



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dona Prindle  
EASTCONN, Communications and Marketing Specialist  
[dprindle@eastconn.org](mailto:dprindle@eastconn.org)  
860-455-1506

### **EASTCONN Announces New Alternative High School**

Hampton, CT – In response to requests from area school districts, EASTCONN will open a new, regional, alternative high school this fall for over-aged and under-credited students who may benefit from a personalized learning environment as they strive to earn their high school diploma.

With a strong focus on career readiness, EASTCONN's new Learners Empowered to Achieve their Potential (LEAP) program will open its doors in downtown Willimantic, in time for the 2019-2020 school year.

LEAP is intended for students who are at risk of not earning their diploma within the state-required five-year period, but who nevertheless have a strong desire to be successful, both in and out of school. The new school will open to all districts in the eastern Connecticut region, and will enroll about 35 students its first year.

LEAP will be located in the former QVCC satellite campus building at 729 Main Street in downtown Willimantic.

"We believe that our new alternative school will help young adults who need a personalized, small-group learning environment to succeed," said Gary Mala, EASTCONN's Executive Director. "Students who are referred to LEAP by their high schools will benefit from its tailored, student-centered learning approach, taught by certified teachers and experienced instructors."

"LEAP is not an expulsion program, nor is it a special education or clinical day treatment program," said Diane Dugas, who co-directs EASTCONN's K-12 Student Services team, which has designed the new school. "LEAP offers individualized instruction that's designed to help students get back on track, and earn their high school degree."

Dugas said that candidates for LEAP have completed at least one year of high school; are over-aged and under-credited, relative to their graduation requirements; and demonstrate a commitment to the learning model and a desire to fully participate in the program. LEAP will also provide career-readiness skills through classroom instruction and field experiences.

"We look forward to continuing our work with our regional school district partners on this important new program for students," said Dugas.

To learn more about LEAP, visit [www.eastconn.org/leap](http://www.eastconn.org/leap).

EASTCONN is a public, non-profit, Regional Educational Service Center that has been serving the education needs of northeastern Connecticut schools and communities since 1980. Learn more at [www.eastconn.org](http://www.eastconn.org).