

A wide banner image at the top of the page. The left side shows a brick building with 'UNIVERSITY CHARTER SCHOOL' and 'Engineering Mathematics Center' visible. The right side shows a white building with large windows and American flags hanging from the facade.

LEAP ACADEMY
UNIVERSITY SCHOOL

130 North Broadway
Camden, NJ 08102
LeapAcademyCharter.org
856-614-0400

LEAP Academy
University School

*Creating educational opportunities for
families & students in Camden, NJ*





Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago
*Founder and Board Chair, Rutgers
 Board of Governors Distinguished
 Service Professor*

Welcome to the LEAP Academy University School!

LEAP Academy was the first public charter school to open its doors in Camden, New Jersey in 1997, and since then has set the highest standard of quality and excellence for children in the city. For over 20 years, the LEAP Academy has maintained a record of success and achievement that is most evident by the record graduation and college acceptance rates of its graduates. With over 1,000 high school graduates and serving 1,570 students in grades K-12 every year, LEAP Academy has become the premier destination for students and families in the City of Camden.

LEAP's mission evolves from a collective commitment to providing Camden City students with the knowledge and skills to pursue post-secondary education, while building and sustaining an environment where all members of the educational community are committed to continuous growth and development toward high academic standards. Our LEAP community works every day to provide our children with a positive, collaborative, nurturing and dynamic learning environment that leads to success and prosperity. Our future as a city and as a nation rests on our capacity to educate and prepare our younger citizens. Therefore, we must prepare our students for careers in STEM and instill in them the love of learning, the motivation and inquisitiveness that are necessary to be committed to a career and the kinds of habits of the mind that will make it natural for them to become successful adults.

Our location on Cooper Street has resulted in the creation of a true Educational Corridor. Children can enter the educational pipeline at birth at our Early Learning Research Academy, continue into Elementary and High School at LEAP, and then proceed to higher education at Rutgers, Rowan, or Camden County College. On this historical street where the past meets the future, we are taking buildings and creating spaces for future generations to come.

Come visit LEAP to experience our commitment to excellence and to fostering the potential of every single child to excel and see their dreams come through. At the end of the day, it is not only about what we do for our children, but also about what we have taught them to do for themselves that will make them successful human beings. We invite you to LEAP into action by joining our school community, as a family, a student, a staff person, or friend of the school.

LEAP Academy University School

CREATING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FROM CRADLE TO COLLEGE

LEAP Academy University School is a comprehensive K-12 public charter school serving students in Camden City, NJ. The school focuses on providing a college preparatory education with an emphasis on the content areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (“STEAM”).

Founded in 1997, LEAP Academy serves students from grades K through 12 and offers a rigorous cutting edge academic program that has prepared over 1,000 alumni to finish high school on time and enter a college or university. Families at LEAP also benefit from the services of the Rutgers Early Learning Research Academy which serves children from infancy through pre-school.

The affiliation with Rutgers University and its Community Leadership Center allows for a variety of opportunities that benefit the school’s teaching and learning portfolio, strengthens staff capacity, promotes engagement of families, and supports the ongoing innovative spirit that permeates the school’s academic culture.

OUR MISSION

To enhance opportunities for the children and families of Camden through the collaborative design, implementation, and integration of education, health, and human services programs and through community development.



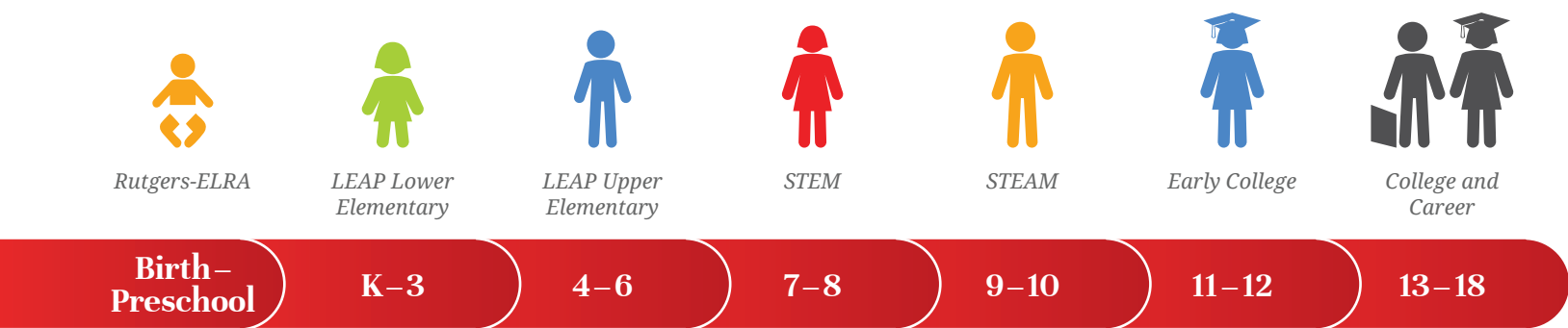
Manny Delgado
Chief Operations Officer

LEAP Academy is guided by a missionary commitment to the City of Camden and its families. Our portfolio of programs are targeted to the unique needs of our students and are integrated into the fabric of our community. We are providing children from cradle to college, with instructional experiences that set the foundation for life-long learning.

Foundational elements that support our mission:

- Rigorous curriculum that focuses on college preparation and STEM/STEAM learning.
- College and career readiness through a focus on high expectations for all students, educators, and families.
- Strong fiscal operation aligned to the instructional and support priorities of the school.
- Ongoing and varied professional development for teachers, staff, and parents.
- Strong partnerships with anchor universities, local businesses and foundations.

A Results Driven Approach



Rutgers-Camden Community Leadership Center

College Access Center • Health & Wellness Center • Family & Student Support Center • Fabrication Lab
Parents Academy • Early Learning Research Academy • Research & Dissemination

FOCUS ON ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & COLLEGE SUCCESS

LEAP Academy is focused on academic excellence and a successful transition to college and careers for all students. This focus is grounded on a collective commitment to accountability, efficiency, and high expectations that has produced unmatched results and changed lives.

- LEAP students have achieved perfect, 100% high school graduation and college acceptance rates since its first high school graduation in 2005.
- LEAP's impact on the Camden community and economy is visible, aligned, and continues to grow.
- LEAP seniors graduate with more than 20 college credits through the school's Early College Program.
- LEAP academic scores rank among the best in the City of Camden.
- LEAP teachers and staff receive over 60 hours of professional development every year.
- LEAP offers access to technology in all of its buildings, including computers for every student.
- LEAP parents have access to multiple opportunities at the school including health services, workforce development programs, wellness and nutrition, and leadership development.



100% College Placement
Maintained for each graduating senior since 2005.



100% Graduation Rate
Maintained since first graduating class in 2005.



5 Schools
Serving 2,000 students from infancy to grade 12.



25 Years
Empowering educational excellence & community development.

Our Best Practices

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE DRIVES ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The LEAP Model emboldens academic excellence and community development through quality education, comprehensive health, social, personal and professional development programs for inner city families and students, from cradle to college.

LEAP is built upon the belief that a quality education can enhance the career opportunities for African Americans and Latinos living in urban and vulnerable environments, and can serve as a nexus for community and economic development in the inner city.

The LEAP Model is sustained by an urgent commitment to accountability for people, time, money, and programs, and the promise of college access and preparedness for all students from infancy through 12th grade.



- 1

Effective and targeted academic program that prepares students to enter and succeed in a college career.
- 2

Health and Wellness Center designed to improve the health and quality of life of its students, families and neighborhood residents. Positive impact of school attendance, employability and productivity of adults.
- 3

A Parents Center that works daily with all families to facilitate engagement and provide support.
- 4

A focus on entrepreneurship, rigor and data driven instruction that integrate problem solving, analytical, research, applied experimentation, project based learning, reflection, and active learning are at the of the instructional program.
- 5

A commitment to community transformation by providing access and parity to community members and forging collaborative efforts that produce new knowledge and promote shared governance.
- 6

A commitment to nutrition and physical activity as essential elements for the development of children. LEAP operates five kitchens and every student receives breakfast and lunch. Chef Pastorello leads these efforts and provides nutritional awareness programs to all members of the school community.
- 7

LEAP educational facilities are modern, safe and conducive to learning. Safety and security personnel are present in every building at all times. Technology and instructional resources are provided at all facilities.



PILLARS FOR SUSTAINABILITY & EXCELLENCE



Student

- Opportunity based curriculum.
- College access for all students.
- Structured extended learning time.
- Data driven instruction through assessment feedback.



Organization

- Entrepreneurial governance.
- Sustainable educational pipelines.
- Systems of accountability.



Teacher

- Performance based compensation.
- Teacher development opportunities.



Stakeholder

- Parents engagement.
- Social/community alliances.
- Partnerships with institutions of higher education.

Academic Program

LEAP Academy provides a college preparatory education with an emphasis on the content areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). The academic program is anchored on multi-disciplinary collaborations that are supported by opportunities for students to engage in active, integrated, and self-directed learning across grade levels.

- Extended day & extended year of instruction, including summer programming.
- A college access office that focuses on academic support & college readiness.
- Strong character & leadership development programs to ensure that students develop important non-cognitive skills & civic responsibility.
- Staff to support students with counseling & socio-emotional services.
- Access to computers & technology with wireless connection.
- Small class size and individualized instruction.
- Fabrication Lab spaces open to all students for applied learning and innovation.
- Early College/Dual College courses for all seniors.



Early Learning Research Academy

Through the partnership with Rutgers University-Camden’s Community Leadership Center, LEAP families benefit from the services and programs of the Early Learning Research Academy (ELRA). ELRA is an early childhood development and research center serving 320 children every year. The holistic model focuses on cognitive and socio-emotional development as important elements to address school readiness for urban children.



Lower Elementary

The Lower Elementary School serves 480 children in grades K-3. The school focuses on providing every student with a strong academic foundation in math and language arts using integrated approaches that incorporate science, social studies and world languages. Innovative curriculum focuses on helping young children to develop the cognitive, social-emotional, self-regulatory, and foundational academic skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.



Upper Elementary

The Upper Elementary School serves 360 children in grades 4-6. The academic program is delivered by content specialized teachers to ensure that students are receiving the best instruction from an instructional expert. Structured opportunities for students to develop life skills such as articulating a vision, decision making, building self-confidence and self-discipline, and accepting responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish are facilitated every day in classrooms and through specialized programs.

Academic Guiding Principles:

High Expectations • Holistic Environment • Integrated Learning
Active Learning • Positive Attitudes • Varied Assessments

Curricular Unifying Themes:

Problem Solving • Critical Thinking • Communication • Information Gathering and Processing
Personal, Family, and Community Growth and Development



Grades 7 through 8



Grades 9 through 11



Grade 12

Intermediate

The LEAP Intermediate School serves 240 students in grades 7 and 8. Teachers and staff work to ensure that students prepare for transitioning to rigorous high school curriculum.

The school's culture and daily routines are supported by high quality academic guidance, mentoring, and exposure to college and careers. Students are intellectually and socially engaged with opportunities for civic and community service.

Students are active participants in exploring and expanding their understanding through interdisciplinary studies and empowering them to develop the skills and competencies that will help them become better scholars and great citizens.

High School

The LEAP High School serves 480 students in grades 9–11, and represents the culmination of the academic trajectory of students at the LEAP Academy. The High School Program is structured to simulate the college experience and to expose students to academic coursework, sequences and expectations that build their level of college readiness, motivation and self assurance about a college career. 100% of LEAP seniors graduate from high school and are accepted to college.

The High School is structured in three academies: (a) STEM/STEAM, (b) Liberal Arts/Social Studies, and (c) Business. During the 9th and 10th grades, students take core foundation courses, which prepare them for one of the academies. During the 11th and 12th grades, they choose an Academy and focus on a specialized track course work.

Early College

All LEAP 12th graders participate in the Early College Program with Rutgers and Rowan Universities. Early College allows students to spend the entire senior year enrolled in college level courses.

Our Early College Program provides:

- **Academic Excitement**
Students are challenged and exposed to real college level coursework, giving them a headstart on completing their college degree and giving them a competitive advantage over other high school seniors.
- **Fast Track to Early Career Success**
While most college freshman will spend their first year figuring out what they want to do and how to navigate college life, LEAP graduates are ahead with a full year of college already completed.
- **Long-term College Savings**
Students can accumulate up to ten completed college courses, equating savings of \$12,000 for up to 30 college credits.
- **Comprehensive Targeted Support**
Students are supported by a Director of College Access and given the tools to successfully navigate the high school to higher education transition process.

Instructional Leaders



Veronica Boone-Gbesi
Director of Curriculum and Instruction



Stephanie Rogers, MHS
Director, Early Learning Research Academy



Shanell Maddrey
Principal, Lower Elementary



Jovita Veguilla
Principal, Upper Elementary and Intermediate



Barbara Dunlap
Principal, High School



Tameka Matthews
Principal, Lower Elementary



Our Innovations

LEAP ACADEMY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Innovation and knowledge production is at the core of LEAP Academy’s academic focus. A strategic partnership with Rutgers-Camden’s Community Leadership Center provides the resources and environment for the development of innovative strategies that enhance teaching and learning, child and youth development and community solutions.

With a transformative approach to education and a commitment for building solid educational pipelines, this school-university partnership makes it possible for children and families in the City to have access to quality cradle to college programs.



Health & Wellness Center

The LEAP Health and Wellness Center is a pediatric school based health center that provides convenient, accessible, and comprehensive health services for children and adolescents where they spend the majority of their time—in school. The range of services varies from basic primary care, preventative medicine, including immunizations and urgent care. The Pediatric Center is open to the public, LEAP students, and their siblings (birth to 23 years of age).



Fabrication Lab

The “FabLab,” focuses on invention, creation, discovery and sharing, serving as the space for inquiry where everyone learns and knowledge gets integrated into teaching and learning. The FabLab provides a platform for immersion in creative processes that weave together technology, art, analysis, logic, and innovation. Through teamwork and a cross-disciplinary approach, students are able to engage in multi-dimensional projects that strengthen their conceptual understanding of technology as well as its application.



College Access Center

The College Access Center takes the leadership in promoting a college ready culture across all grade levels, with an intensified focus at the high school. With offices and staff in each school building, it provides the support mechanisms to ensure that there is alignment between college aspirations and college attainment. College Access staff stand by a collective commitment to motivate, prepare, support and celebrate students’ quest of a college degree.



Family & Student Support Center

LEAP Academy is committed to providing comprehensive services aimed at achieving educational success and the physical, social, and emotional well being for students, families, and community. The Family Support Center offers and mobilizes multiple services through the development of programs and partnerships to provide opportunities, optimize assets, and address the identified needs of students, family, and community.



Parents Academy & Engagement Center

The Parents Academy develops and provides programs that are geared at building opportunities for parents. The aim is to invest in making parents effective participants in the overall educational development of their children. This investment, in turn, can translate into enhanced academic achievement of their children.



Innovation Leaders



Khary Golden
Director of Early College



Maria Cruz
Director of Parent Engagement Center



Marchelle Roberts
Director of College Access



Ricardo Miranda
Director of Fabrication Lab



Dr. Velmina Rivera, MD, FAAP
Director of Health & Wellness Center



Leda Hernandez Diaz
Director of Behavioral Health & Wellness

LEAP Academy Alumni

WITH OVER 1,000 GRADUATES, THE GROWING NETWORK OF SUCCESSFUL ALUMNI IS LEAP ACADEMY’S BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

LEAP Academy University School provides academic and professional support to all LEAP Academy graduates. We are proud of what alumni have achieved, and celebrate their success.

Over \$30 million in scholarships have been awarded to LEAP Academy graduates.

\$540,000 has been awarded to 130 students through the Alfredo Santiago scholarship.

Over 100 college graduates from top-tier schools including Rutgers University, Rowan University, Georgetown, Howard, Temple, Stockton, Villanova, and the University of Rochester.

LEAP Academy graduates have attended over 150 universities in over 20 states.

85% college retention rate.



Alfredo Santiago Scholarship

The Alfredo Santiago Scholarship was created in 1999 to help LEAP Academy students attend college and graduate with the experience needed to pursue successful careers. High achieving students are inducted to the Alfredo Santiago Rutgers Scholars Program at an early age, and are given the promise of a college scholarship provided that he/she continues to excel in school.

LEAP Alumni



Jonathan Gonzalez

University of Rochester Class of 2014, Community Development and Investing

Jonathan is an Associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), a national accounting firm, meeting with C-level executives to discuss their strategic and tactical approaches to complex problems. He held previous positions at AT&T and Wells Fargo before joining PwC.



Michael Espinosa

Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden Class of 2016

Michael studied Nursing at Rutgers-Camden and studied public health in Cuba, Brazil, and Bolivia. He became committed to the field of medicine, and upon graduating started a full-time position as a Nurse in the Vascular & Plastic Surgery Unit at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.



Melissa Edmond, PharmD

South University School of Pharmacy Class of 2018, Howard University Class of 2015

Melissa started LEAP Academy in Kindergarten and has excelled in her studies throughout college and graduate school. She is now a full time pharmacist in the Greater DC area and has given back to LEAP through mentoring and speaking.



Learn More About Getting Involved at LEAP Academy:

- 1 **Enroll at LEAP Academy**
leapacademycharter.org/enrollment
- 2 **Work at LEAP Academy**
leapacademycharter.org/work-at-leap
- 3 **Support LEAP Academy**
leapacademycharter.org/support-leap
- 4 **Learn More**
leapacademycharter.org/about

