

What is the LEAP Program?

The purpose of the LEAP Program is to provide a learning environment where a consistent and deliberate integration of activities that foster oral language and literacy development can be a part of the daily classroom routine.

In the LEAP Program, students will learn English at the same time that they are learning the academic content for their grade level. Instruction will be focused on activities that develop oral language and literacy skills.

How will this program benefit my child?

- Your child will receive individual attention from expert teachers.
- Your child will receive instruction in a small group rather than in a large class.
- Your child will have the opportunity to learn through a variety of hands-on experiences in all subjects.
- Your child will build a foundation for study in math, science and social studies at the same time he/she is learning to speak, read & write English.
- If your child is new to the United States, he/she will have time to learn how the school system works.

Why is my child in the LEAP program?

Students are placed in the LEAP program based on their scores on the English Language Proficiency tests given when they enroll and in the spring of each school year. Students whose scores place them in Level 1, 2, or 3 are eligible to be in a LEAP classroom.

What will my child study?

Students will receive instruction in English integrated into reading, math, science and social studies. The curriculum is based on grade level objectives from the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL).

Teachers will help students learn concepts from earlier grades that they need to understand the concepts for their grade level.

Language and reading development will be integrated into instruction in all content areas through hands-on activities and appropriate level reading materials.

How will my child learn to speak English in a class with other ESL students?

There are two kinds of English that students are learning in school. BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills), or “Social English”, and

CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), or “Academic English”.

Many students now are learning “Social English” well, but are not learning “Academic English”.

The focus of the LEAP program is on preparing students for academic success. Students in a LEAP classroom will have a stronger foundation in “Academic English”.

When will my child interact with native English speakers?

LEAP classroom students will join the other students from their grade level for physical education, lunch, elective classes such as art and computer, assemblies and field trips. Some students may join other classrooms for math.

How long will my child be in the LEAP Program?

Our goal is for each student to advance at least one level each year, however, some students may take longer and others will move more quickly.

Why has Harrisonburg created the LEAP Program?

In the past Harrisonburg has used a “pull-out” model to provide English instruction for ESL students. In the pull-out model, students are pulled out of a mainstream classroom to meet with an ESL teacher for 30- 60 min. a day.

- Research shows that teaching English through the content areas is more effective than pulling students out of a mainstream classroom to work on English.
- The number of ESL students in Harrisonburg has grown rapidly. There are not enough ESL teachers or extra rooms to meet the needs of all of the ESL students through a pull-out program.
- Many of the activities that will help level one and two students learn English are not appropriate for native English speakers in a mainstream classroom.
- Our goal is to have appropriate, on-level, instruction for level one students in all subject areas for 80% to 90% of the day.

NOTE: As a parent, you have the right to refuse the participation of your child in this program.

How can I help my child learn English?

Research shows that children who are literate in their first language perform much better in school than children who are not literate in their first language. Please continue to interact with your children in your first language and to encourage them to become bilingual.

- **Talk with your child about school in your language.**
- **Read to your child in your language.**
- **Ask your child to read to you in English and expect your child to read every day.**
- **Tell your child stories in your language.**
- **Encourage your child to complete homework assignments.**
- **Teach your child to read and write in your language.**

Harrisonburg City Public Schools

LEAP Program

Language
Enrichment for
Academic
Progress

Questions and Answers for Parents



Grades 5-8