

# LEAP ACADEMY SCHOOL MODEL

## GLORIA BONILLA-SANTIAGO, PH.D.

President, LEAP Academy Social Enterprise

Board of Governors Distinguished Professor of  
Service, Public Policy and Administration

Community Leadership Director and Founder and  
Board Chair of LEAP Academy Inc.



# VISION: Every child will be a global citizen

**PEOPLE**



**PLACE**



**OUTCOMES**

- 100% Graduation & College Placement
- Education and Workforce Development
- Social Entrepreneurship
- Small Business Development
- Multi-Sector Alignment
- Community HUB and Resilient Facility

# LEAP AS A HUB FOR ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**100%** High School Graduation Rate

**100%** College Placement

**\$27 Million** Annual Budget

**2,300** PreK-12 Students Served Annually

**5 Schools \$100 Million** Real Estate Investment

**3,000** Students Graduated

# The Collective 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.*



# The Power of LEAP



# LEAP Model



- Entrepreneurial Governance
- Sustainable Educational Pipelines
- Accountability Systems for Results
- Innovative Practices
- Evidence-based Research Practices
- Ethics, Equity & Transparency”

Organizational  
Factors

- STEM/STEAM Curriculum
- Early College
- Careers/ College Access
- Socio-Emotional Learning
- Extended learning time
- Data-driven instruction

Student  
Factors

Stakeholder/  
Alliance  
Factors

Teacher & Staff  
Development  
Factors

- Parent Engagement
- Social/Community alliances
- Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education and Industry Workforce Development

- Performance Based Compensation
- Professional Development & Diversity Training
- Digital & Hybrid Platforms for Learning
- Leadership & Capacity Building
- Superior Compensation & Benefits
- Culture of Excellence

# The LEAP Pipeline

Birth-to-16 centers of excellence



Rutgers-ELRA



LEAP Lower  
Elementary



LEAP Upper  
Elementary



STEM



STEAM



Early College



College and  
Career

**Birth-  
Preschool**

**K-3**

**4-6**

**7-8**

**9-11**

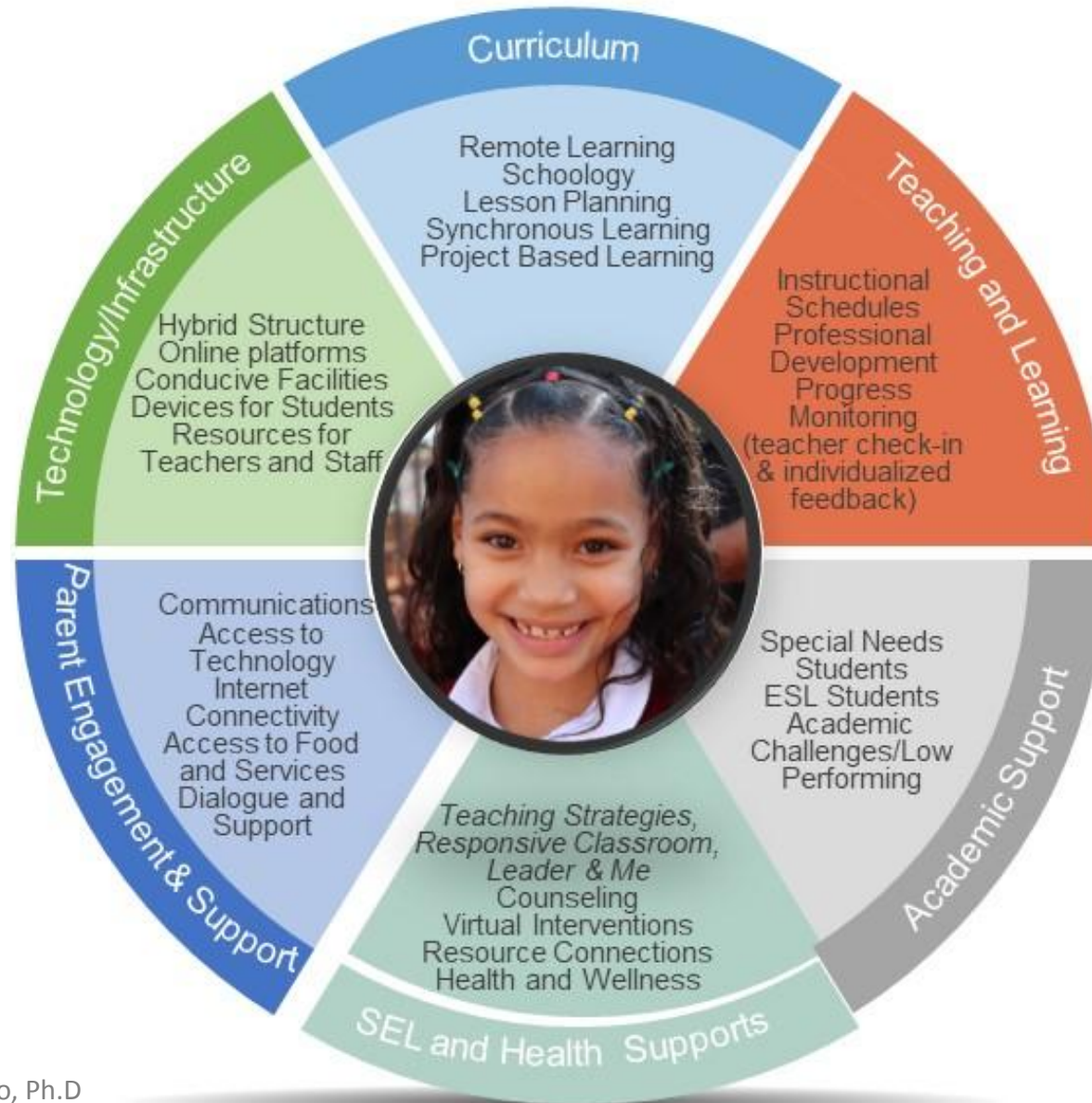
**12**

**13-18**

**LEAP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK OF SCHOOLS**

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

# Integrated Holistic Approach to the LEAP Model







## Instructional Pedagogical Approach

1. Data-Driven Instruction
2. Professional Development Training
3. Performance Reward System
4. Personalized Learning Pathways
5. Multidisciplinary STEM/STEAM Curriculum
6. Project-Based Learning
7. Instructional Rigor & Differentiated Instruction
8. Integration of Technology across Grade Levels
9. Variety Assessments
10. Synchronous & Asynchronous Approach
  - Hybrid & In-Person Platforms
  - Schoology Platform
11. Guiding Principles to Teaching & Learning



## Five Core Elements of the LEAP Model

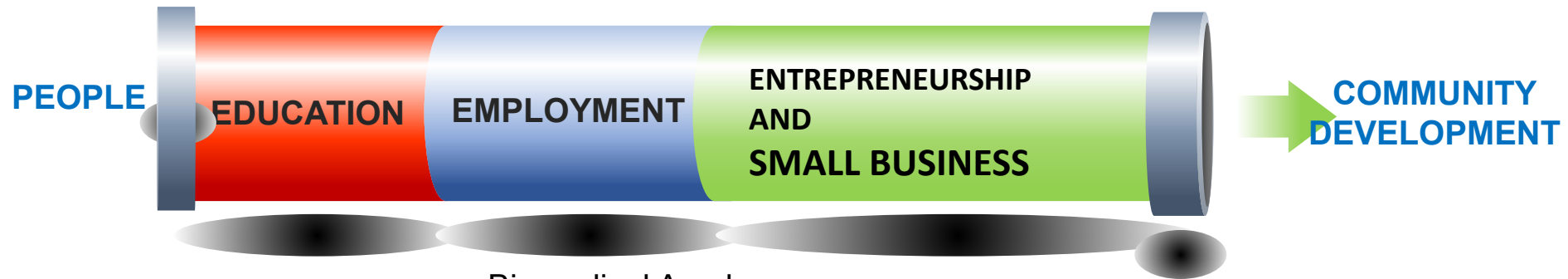
1. Accountability for People, Time, Money and Programs
2. Pipeline of College Access for all students PreK- 16
3. Teacher Development and Support
4. Parental Engagement
5. Early Learning means later Earning



## LEAP Values

1. Student achievement comes first
2. We do whatever it takes to get the job done
3. Children focus
4. We are a family
5. Positive and caring culture
6. We are all accountable
7. Transparency with each other
8. Improvement is ongoing
9. Diversity is our strength
10. We are one team
11. Community Partnerships
12. Building capacity from within

*Provide comprehensive services for students, parents and families within our community*



- ✓ K-12 Model Schools
- ✓ Early College
- ✓ Early Learning through 16 and Careers
- ✓ Fab Lab
- ✓ Center for College Access
- ✓ Health Clinic
- ✓ Family & Student Support Center

- Biomedical Academy
- Business Academy
- Social Science Academy
- STEM/STEAM Academy (Manufacturing/Computer Science)
- Service Industry
- Early Industry
- Job Creation
- Job Readiness and Soft Skills Training
- Local Industry

- Small Business Development
- Creative Entrepreneurship
- Digital Connections
- Community Fabrication and Innovation Lab



## Best Practices

1. Rigorous college preparation programs prepare students from cradle to college and develop soft skills necessary to achieve in higher education and into their careers
2. The Health and Community Wellness Center improves the quality of life for neighborhood residents and positively impacts school attendance, employability and productivity of adults



## Best Practices

4. Parent Engagement builds school and community culture creating accountability and transparency, and improving academic performance
5. Academic Pillars for learning integrate entrepreneurship, data-driven instruction, problem solving, analytical research, applied experimentation, project based learning, reflection, and active learning



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## Best Practices

6. The University CLC is an anchor for community transformation, giving LEAP access and parity for community to become partners to create new knowledge and innovations, and a voice and a seat at the table in the school governance and in community development efforts

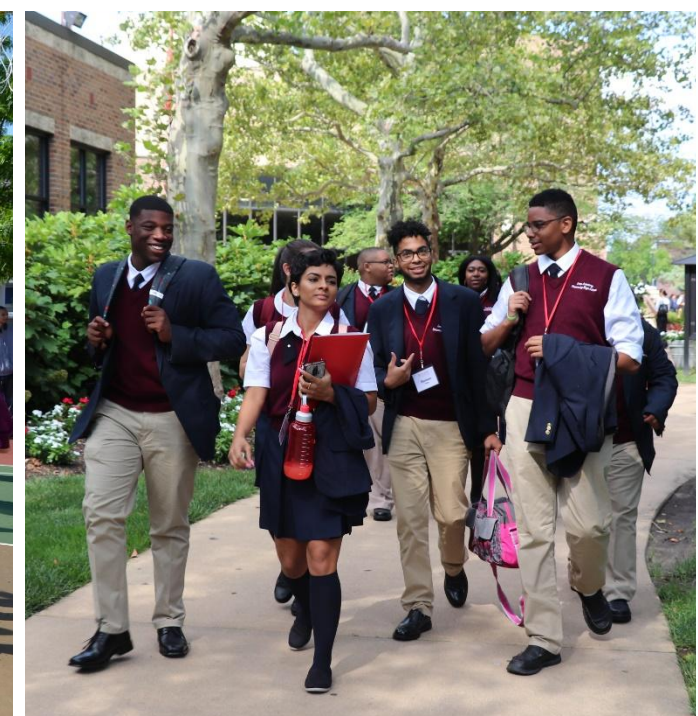


## Best Practices

7. Transformative School Leadership is long, difficult and lonely work. Adults want to maintain the status quo and teachers are impatient for results. School leaders need to have resiliency and knowledge to know what to do, lead with courage and make difficult decisions, know who to listen to and how to manage critics along the way



# Community of Practice





# Our Stakeholders

- Higher Education Institutions
  - Rutgers University
  - Rowan University
  - Camden County College
  - Cabrini University
  - Saint Peters University
- Philanthropy Foundations
- Banking Institutions
- State & Local Government
- Traditional Public Schools
- Charter/Alianza Network
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Community Partnerships
- Local Industries

# The Early Days: *The Vision is Forged* (1992 – 1995)







**Innovative school is planned by Rutgers**

**■ Purpose:** *The plan is to develop a curriculum for the inner-city student and family.*

By KEVIN RIORDAN  
Courier-Post Staff

CAMDEN — Rutgers University hopes to build an experimental school for teaching the children and reaching the families of North Camden.

The proposed \$25 million "Project Lean Academy" — to be





Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
Center for Strategic Urban Community Leadership  
Camden Campus

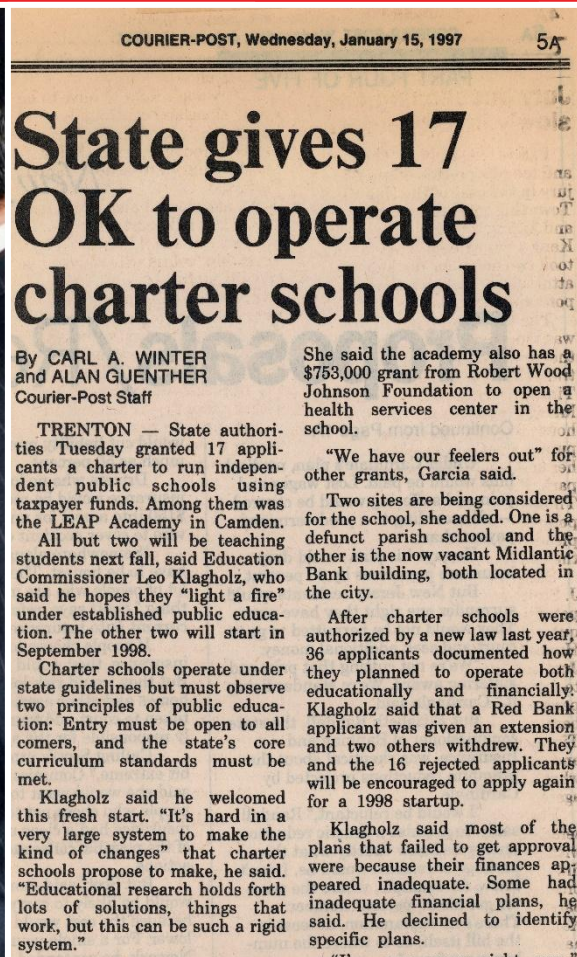
### CAMDEN COUNTS: A Strategic Plan for the Project LEAP Academy

January 1995

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# The Planning Phase: *The Vision Begins to Take Shape* (1996-1997)







1996



Friday, January 12, 1996

# ACTION IN TRENTON

The Senate will reconvene  
Thursday, January 18;  
Assembly at call

27

A special section reporting major actions during yesterday's meeting of the State Legislature

## Whitman signs bill, rings opening bell on charter schools

By DONNA LEUSNER

Glorio Bonilla-Santiago, a professor at Rutgers University's graduate school of social work in Camden, has been working day and night for three years on creating a new breed of elementary school for 500 of Camden's impoverished children.

to improve public schools, charter school officials around the country say. They are privately run, independent of most school district rules and often target specific groups of kids such as gifted or disadvantaged or have education themes like math or computers.

Whitman, who focused on education in her address to the Legislature, said charter schools are "exactly the kind of fundamental change we need." Among the other groups talking up the bill was the state Education Council. Leo Klingholz, to sign the bill, said he wants to see parents of gifted children in Jersey City parents union in the public schools, a New



With a group of children looking on, Gov. Christie Whitman signs the charter schools bill after her State of the State address.

Photo by Jack S. Kanth

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1997

THE STAR-LEDGER

## STATE OF THE STATE



PHOTOS BY JERRY MCCREA

Monica Jones, left, and James Verrilli and Gloria Bonilla-Santiago were singled out by the Governor in her address as representatives of her successes.

## Whitman says the proof is in the people

1997

# The College Vision Begins: *Building A Strong Foundation* (1997- 2003)



**Camden charter school gets own building**

Thursday, September 2, 1999  
COURIER-POST



**In The Schools** By Maureen Fitzgerald

## Dream of Camden charter school nears

For four years, Gloria Bonilla-Santiago has clung to a vision for the children of Camden: an elite math and science school with the best teachers and textbooks and technology around. With involved parents to check homework and volunteer. With a built-in clinic, with doctors, nurses and social workers to serve families.

All along the way, people told her it couldn't be done.

Teachers told her the parents don't care. Politicians told her she'd never raise the money.

Many times, she asked herself why she was going on. But she kept seeing the faces of those mothers and children who believed in her dream and helped her build it.

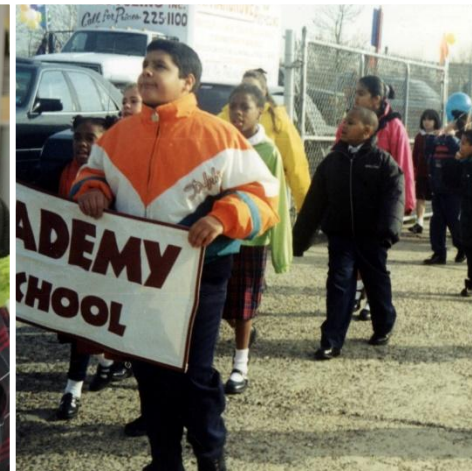
"I couldn't let them down," she said.

On Sept. 15, the LEAP Academy Charter School will open — in 19 portable trailers on a vacant lot bordered by Seventh, Linden and Pearl Streets, rented from the city of Camden for \$1 a year. It's not perfect, but it's a start. And the effort it took to get there is a testimony to one woman's dedication to her dream.

She raised \$5 million — almost



The Philadelphia Inquirer / APRIL SAUL



# COURIER-POST

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1997

## S. Jersey's first charter school welcomes kids

By JUDITH THOMAS LUCAS  
Courier-Post Staff

CAMDEN — The 324 young students seemed unaware of their place in history as South Jersey's first charter school opened Monday.

"This is a historic moment for you," Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, founder of LEAP Academy Charter School, told the children during a 75-minute opening ceremony.

Even before the program was halfway over, scores of students fell asleep. Some cried. Others sought out their parents or talked with classmates, seemingly oblivious to the hopes and dreams their parents and teachers are pinning on them.

"I'm so excited," said Delvis Serrano, who has two children — Vanessa Rivera, 10, and Emilio Morales, 6 — enrolled in the school. "Actually, I am aw-

whelmed. It feels like I just gave birth. This is a dream come true."

Project LEAP — an acronym for leadership, education and partnership — is the first of 16 charter schools in the state opening this year.

Charter schools are privately run institutions that receive public funds. They operate under a contract, or charter, that sets out terms and student performance goals in advance.

For the next two years, the children at LEAP Academy will get their lessons in nine classroom trailers at Seventh and Linden streets.

The school is for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Any Camden resident could apply. About 500 students did, and 324 were chosen by lottery.

Every student will be exposed to foreign languages and is expected to become bilingual.

Continued from Page 1A

ted to become bilingual in Spanish or French. They will attend school year-round, and the school day will be extended, running from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Computers will be used to allow students to communicate with youngsters around the globe.

The students wear uniforms: girls in plaid jumpers and white shirts, and boys in navy pants, white shirts and plaid ties.

On Monday, parents snapped photographs even as Bonilla-Santiago tried to keep the children's attention. Later, the children showed more interest in escaping balloons than the speech that school director Juan Rosario made about the school's future.

Parent Danny Maldonado said he is thrilled his 6-year-old son Joshua will get exposed to a

curriculum that focuses on math, science and technology.

Bonilla-Santiago wants the school to buy a stately four-story brick building at Seventh and Cooper streets, but the \$700,000 price tag is a stumbling block. Negotiations are ongoing with the Camden Diocese, which owns the building.

"I just hope it's all that they say it's going to be," said Joan Rodriguez, whose 7-year-old son Ruddy started the second grade Monday.

"They say it's going to do more for the children," Rodriguez said. "I hope they are right, because we need this."

Diana Black was full of dreams for her 6-year-old daughter Joie.

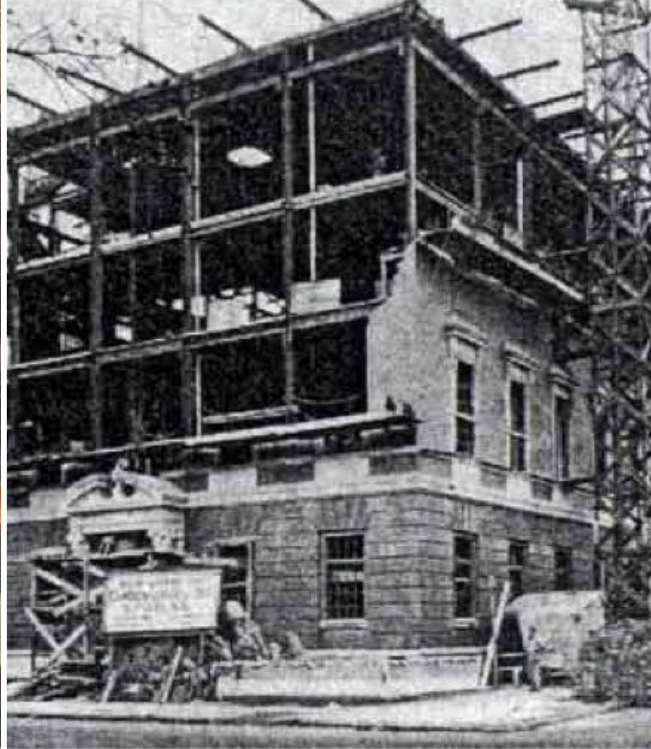
"If I took her to a public school, she wouldn't get the attention," Black said.



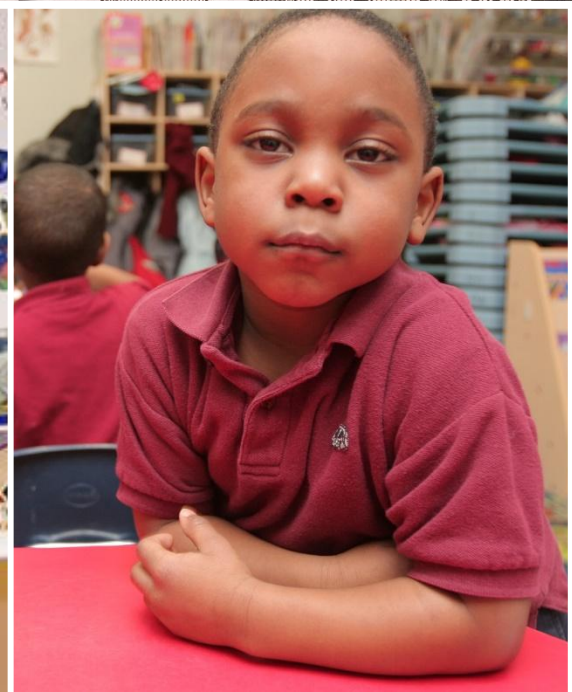
1997



1999



2001





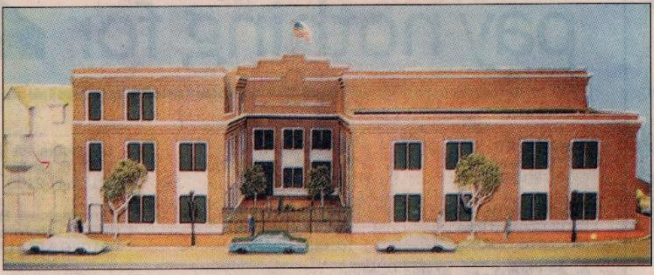
2002

## Ground broken for LEAP Academy school in Camden

By LAVINIA DeCASTRO  
Courier-Post Staff

**CAMDEN**  
Not even Monday morning's steady drizzle could dampen their spirits. More than 50 people attended a ground-breaking ceremony for the new LEAP Academy University Charter High School. The \$10.5 million building is being constructed on Rutgers University's Camden campus. Officials from LEAP, the state Department of Education, legislators, community leaders and students huddled under a white tent behind the construction site on Cooper Street and Broadway. Those who couldn't fit

under the tent crowded around it holding umbrellas. "This is just liquid sunshine," LEAP Superintendent Stephanie Branch said of the rain. The 59,700-square-foot building, expected to open in the fall 2004, will house 216 students in grades eight through 12 and have 50 staff members. Students in pre-kindergarten through seventh grade have their own building one block away on the corner of Cooper Street and Haddon Avenue. LEAP's high school students currently attend classes at a Rutgers building less than one block from



Ground was broken for the LEAP Academy University Charter High School in Camden, shown here in an artist's rendering. The building is expected to open in fall 2004.

"It's very crowded," said 11th-grader Marteha Stewart, adding that students use Rutgers' lab, gym and cafeteria. "If it's snowing, they have to bring our lunches to us." LEAP has added one grade a year since a group of Rutgers professors, with the help of community leaders and parents, founded the charter school in 1997. About 700 students in pre-kindergarten through 11th grade attend LEAP. Next year, the school is expected to add 50 students — hence the need for a larger building. The three-story high

where the new school will be located. "We want to thank Rutgers for allowing us to use that building, but I have to

say that honestly, we're looking forward to having our own building," 11th-grader Rafael Guzman said. That's because the build-

ing has no gymnasium, cafeteria, auditorium or science labs. It is so small that half of its classes meet in six trailers.

See LEAP, Page 2B



2003



# The First Cohort of 100% College Graduation Begins: *High School Expansion* (2005 – 2010)



2005



2009



# Expansion of the Vision: *Forging Early College Partnerships and Leading Innovation in Education (2011-2017)*









2015



2017





# Sustaining Growth

*(2018- present)*

Camden's LEAP Academy celebrates 20 years





### Camden school hires pediatrician

Kim Mulford, @CP\_KimMulford



Dr. Velmina Rivera (right) gets a hug from 4-year-old Alan Hernandez at LEAP Academy University Charter in Camden. The school's founder, Gloria Bonilla-Santiago (left) recruited the pediatrician to care for the school's 2,000 students. (Photo: Kim Mulford/Staff photographer)Buy Photo

CAMDEN - Dr. Velmina Rivera was tying her shoelaces at her gym in June, when the founder of LEAP Academy University Charter School made an



# Impact & Results

100% in 2005

100% in 2006

100% in 2007

100% in 2008

100% in 2009

100% in 2010

100% in 2011

100% in 2012

100% in 2013

100% in 2014

100% in 2015

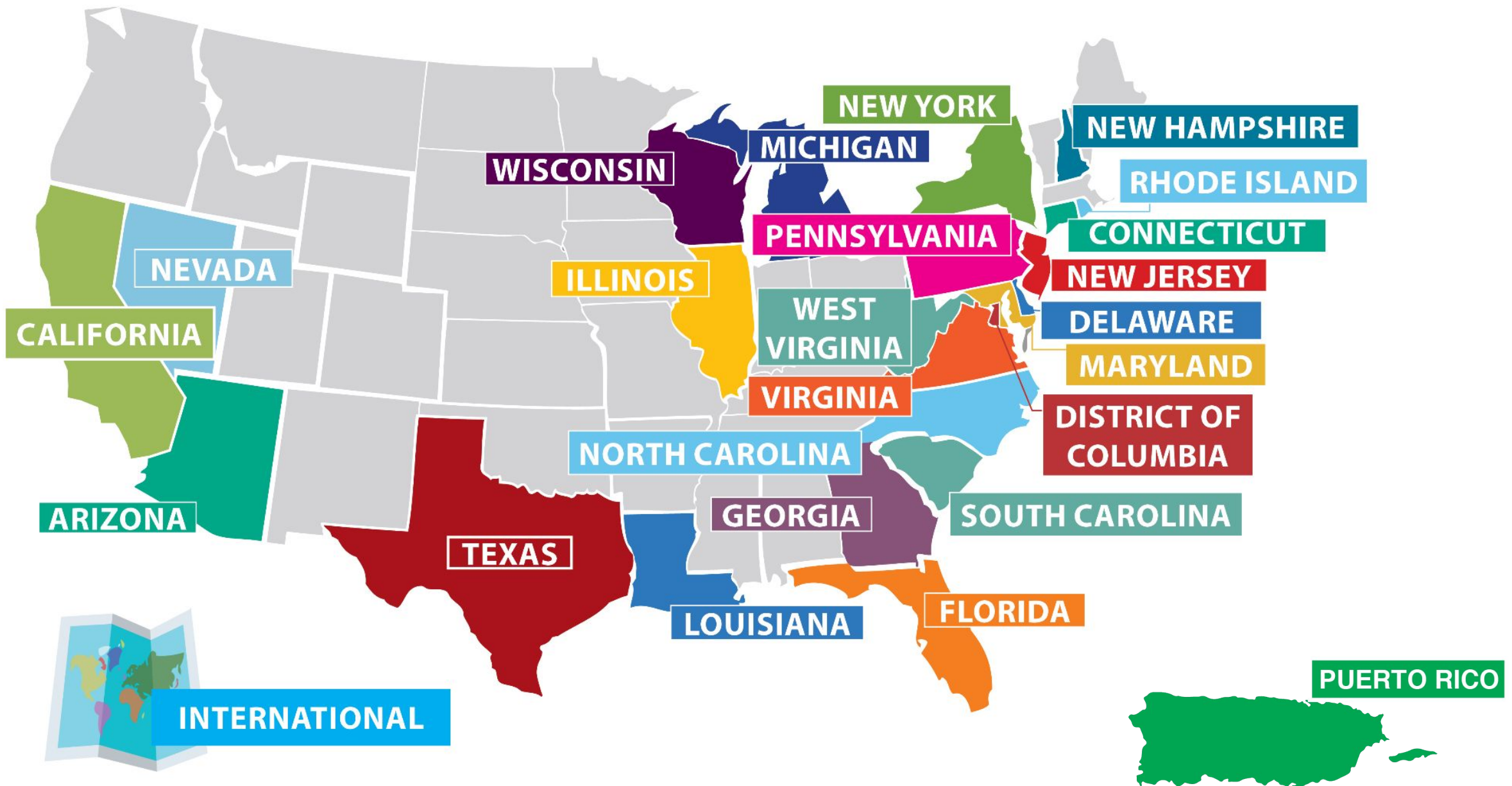
100% in 2016

100% in 2017

100% in 2018

100% in 2019

100% in 2020



# Rutgers Alfredo Santiago Scholarship Endowment Fund



**\$3,500,000** Since 2005 the Alfredo Santiago Scholarship has made it possible for hundreds of students from Camden to attend college. In a city where only **5.5% of adults** hold a bachelor's or professional degree and only **51% hold a high school diploma**, there is an urgent need for greater access to and greater affordability of higher education for Camden youth.



# Early Learning John E. Morgan Family Endowment Fund



**\$2,000,000**

*This fund supports the life trajectories of Camden children beginning in infancy when they enroll in the Early Learning Research Academy and through college when they become eligible to receive a scholarship to pursue their college careers. By attending the Early Learning Research Academy, these children become the youngest members of the Rutgers/LEAP pipeline ensuring that the next generation of the Camden community has access to the tools and opportunities that will lead to success.*

# Return on Investment- Our Kids

