

THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

a public charter school

At The Learning Community, we believe that literacy empowers each individual to have a voice, assume community responsibility and take social action.

We expect leadership at every level. We grow teacher leaders, student leaders and community leaders.

Founded in 2004, The Learning Community is a public school serving students from Central Falls, Providence, and Pawtucket. We maintain the highest expectations for student achievement through a culture of respect and accountability. We are a K-8 school and currently serve 410 students in grades K-6. We will grow to support the dreams of 540 children each year.

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

At The Learning Community economically disadvantaged students are reaching proficiency in math at a higher rate than 62% of the state's **suburban** districts and all of the state's urban districts. The Learning Community has by far the highest poverty rate of the state's highest performing urban schools.

source: NECAP results, RI Department of Education

ACADEMICS

Our curriculum focuses on literacy, emphasizing the speaking and listening skills that help students succeed in the classroom and the community. Our small group instructional approach meets individual student needs and encourages each learner's independence.

All classrooms use a workshop structure in math, reading and writing. Teachers start with a concise, targeted mini-lesson, guide students as they practice, and confer with individuals and small groups. This gradual release of responsibility promotes mastery of learning strategies and maximum student independence. Instruction is guided by informal weekly assessments and formal quarterly assessments.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Students, teachers and staff continually assess their progress and share the results. Our detailed report card is based on national standards, shares objective measures of student performance with parents, and pinpoints specific skills that can be practiced at home. The report card and all other documents shared with families are bilingual. Our students have outperformed sending districts on the state-mandated New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) standardized tests. These scores place us as one of Rhode Island's strongest urban schools.

FAMILIES

We develop active relationships with families, and rely on their strong support for their child's education. We listen, invite families to connect with the school in new ways, and build systems that enable families to hold us accountable.



BEST FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE STATE

For two years The Learning Community has ranked first among Rhode Island's 314 public schools for family engagement. For the third year in a row The Learning Community also ranks first in the state's survey of all public school parents for the percentage of families who say the school "contacts me if my child does something well or improves."

source: InformationWorks 2009, RI Department of Education

The Learning Community is proud to benefit from nearly 100% parent engagement. Parents are our most significant partners, supporting their child's growth and learning every day at home, volunteering in classrooms and offices, participating in meetings and committees, serving on our board of directors, leading parent initiatives, and sharing their opinions about how we can improve. We learn from our families every day.

PROVING POVERTY IS NOT A BARRIER TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

OUR TEAM

Our faculty includes 20 classroom teachers and 7 bilingual teaching partners. Our classrooms are supported by a special education teacher, reading specialist, physical education teachers, and bilingual speech therapist. 100% of our teachers have Rhode Island certification and are highly qualified. All faculty members are engaged in rigorous professional development with the support of an instructional coach, and every teacher is evaluated by external consultants annually.

The school is led by two co-directors who focus on long-term strategic directions for the school, academic rigor, family engagement and the development of school culture. An Administrative Team and a Student & Family Support Team provide technical and clinical support to our teachers, students and families.



Collaboration and professionalism are hallmarks of our school. Our team is focused on a shared sense of purpose and uses a model of distributed leadership.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS: 2009-10

84% are Latino, 11% African American, 5% Caucasian

52% live in Central Falls, 28% Pawtucket, 20% Providence

76% live in Spanish-speaking homes

88% qualify for free or reduced-priced meals

21% live in households with one adult

25% receive academic support services; 13% have IEPs

100% have important stories to tell

ENROLLMENT

The Learning Community, like all charter schools in Rhode Island, is a public school open to students regardless of their prior academic record, conduct or socio-economic background. Students are admitted through an annual random, state-monitored lottery every spring. Each year we reach out to local communities to let them know about our school, and interest has been very strong -- only 7% of applicants are admitted and we have a waiting list of over 400 students.

BROAD IMPACT: SHARING WHAT WORKS

The Learning Community has launched an ambitious professional development lab to make a broad impact on public education. Our early work includes:

- > **OBSERVATION:** Our classrooms are open for observation to dozens of educators each year.
- > **DISTRICT CLIENTS:** We are working with every elementary school in Central Falls to redesign reading instruction.
- > **INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS:** The Tipping Point Cohorts are a tailored approach to professional development for teachers pairing the latest technology with proven instructional strategies.

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO CHANGE

Excellent schools are built on clear systems with measurable outcomes that meet individual needs. The Learning Community is creating new, replicable systems to help students and classrooms succeed. We have unique, proactive systems for identifying and addressing students' social, emotional and behavioral needs as well as their academic challenges. And our teachers have exceptional opportunities to receive embedded professional development in their classrooms as part of a plan for their own professional growth.

BUDGET & FACILITIES

Our operating budget for 2009-10 is \$5 million. Like all public schools, our principal revenue is an annual per pupil allocation. Our largest expenditures are instruction, operations and student support services.

In 2006 The Learning Community purchased a former nursing home as our permanent location. Our future success depends on securing additional funds for capital improvements and innovative programs.



VISIT!

Come see our students and classrooms in action. We are an open school community, we welcome visitors, and we look forward to your questions and ideas. To arrange a visit to The Learning Community contact us at 401-722-9560.

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