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Contact: Linda Saris

978-740-6667 x109

lsaris@leap4ed.org

LEAP FOR EDUCATION COMPLETES ITS FIRST VIRTUAL SUMMER PROGRAM IN LYNN

Thirty EL Students at the Thurgood Marshall Middle School Complete a Five-Week Program

SALEM, MA — LEAP for Education and Lynn Public Schools partnered this summer to offer a five-week program for 30 English Learner (EL) students at the Thurgood Marshall Middle School (TMMS) in a virtual Zoom-based format.

“We were extremely fortunate to have a great team of teachers from TMMS who, together with the LEAP team, planned an amazing virtual summer experience. The program was designed to stem some of the English language learning loss experienced since the schools closed in March. It also and taught our students how to access and use technology,” said LEAP’s Executive Director Linda Saris.

Before schools closed in March, students themselves gave the program its name, Dream MORE. MORE is an acronym for Marshall Opportunities for Resilience and Education. This program, originally planned for an April 9 start date, was changed to a virtual format and pushed back to July 7. Students met from July 7 through August 6th for two 90-minute sessions a day with a break between sessions. There were three learning cohorts of 10 students, each with a certified Lynn teacher and a group leader. Students learned about their community by interviewing several Lynn business, first responders, non-profit leaders, school and community leaders.

“We are so fortunate to have the LEAP-Marshall Dream MORE program at TMMS,” said Lynn Superintendent of Schools Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, “These students are some of the more vulnerable students because of low English language and technology literacy levels. With this program, our students are much better prepared for fall remote learning. I was also interviewed by these students and loved their questions and the interactions it allowed for both of us. We look forward to more LEAP programming for these students in the fall.”

“The Dream MORE virtual summer program offered English Learners an opportunity to improve their English proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing through interactive interviews with local community members. Students also had an opportunity to develop their technology skills and practice problem solving skills in order to be able to efficiently navigate the world virtually,” said Sarah McKenna, EL teacher at TMMS.

Before the start of the summer, LEAP and TMMS staff identified that 80% of the students lacked a laptop and/or internet connectivity. In partnership with the schools, Chromebooks were provided by the district to all students and LEAP arranged for, and paid for, a hotspot contract and tablet for every student enrolled in the program.

“The teachers helped us set up our computers and internet. I would rather be at the school but I learned how to use the technology and dealt with it, said Roisy, student a TMMS. “We got to interact with and interview different people – that was my favorite part. It’s pretty cool to interview people with interesting jobs and learn about what they do.”

LEAP for Education is working with the Lynn School District and TMMS to plan for ongoing programs in the fall. Information on registration and schedules will be announced in mid-September. Information on fall programs should be directed to Wanntha Sim Chanhdyman at wsim@leap4ed.org.

About LEAP for Education, Inc.

LEAP for Education (www.leap4ed.org) has as its mission to empower underserved students to pave their own way to social and economic mobility through an informed educational plan that leads to a successful career aligned with their values and interests. We accomplish this through programs that provide impactful support in academic enrichment, social-emotional development, post-secondary and career readiness, and social-capital building.

LEAP is an acronym for: Learn, Explore, Aspire, and Pursue.

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