



### **Learning Enrichment and Accelerated Pace**

Saturday Academy's Learning Enrichment and Accelerated Pace (LEAP) is a unique and effective educational enrichment program designed to inspire students who are underchallenged by regular classroom material to achieve in school and to pursue future educational opportunities by engaging them in a dynamic, hands-on learning environment. The LEAP Program provides elementary and middle schools a menu of approximately 60 classes to offer their advanced students in exciting topics like short story writing, robotic engineering, math, chemistry, Lego physics, marine biology, and critical thinking. LEAP class instructors are professional scientists, engineers, writers, and artists who teach well-developed curricula that are targeted to state CIM and CAM requirements. Classroom teachers select students who are working above grade level to participate in LEAP classes as a supplement to the regular classroom curriculum. Classes typically meet from 6 to 12 weeks for 1 ½ hour sessions each time.

The school identified for participation does not have the TAG funding, unrestricted resources, financially supportive Parent Teacher Associations, or school foundations to fund educational enrichment and other important services for talented and gifted students. Because of this, the high-potential students from these schools become disadvantaged as they approach higher education relative to students in schools with more resources. An examination of school test scores also shows that many of the teaching staff in these schools are occupied with helping the large numbers of below-grade level students to achieve testing standards, leaving little time for them to meet the needs of students working above grade level.

LEAP provides a way for advanced students in low-income and academically at-risk schools to access challenging, relevant, and academically rigorous educational enrichment while removing many of the barriers to participation in enrichment activities these students may face. LEAP successfully removes barriers because it is free to students, classes occur at the school during regular school hours, and students are encouraged by teachers and administrators to participate. LEAP also supports the classroom teacher's work by providing challenging material for the most advanced students which enables the teacher to focus additional effort on assisting students who are working at or below grade level. Finally, LEAP strengthens the students' educational experience by using as instructors experts in technology, science, and math—areas which are often less familiar to classroom teachers.