



*"This is more fun than my friend's birthday party!"*

Vivian Do  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade Visual Art Student

## Purpose

The **Leap Academy Arts Education Plan** will guide our growing support of arts education in our District and serve as a foundation for future opportunities and funding in the arts. It details the reasons why our community must support an education in which Camden students are provided with quality instruction in the arts, and have positive artistic experiences from Kindergarten through their senior year of high school. Though our initial goal is to introduce and nurture artistic expression within our students, our ultimate goal is that they would leave LEAP empowered with artistic vision that they utilize at work, at home, and at play.

At a time when other schools are cutting Arts funding, LEAP Academy is proud to be bucking this trend. LEAP Academy strongly believes in the importance of making dance, music, theatre, and visual arts a necessary part of each student's academic career. Within the span of seven months, LEAP's VAPA Department has made wonderful strides in improving the artistic culture within the schools, but there is still much work to do.

Our disciplines require functional teaching spaces. We have equipment and supply needs unique to the visual and performing arts. We have an adequate performance space, but it is in serious need of an upgrade. We have students who desperately want to learn how to play instruments. We need more support for these improvements to be made, but in the meantime we are focusing on what we can control—educating the kids about art.

A high-quality education in the arts is a vital piece of a complete curriculum. The arts teach our children more than just how to dance, sing, act, or draw. The arts engage students' learning in all subject areas and stimulate their imagination and creativity, which enhances their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. A background in the arts also helps to better prepare students for college and the workforce by giving them the necessary skills, innovation, creativity, and imagination to be successful and competitive in today's global market.

For the past three months, LEAP Academy University Charter School has convened on a periodic basis with its newly implemented District Arts Team, with the overall goal of putting together this full, comprehensive **Arts**



*"Music lets me be me. It gives purpose to my feelings and thoughts."*

Wilfrancis Ruiz  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Dance & Music  
Student

*"Art has helped me mature as a person by teaching me patience. It will help me in the future by helping me continue to grow."*

Pedro Maldonado  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade Visual Art  
Student

**Education Plan.** This plan will work as the blueprint for a thriving and successful Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Department.

The important elements of this process, so far, have been:

- Establishing our District Arts Team
- Developing a Vision Statement
- Establishing the right climate for students to receive an Arts Education
- Realizing what has already been accomplished to date
- Creating both long-term and short-term goals
- Creating an Implementation Plan

## District Arts Team

### District Leadership

- Jance Strigh  
*Lead Person/Chief Academic Officer*
- Effie Jenkins-Smith  
*Curriculum Coordinator*
- David Salas  
*Director of Fabrication Lab*
- Scott Laska  
*Chair of Visual and Performing Arts*

### Performing Arts Department

- Jill Bradshaw (Music)
- Renee Coccia (Music)
- Scott Laska (Theater)
- Maria Panvini (Theater)
- Marissa Stahl (Dance)

### Visual Arts Department

- Jesse Barton
- Jeffrey Phillips
- Nina Speart



*"The level of Arts instruction given to us this year has been challenging but encouraging. It seems like the teachers know what we can do even before WE do!"*

Jasmine Burgos  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Dance & Music  
Student, Drama Club Member

## Vision

LEAP Academy's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Department provides students with the techniques, confidence and versatility to thrive not only in the arts but also in life. By creating a rigorous, motivating, safe and affirming environment, students explore their creative expression and examine the benefits and relevance of incorporating artistic expression in all aspects of their education and daily life.

## Recent Highlights

- Seen marked improvement in the confidence of many students at all grade levels with regards to performing, public speaking and the ability to trust their creative instincts.
- Elementary Visual Art worked with a small group of students and Camden's Children's Garden on designing and painting fence posts for their display at the Philadelphia Flower Show.
- Elementary Visual Art is uploading student artwork onto *Artsonia*, the world's largest online kid's art museum. Once fully implemented, parents and families will have the opportunity to purchase customized keepsakes featuring their child's artwork. Additionally, the school's art program earns 20% of the purchase amount.
- After obtaining Board approval, Performing Arts held their first Drama Club Meeting, which will prepare students for upcoming competitions, as well as several fundraisers for the VAPA Department.
- Independently gained donations for the purchase of Ballet Barres to be used in the Dance Room.
- Introduced the elementary school students to professional live theater with a field trip to the *Arden Theater* in December. The performance included Q&A with the cast and a meet-and-greet in the Theater's lobby.



*"I really like to paint. And, I liked painting my ice cream."*

Marie Berry  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Visual Arts Student

- In November, acquired a Title 1 Grant through Longwood Gardens for *Mathematics in the Garden* workshop for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade that highlighted the use of geometry and measurement in landscape design.
- Elementary Visual Art students participated in three field trip opportunities focusing on ELA and Math at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Teachers created a scavenger hunt-like activity to supplement the Museum-lead trip.
- High School Visual Art won three Best of County awards and four Honorable Mentions at the 2014 Arts for Teens exhibition. These students will have their work displayed in April at the Frandy Jean Gallery in Haddon Heights.
- During the summer, the Frandy Jean Gallery in Haddon Heights will host a private art exhibit showcasing LEAP Academy student work.
- Successfully mounted five, multi-grade level, culturally themed original productions:
  - Hispanic Heritage Month Performance
  - The High School Winter Show
  - Elementary Winter Wonderland Show
  - High School Winter Concert
  - Black History Month Performance

## Summary of Short-Term Goals

### Goal 1: Curriculum

The Arts Team will develop the scope and sequence of available arts courses by the close of the 2014 school year and finalize a K-12 curriculum for the 2014-15 school year. The development of an effective, comprehensive K-12 VAPA curriculum will also align with LEAP's mission of preparing every student for college and beyond. To that end, this curriculum will:

- Nurture a growing understanding of the arts through age-appropriate explorations of discipline-specific experiences
- Foster an appreciation of the arts across time and culture



*"The arts have been a big part of LEAP this year; going from small shows to really big entertaining shows. They have always been a way for me to express myself in the way that I like. LEAP gave me opportunities I couldn't find on my own, and I've enjoyed every moment of it. Without the Arts Department at LEAP, I wouldn't be the man I am today."*

Argenis Calderon  
12<sup>th</sup> grade Theater Student

- Provide students seeking a career in the arts an avenue of expression that will allow them to compete for admission to art universities/colleges
- Support the incorporation of literacy, math, science, technology and social studies where appropriate
- Incorporate a K-8 STEAM curriculum with integration into HS Academy programs.

The LEAP VAPA Department will utilize funds from the grant to hire a consultant to assist in the development of an effective visual and performing arts framework and K-12 curriculum. The success of these curricular goals, however, is predicated upon a master schedule that fully implements them.

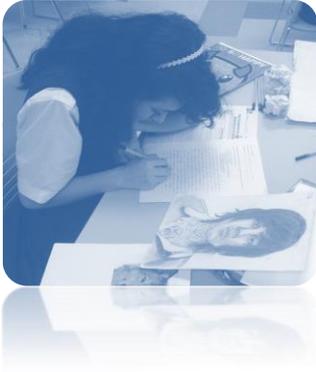
## Goal 2: Resources and Facilities

The Arts Team seeks to ensure full utilization of the resources and facilities used to support visual and performing arts at LEAP Academy. By employing the teachers and their specialist-knowledge through input on the selection and implementation of dedicated art spaces within each campus, the District would:

- Ensure proper facilities and equipment are selected and implemented
- Maximize the learning potential for those participating in arts-related coursework
- Utilize art-specific spaces to support all after-school arts activities
- Expand the curriculum and present greater opportunity for community exposure to the arts
- Demonstrate a commitment to the arts
- Seek college articulations, scholarships and internships for our students.

## Goal 3: Visual Arts and Drama After-School Program

In addition the LEAP's District Arts offerings, LEAP's VAPA Department seeks to establish a well-attended and effective visual and performing arts after-school program. These programs, with institutional support, will support our overall goal of increasing community awareness and



*“Visual Art has made me realize things that I have not before. For example, when I look at a detailed portrait, I don’t become discouraged by it. I look at it and think of different ways I can approach it.”*

Liz Ramos  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade Visual Arts Student

involvement of LEAP’s arts programs. Choir, dance, drama, instrumental music (modern band), and visual arts would potentially all be offered during LEAP’s after-school program.

Our multi-disciplinary, after-school arts program would ideally:

- Encourage participation from over 50% of the student body with consistent growth over the following years
- Provide countless opportunities for presentation of artistic work of LEAP students
- Expand the curriculum
- Provide more opportunities for family and community engagement
- Build an Arts-awareness and appreciation within the LEAP Academy District and the community of Camden.

#### Goal 4 – Address Immediate Needs

Using the recently acquired ArterCharter Grant, the VAPA Department will obtain pressing material needs (see table below) for all disciplines to immediately improve the quality of instruction.

Proposed Purchase	Implementation Date	Projected Cost	Outcome
Curriculum Consultant	April – May 2014	\$2500	Develop scope and sequence, alignment to CCCS
Portable Flooring for dance room	April 2014	\$1800	Provide improved space for dance instruction
Immediate Art Supplies	April 2014	\$1000	Improve art instruction at STEM ES
Keyboard(s)	April 2014	\$2000	Improve music instruction at

			STEM and US
Piano Tuner and moving fee for "Free Piano" Lower School	April 2014	\$900	Improve music instruction at LS
After School Drama Club (Supplies, Scripts, Printing, Advertising, etc.)	February – June 2014	\$2000	Increase student interest, participation
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$10,000</b>	



*"Theater is an art; a place where you can let all your emotions out and be yourself. I love being a part of it"*

Brian Sosa  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade Music & Dance  
Student

## Advocacy

LEAP's VAPA Department desires to provide guidance, insight, and assistance during LEAP's District planning to ensure continual effective implementation of the Arts Education Plan. In doing so, we can ensure that we are consistently using our resources as effectively as possible to maximize the quality of arts instruction. This also includes:

- Having a presence in all meetings pertaining to the planning of new facilities and the realignment of existing facilities
- Seeking counsel from key voices in the community to help gain insights into culturally and locally relevant issues
- Exploring further the history of arts education within the community of Camden
- Contributing to the growth of the artistic culture of the community through a series of culturally relevant and diversely themed art shows and productions
- Creating a full calendar of Arts events to insight interest within the community.

## Partnerships & Collaborations

*"People usually associate art with being just the process of making trivial, pretty objects. They fail to realize that art is much more than that. From learning to give contrast in each fragile petal to portraying the deep blue ocean, to bringing our role models to life with graphite, we are working on improving our skills in each medium of life. With all I learned, it can help me grow stronger as someone who observes detail in my scientific discoveries as well as the mathematical fractals in life."*

*Cindy Le  
12<sup>th</sup> Grade Visual Art  
Student*

The VAPA Department will work to establish three new partnerships and collaborations with Rutgers University, as well as several outside institutions. To achieve this, it is our goal to:

- Set up an Visual and Performing Arts Agreement with Rutgers and/or Rowan University that would allow LEAP's artistically talented seniors to attend a college-credited course in their chosen discipline
- Reach out to local art camps and year-long instructional facilities (e.g., Perkins Center for the Arts, Appel Farm, Little Kids Rock, etc.) that may collaborate with LEAP on scholarship programs so that artistic LEAP students may supplement and enrich their arts education in other environments
- Work with LEAP Academy's Director of College Access to utilize existing partnerships with Rutgers University to maximize the unique needs of LEAP's art student population
- Explore educational opportunities/possibilities through meetings with targeted arts administrators and instructors at Rutgers, such as Kenneth Elliott, Chair of Fine Arts at the Camden Campus.

## Professional Development

LEAP's VAPA Department is committed to providing quality instruction to the District's student population. As educators, we recognize the importance of growing in our practice so as to enhance the outcomes of our students. Our efforts towards improving ourselves and our practice will be accomplished and support through:

- Utilizing and creating opportunities for professional development to consistently improve the quality of our instruction
- Ongoing and inclusive planning to advocate for arts education and to provide guidance, resources, and assistance to the District for the effective implementation of the Arts Education Plan.
- Seeking out classes to supplement teacher

knowledge gaps, since quality professional development in the arts provide on-going, high-quality, relevant, focused instruction.

- Meeting as a Department regularly to assess and review curriculum and best practices so as to improve and assist in the evolution of our practice as arts professionals
- Visiting other schools to review other programs and methodologies to share knowledge and practice and improve our own instruction
- Seeking Artist-in-Resident programs to provide special learning opportunities for LEAP's students.

**APPENDIX A**

**5-Year Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Departmental Goals**

## DANCE

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-equipped, dedicated dance studio (not p/t academic classroom); proper flooring, mirrors, ballet barres, changing/locker areas for male and female students.</li> <li>• Comprehensive dance curriculum with full year dance elective offered to 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade that will eventually lead to implementation of Dance 1, Dance 2, Dance 3 courses.</li> <li>• Collaborative performances with all performing arts disciplines.</li> <li>• District-funded guest teaching artists and/or choreographers</li> <li>• Field trip(s) to expose students to live dance performance</li> <li>• Continue/Expand Drama Club: District-funded, full-length musical, Arts 4 Teens, fundraisers, informal performances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive dance curriculum with full year dance elective offered to 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade that will eventually lead to implementation of Dance 1, Dance 2, Dance 3 courses.</li> <li>• Collaborative performances with all performing arts disciplines.</li> <li>• Guest teaching artists/choreographers</li> <li>• Informal performance (black box) dedicated only to dance.</li> <li>• Field trip(s) to expose students to live dance performance</li> <li>• Continue/Expand Drama Club: District-funded, full-length musical, Arts 4 Teens, fundraisers, informal performances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal performance dedicated only to dance. (All students enrolled in Dance 1-3 involved.)</li> <li>• Guest teaching artists/choreographers</li> <li>• Collaborative performances with all performing arts disciplines.</li> <li>• Field trip(s) to expose students to live dance performance</li> <li>• Continue/Expand Drama Club: District-funded, full-length musical, Arts 4 Teens, fundraisers, informal performances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative performances with all performing arts disciplines.</li> <li>• Field trip(s) to expose students to live dance performance</li> <li>• Continue/Expand Drama Club: District-funded, full-length musical, Arts 4 Teens, fundraisers, informal performances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal performance space used for LEAP productions equipped to professional standards; Gordon Theater or new performance space funded by District</li> <li>• Formal performance dedicated only to dance. All students enrolled in Dance 1-3 will be involved.</li> <li>• Collaborative performances with all performing arts disciplines.</li> <li>• Field trip(s) to expose students to live dance performance</li> <li>• Continue/Expand Drama Club: District-funded, full-length musical, Arts 4 Teens, fundraisers, informal performances</li> </ul>

## MUSIC

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to incorporate elements of the Little Kids Rock training technique into current music classes.</li> <li>• District approval to expand on the number of instruments available for the modern program</li> <li>• Schedule annual performances at the beginning of the year and include in school-wide calendar</li> <li>• One room at HS level dedicated to Choir and Band.</li> <li>• See a marked improvement in the interest and ability of LEAP music students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Little Kids Rock modern band program to students in grades 4-6 full time, with classes provided at least once per week (preferably twice per week)</li> <li>• Incorporate a Little Kids Rock concert into a year-end performance</li> <li>• Receive additional funding for modern band instruments to increase number of students enrolled in modern band classes</li> <li>• Purchase 2nd set of materials/textbooks for 2nd elementary music teacher</li> <li>• Begin an after-school choir and/or musical theater program for elementary students (3rd-5th or 3rd-6th grade)</li> <li>• Dedicated risers set up in Choir classroom at HS level.</li> <li>• All HS classes travel to dedicated music room.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire 2nd elementary music teacher to ensure full-time music programs in each elementary school</li> <li>• Receive additional funding for modern band instruments to increase the number of students enrolled in modern band classes</li> <li>• Grow the modern band program to multiple levels, including a beginner and advanced class</li> <li>• Continue to offer elementary-only performing arts shows to showcase student work among elementary students</li> <li>• Grow the after-school choir and/or musical theater program</li> <li>• Offer elementary-only performing arts shows to showcase students in 4 performances throughout the school year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive additional funding for modern band instruments to increase the number of students enrolled in modern band classes</li> <li>• Continue elementary performing arts shows</li> <li>• Begin to incorporate community-based performances into yearly performance plan</li> <li>• Continue to build the after-school choir and/or musical theater program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive additional funding for modern band instruments to increase the number of students enrolled in modern band classes</li> <li>• Have year-long modern band offered to 4th-12th grade students at least once per week (beginner, emerging and advanced classes)</li> <li>• Continue elementary-only performing arts shows (music and theater)</li> <li>• Continue to incorporate community-based performances into the plan, featuring modern band classes and after-school choir/musical theater group</li> </ul>

## THEATER

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See marked improvement in the confidence of many students</li> <li>• Form a Drama Club to begin immediately in changing the artistic culture at LEAP</li> <li>• Introduce students to live professional theater</li> <li>• Successfully mount 5 productions, multi-grade level productions</li> <li>• Cabaret performances</li> <li>• Specific Dates are pre-planned for after school and assembly performances</li> <li>• At least 30 regular members</li> <li>• At least 2 fundraising events</li> <li>• Master Class for VAPA Seniors with a Broadway Veteran.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete overhaul of Lower School Theater /Performance Space. (Most notably the technical equipment.)</li> <li>• Complete schedule of VAPA Dept. events and small performances scheduled at the start of the year that enhance the artistic culture of the local community.</li> <li>• Begin to integrate STEAM into Theater Lessons through prop and costume accessory creation.</li> <li>• New LEAP VAPA Curriculum to be implemented at the start of the year.</li> <li>• Small-scale Spring Book Musical Performed by Drama Club.</li> <li>• 2 Cabaret performances</li> <li>• Specific Dates are pre-planned for after school and assembly performances</li> <li>• At least 40 regular members</li> <li>• At least 2 fundraising events</li> <li>• Space dedicated to keep costumes and props</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refurbish the floor of the Lower School Stage to fix places that are in need of repair.</li> <li>▪ Improved schedule of VAPA Dept. events that contribute to the enhanced artistic culture of the community.</li> <li>▪ Full-scale Spring musical</li> <li>▪ 2 Cabaret Performances</li> <li>▪ Specific Dates are pre-planned for after school and assembly performances</li> <li>▪ At least 50 regular members (including crew) of Drama Club.</li> <li>▪ At least 2 fundraising events</li> <li>▪ Space dedicated to keep costumes and props</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal Space and Performance Space for LEAP to regularly hold performances: (Gordon?)</li> <li>▪ Regular Parent involvement (building, sewing, chaperoning)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Varied schedule of VAPA Dept events that contribute to the enhanced artistic culture of the community.</li> <li>▪ Full Scale Spring Musical</li> <li>▪ 3 Cabaret Performances</li> <li>▪ Field Trip to NYC to see Broadway Show.</li> <li>▪ At least 50 regular members (including crew) of Drama Club.</li> <li>▪ At least 3 fundraising events</li> <li>▪ Space dedicated to keep costumes and props</li> <li>▪ Rehearsal Space and Performance Space for LEAP to regularly hold performances: (Gordon?)</li> <li>▪ Regular Parent involvement (building, sewing, chaperoning)</li> <li>▪ Implementation of an AV club that will use multimedia and technology to create artistic projects through the medium of film.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full enrollment in elective theater programs at HS and MS level.</li> <li>• Most LEAP Theater props to be produced by LEAP Fabrication lab.</li> <li>• Full Scale Spring Musical Fall Musical</li> <li>• Cabaret Performances with Specific Dates planned.</li> <li>• At least 60 regular members of Drama Club (including crew)</li> <li>• At least 2 fundraising events</li> <li>• Space dedicated to keep</li> <li>• Rehearsal Space and Performance Space for LEAP to regularly hold performances: (Gordon?)</li> <li>• Regular Parent involvement (building, sewing, chaperoning)</li> <li>• Funds to rent props, costumes, sets... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Field Trip to NYC to see Broadway Show.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**VISUAL ARTS**

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each school has a <u>functional</u> art room (2 HS rooms allocated for more electives whether now or in future)</li> <li>• Each art room will include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least one working sink (hot/cold water, paper towel dispenser)</li> <li>• Storage for supplies for all grades served</li> <li>• Storage for artwork for all grades served</li> <li>• Large tables (not desks) with stools for students</li> <li>• Drying rack for wet 2D work</li> <li>• Shelving for 3D work</li> <li>• SMARTBoard, document camera</li> <li>• White board</li> </ul> </li> <li>• (Budget permitting) Install kiln in closet for art room (presently HS Biology lab) at STEM ES</li> <li>• Appropriate kiln supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New curriculum implemented</li> <li>• Select either new HS, STEM ES or LS for kiln closet</li> <li>• Appropriate kiln supplies for selected school</li> <li>• After-school program and necessary supplies to meet the unique demands of the program (set design, sculpture, large-scale projects, tile walls)</li> <li>• Additional HS art teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum review with revisions as needed</li> <li>• Select one of remaining schools for kiln closet</li> <li>• Appropriate kiln supplies for this school</li> <li>• Additional MS art room</li> <li>• Additional MS art teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Table-top printer’s press for selected schools</li> <li>• Associated printing supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum review</li> <li>• Table-top printer’s press for any outstanding schools</li> <li>• Associated printing supplies</li> </ul>