistent 100% college placement rate for all of its graduates.

The school is strengthened by its students, the families that choose to send their children to LEAP, and an extraordinary teacher and staff team that work intensely to provide students with quality learning opportunities and a challenging curriculum.

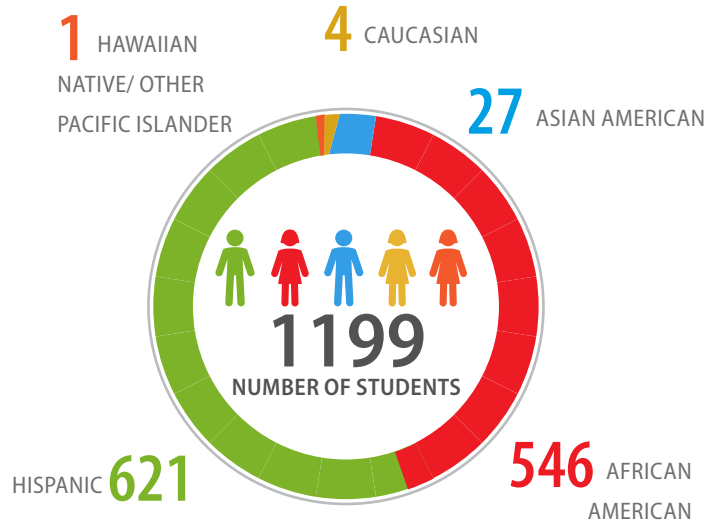
A few highlights about the school provide the context for a new narrative about children and education in Camden City.

SERVING THE STUDENTS THAT NEED US

LEAP children live in low-income families.

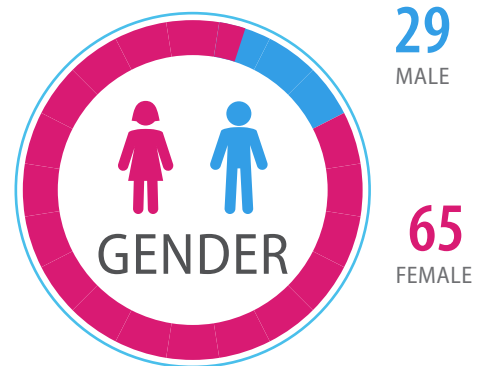
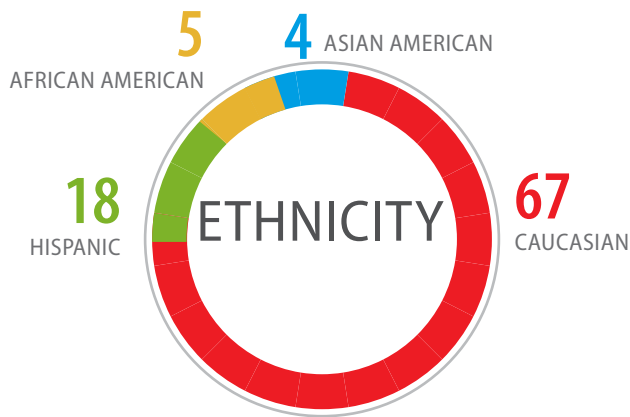


LEAP children are primarily Latino and African American

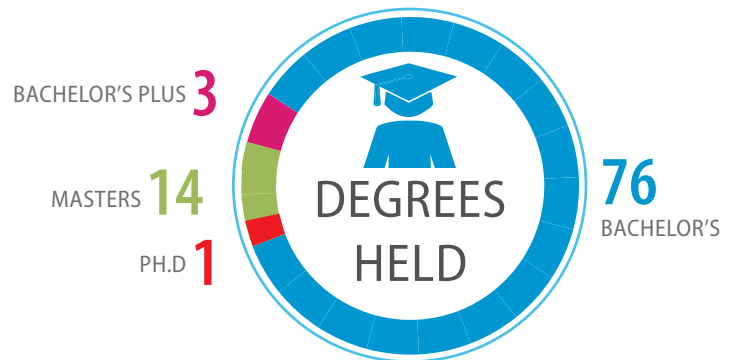


94 EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS

LEAP teachers are caring, dynamic and prepared to support teaching and learning at a higher level.



15 teachers hold a graduate degree



SOURCE: LEAP Academy Data, 2013

LEAP TEACHERS

All critical elements for the development of teachers are integrated in LEAP's approach to teacher cultivation and support:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HOURS

LEAP supports teachers by providing ongoing access to professional development and rewarding good teaching through a state approved Performance Based Compensation Program.

4,392

HOURS FOR TEACHERS

1,256

HOURS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

CORE ELEMENTS OF THE TEACHING TOOL

LEAP Academy's performance based compensation program link teachers to professional development and rewards for excellence.

The program focuses on three core elements:



TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Skills, knowledge, and behaviors that teachers are expected to demonstrate in the classroom on a daily basis



LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to the mission and vision of the school, the ability to reflect on teaching and student growth, engagement and communication with families, support of the growth of colleagues, and the ability to take initiative in the school and outside the classroom



STUDENT ACADEMIC GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT

A teacher may receive an affirmative performance-based evaluation if their students as a whole meet or exceed a performance target or if their students improved from one year to the next

Our students pull on your heart strings every day and inspire you to work harder and smarter to serve them better. LEAP is truly a beacon of hope and a safe harbor for many. I am proud and humbled to be a part of such a wonderful organization.

Scott Lunn

*8th year at LEAP Academy
3rd Grade Math and Science Teacher
BA, Education, Richard Stockton College
BA, History, Rutgers University*

Prior to my teaching career, I worked as a realtor and I also served as a Mayor. I left my former career to become a teacher because I have always had a passion for working with young people. I enjoy our students' energy and creativity, individuality and honesty. I believe I bring an excellent work ethic, compassion, and everyday life experiences into the classroom to help my students make better choices.

I feel LEAP has an authentic program, which is based on saving children from negative outside influences, and preparing children for college and success in life.

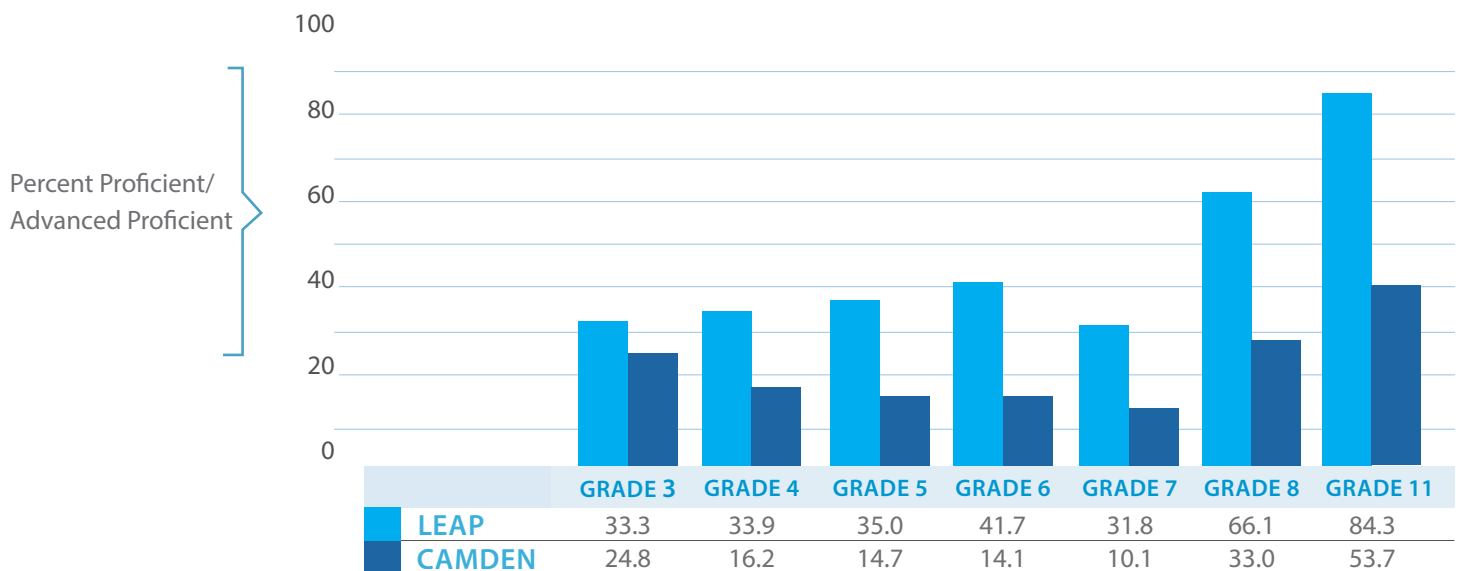
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TOOL



LEAP ACADEMY UNIVERSITY CHARTER SCHOOL AND CAMDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMPARISON DATA

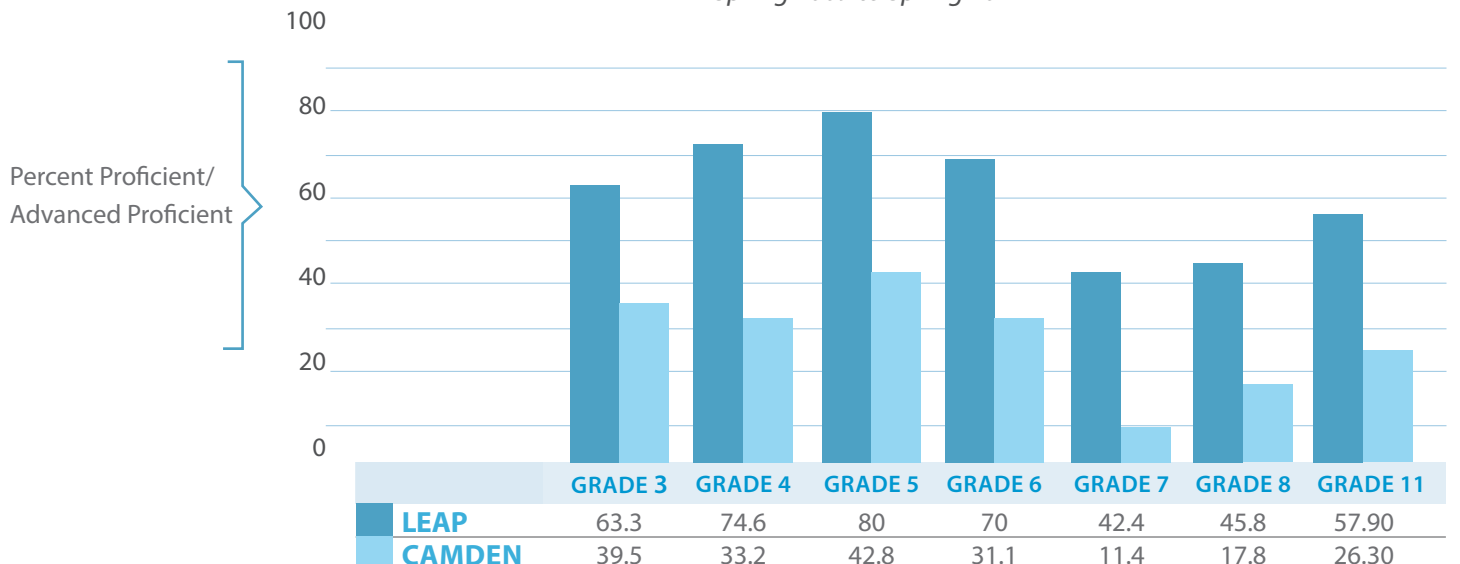
State test achievement results - Spring 2012

Performance framework: comparative performance by grade - Language arts/literacy



State test achievement results by grade – Mathematics

Spring 2009 to Spring 2012



SOURCE: Spring NJASK3-8 and HSPA, NJ DOE, 2012

LEAP TEACHERS BUILDING EXCELLENCE



UNEEB QURESHI

*2nd Year at LEAP Academy, High School Chemistry Teacher
BS, Honors, Biochemistry, University of Maryland, College Park, MD*

Prior to joining the LEAP Academy I had a varied research background. I enjoy working on the STEM campus in particular, because its mission allows me to take students beyond a typical high school curriculum and introduce them to the types of research and clinical experiences I have obtained. The STEM students are motivated to enter the fields of science, math, and technology and they are working to achieve these goals.

I currently teach 10th grade Chemistry and 11th grade Advanced Chemistry. I like being a teacher at LEAP because it is a school that enables me to reach out to minority students and encourage them to excel. The talented professionals and colleagues I work with are all highly educated and collaborative, with each bringing unique insights to the classroom environment.



RAY ROSSI

*9th year at LEAP Academy, High School World History Teacher
BA, History, Rutgers University
Fordham University College Board Certificate for AP World History*

Before joining LEAP, I worked for a large investment firm supporting the Mutual Fund Analyst Division. I left that job shortly after 9/11 and reevaluated my career path, I wanted to do something that made a difference in the world. A friend told me that LEAP Academy was looking for non-traditional teachers with various backgrounds. I applied for a "Teacher Fellow" position and pursued an alternate route for certification.

I love working at LEAP first and foremost for the kids. Our students are the best. They come from some extremely tough situations in life and they manage to persevere. LEAP Academy is all about "community." We continue to grow and succeed because we have a community of parents, teachers, administrators and board members that work tirelessly to cultivate every opportunity imaginable for our students.



GRISELLE RODRIGUEZ

*2nd Year at LEAP Academy High School Spanish Teacher
BA, Environmental Design, University of Puerto Rico- School of Architecture
MA, Architecture, University of Puerto Rico- School of Architecture
Certified Spanish and Art Teacher*

I began my career as an architect. Even while I enjoy design, being behind a computer sometimes felt too passive for me. Teaching a world language is an exciting and valuable experience. When I'm teaching I incorporate everything I know about how to create a building and use this method as the foundation for my Spanish language instruction.

As a foreign language teacher I have been in many other countries. I use those experiences to share authentic products with my students in class, so they can gain understanding of other cultures. Our students sometimes lack experiences to build their background knowledge and in LEAP they have opportunities that expand their frame of reference so they can better understand their world.



RUTGERS/LEAP CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The Community Leadership Center has continued to provide quality experiences for Rutgers students to engage in service learning opportunities that combine academic and experiential learning while delivering a service. ELRA and the LEAP Academy are the main placement sites as the two provide a myriad of opportunities for students to engage in all aspects of teaching, and learning at the prek-12th level, as well as opportunities to work with families and adults in a school setting.

JumpStart and the YES Institute are the major efforts for attracting and engaging college students.

JUMPSTART AND EARLY LEARNING

This year, Jumpstart has enlisted 34 Corps members that are completing 3,000 hours of work under the AmeriCorps program. These students come from all majors at Rutgers-Camden, including education, business, psychology, social work, nursing, and many others.

Each of these Corps members serves at one of 3 local pre-k centers, working first hand with classroom teachers and engaging the families to keep them informed of their children's progress. The teachers and administrators from each center have given positive reviews about Jumpstart's presence in the classroom and the knowledge and skills of the Corps members.

In addition to the work of our Corps members, Jumpstart has held three Volunteer events which have yielded over 130 hours of time served by 41 community volunteers. These events included activities like reading to pre-k children, making crafts to celebrate the fall and winter, painting a pre-k center in Cramer Hill, and celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday with books, crafts, and imaginary play.

For the 2013-2014 program year, we are working to expand our Corps member opportunities to include up to 100 undergraduate and graduate students. These additional Corps member slots would allow us to serve more pre-k children from the Camden community while involving additional college students in community service in Camden.





FELLOWSHIPS AND GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES

CLC is also a main placement site for graduate and doctoral students serving for applied research projects, as well as for practice experiences. A group of students from the School of Social Work is placed with the Rutgers/LEAP Family Support Center as they complete the required Field Placement experience. They are working on a variety of activities including the development and facilitation of groups around social and emotional challenges faced by children in a school setting.

Students from the Nursing Department also engage in the school as part of the Nursing Rotations that are required for completion of other degrees.

PEGGY JEAN CRAIG

A doctoral student in the Community Development in Public Affairs Program is working on a research study on parental engagement patterns at LEAP Academy and its impact on a family's life expectancies.

SARAH STONE

A graduate student in the Children Studies Department is working on documenting classroom transition in a pre-school environment.

MATTHEW McCAFFREY

A doctoral student in the the Community Development in Public Affairs Program. He is serving as the Coordinator for the AIM High Academy and is devoting his time to organizing the program, recruiting students and supervising the curriculum and program components.

VALERIE ILLUMINATI

A master level student in the English Department is working on literature reviews and other writing projects for the Center

YOU YOU JIANG

An undergraduate student who after completing JumpStart and working on AIM High is now coordinating the YES Institute.

Picture from left to right are
Sarah Stone,
Valerie Illuminati,
Peggy Jean Craig,
You You Jiang,
and
Matthew McCaffrey



INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

The Community Leadership Center is internationally partnered with the University of Havana in Cuba and the Center for Puerto Rico. These collaborations serve to develop new programs and certifications at the universities and to create opportunities for students and faculty.

PUERTO RICO – RUTGERS GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dr. Santiago is currently overseeing Geoconda Idrovo and Natasha Young, two students who are part of the MPA program at Rutgers University in Camden. Both are doing overseas service interning at the Center for Puerto Rico.

One project they are undertaking is a feasibility study focused on community development through Rutgers' MPA program. Idrovo and Young are currently involved in data collection, and are helping to produce an in-depth proposal for program accreditation in Puerto Rico.

Another project the pair of MPA students is undertaking focuses on expanding the Center for Puerto Rico's Green Market Initiatives (Mercado Verde). The project provides women in agriculture with spaces for selling and marketing their products and is including a focus on sustainable agriculture by creating workshops engineered to promote urban farming, the sharing of new techniques, and consumption of locally grown food. This project has given Idrovo and Young the chance to collaborate with community organizations, university professors, technical experts, and local business owners to develop a strategy centered around achieving the desired goals for the project.

Graduate students
Geoconda Idrovo and Natasha Young,
work with communities as part of their
research in Puerto Rico.





Rutgers students gain new experience in social-economic development while attending courses in Cuba.

Graduate students conduct original research to identify ways of improving health for seniors .

STUDY TRIP TO CUBA

Over the years, Rutgers–Camden and the University of Havana have maintained a strong innovative partnership. An international memorandum of agreement allows Rutgers students and faculty to participate in approved travel and study to Cuba through an educational general license approved by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago coordinates Rutgers–Camden academic trips to Cuba and oversees collaborative academic efforts there. In June 2011, thirty Rutgers students traveled to Havana as part of the course “Modern Cuba: Perspectives on Socio-Economic Development, Community Building and Cultural Adaptation in the New Global Context.” The students conducted research and studied community and urban development. Faculty from both Rutgers and the University of Havana participated in the instruction.

In June of 2013, Dr. Santiago will lead another Cuba trip and offer the Modern Cuba course to new students. As part of this program, students will go on field trips to a variety of places, like Old Havana, the Museum of the Revolution, markets, plantations, cities, and the Hemingway Farm and museum. This cultural excursion provides students with a rare and memorable academic and social experience in one of the world’s most isolated countries.

RUTGERS/CUBA STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF AGING

The Center recently published a study called the “Bridge of Knowledge: Linking Intergenerational Exchange and Mental Stimulation: A Community Pilot Project for the Elderly in Old Havana Cuba.” Two Rutgers University graduate students, Alyssa Yackle and Beatrix Jackson conducted the original research for the study under the supervision of Ailec Vega, a professor at San Gerónimo College and the Director of Research at the Direction of Cultural Management, as well as Professor Dr. Eduardo J. Gómez and Professor Dr. Bonilla-Santiago from Rutgers-Camden.

From September 2011 until May 2012, the team examined the demographic and social aspects of the aging population in Cuba. Information taken from this research and a culminating socio-cultural diagnostic was used to develop the pilot project, which aimed to meet the needs and interests of the elder population in Old Havana.

The fact that Cuba is now tied with Barbados for having the highest percentage of elderly population in the entire Western Hemisphere provides evidence of Cuba’s ongoing success in providing effective and enduring social welfare programs.

This report provides an example of the importance of community development, participation, and intergenerational ties in helping improve the health, happiness, and wellbeing of Cuba’s elderly.



ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

The Community Leadership Center has developed major funding for college education through the creation and development of Endowed Scholarships. This generous support from individuals and organizations gives students the opportunity to pursue their dreams at Rutgers University. By establishing this legacy, the endowments provide a constantly renewing source of funding to sustain LEAP students attending college for the first time and for graduate students taking part in international studies.

ALFREDO SANTIAGO ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

The Rutgers University Alfredo Santiago Endowed Scholarship was established in 1999 by CLC Director Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago in loving memory of her husband Alfredo Santiago and with the goal to increase the number of children in Camden who attend college.

The Scholarship provides financial assistance to LEAP Academy University Charter School graduates who enroll full-time at one of Rutgers University's three campuses. Since 2005, the Alfredo Santiago Scholarship has made it possible for 47 students from Camden to attend college by awarding \$209,000 worth of scholarships.

The LEAP Alfredo Santiago Scholarship provides funding for students that want to attend schools at other locations in the United States. Twenty-one students have received scholarships through this program totaling \$81,000 to help them attend school at numerous colleges, including Brown, Temple, and LaSalle Universities.

SILA CALDERON FELLOWSHIP

The Sila Calderon Fund provides the Community Leadership Center at Rutgers University in Camden with a \$500,000 endowment. The endowment supports research and scholarly activities in the areas of community building, leadership and capacity building, transparency in government, and social justice.

The Sila Calderon Fellowship is offered to talented graduate and doctoral level students in the Master's in Public Administration (MPA) degree program at Rutgers-Camden. The fellowships allow students and faculty scholars to engage in applied research in core areas of community building, ethics, and social justice. In 2012, \$4,000 in scholarships was awarded to Geoconda Idrovo and Natasha Young for their work in Puerto Rico.

The fellowships are part of The Sila Calderon Endowed Fund, an endowment established at Rutgers by a personal gift from the Honorable Sila Calderon, the former governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The endowment supports research and scholarly activities in the areas of community building, leadership and capacity building, transparency in government, and social justice.



Save the Date!

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2013

Rutgers/LEAP Alfredo Santiago Scholarship Fundraising Gala

ATRIUM at the Curtis Center in Philadelphia

Black tie | Tickets: \$300.00

For more information visit us at
clc.camden.rutgers.edu | p. 856-225-6348

Auction, Dinner, Music, Raffles, and Fun!!!

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