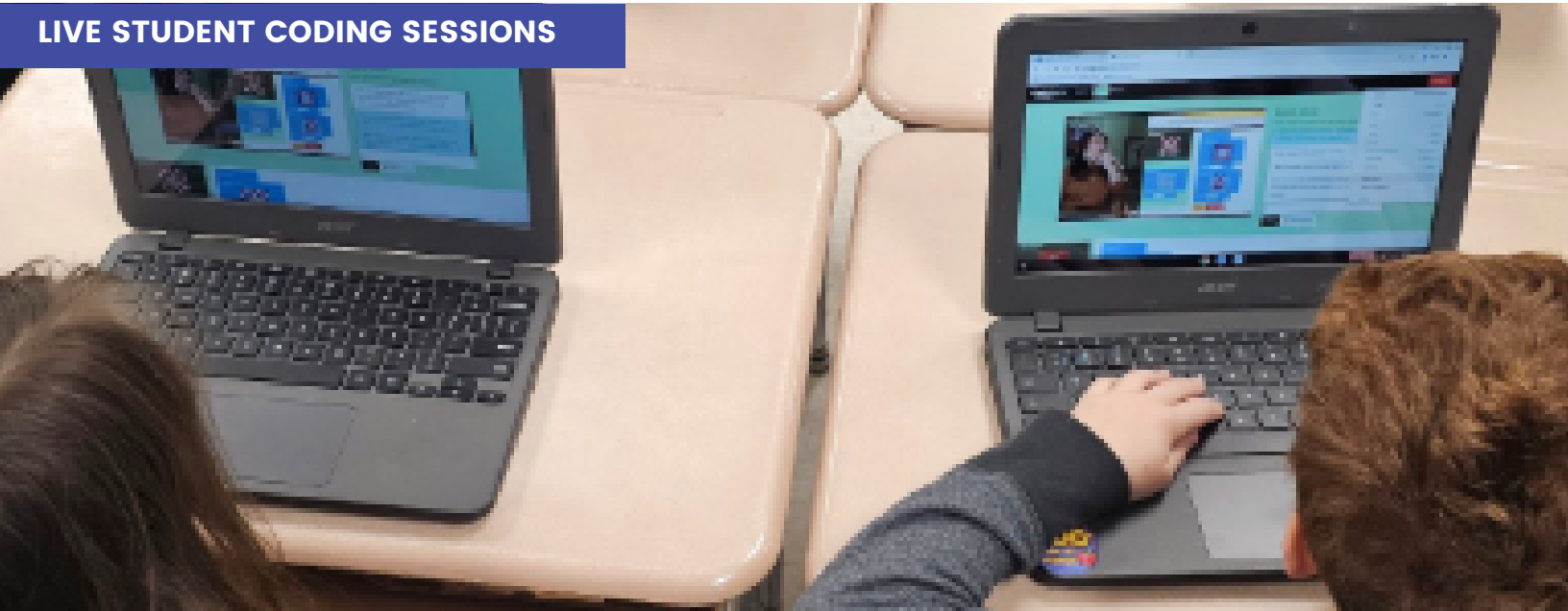


ABC CREATE Quarterly



Vol .05
March 2024

LIVE STUDENT CODING SESSIONS



TECH PLAYGROUNDS



SCRIPT TRAINING



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

LEVERAGING EDUCATION
to ACCELERATE DIVERSITY
and SUCCESS

ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM

STEAM LEARNING

COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES

PARTNERS: SCHOOLS,
BUSINESS, COMMUNITY

EXTENDING IMPACT

A LOOK INSIDE L.E.A.D.S.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

Elementary cs/STEAM

“Amazing!! Thank you so much for another great time with tons of learning!!!”

Heather Thompson
4th Grade Teacher
Kiski Area School District

STUDENT SESSIONS WITH CODEJOY

Photo Credit: Tracey Richards, River Valley School District @SbgPrincipal

Students across the region are actively learning coding and computer science foundations! Just this winter, more than 4000 elementary students across the ABC CREATE collaborative participated in virtual coding experiences led by our partners at CodeJoy.

We are overjoyed by the great feedback we continue to receive from teachers and students about this introductory coding experience. Early exposure to opportunities like this make it more likely for all students, but especially girls and children of color, to see opportunities for themselves in computer science.

Nearly 170 teachers across 13 ABC CREATE member and pilot districts registered their classes, giving 4003 students a chance to remotely command the Hummingbird, Finch, and Micro:bit robots. In all, Kelsey and Matt led a total of 50 virtual sessions this winter.

“I wish I could do this lesson again. It was so fun.” Miles, Grade 4

“You guys are super creative. I think this is super cool.” Rowen, Grade 5

“I am wondering about how electronics can do so much.” Everson, Grade 6

“Bye thank you that was soooooo much fun!!!!!! Annabelle, Grade 3

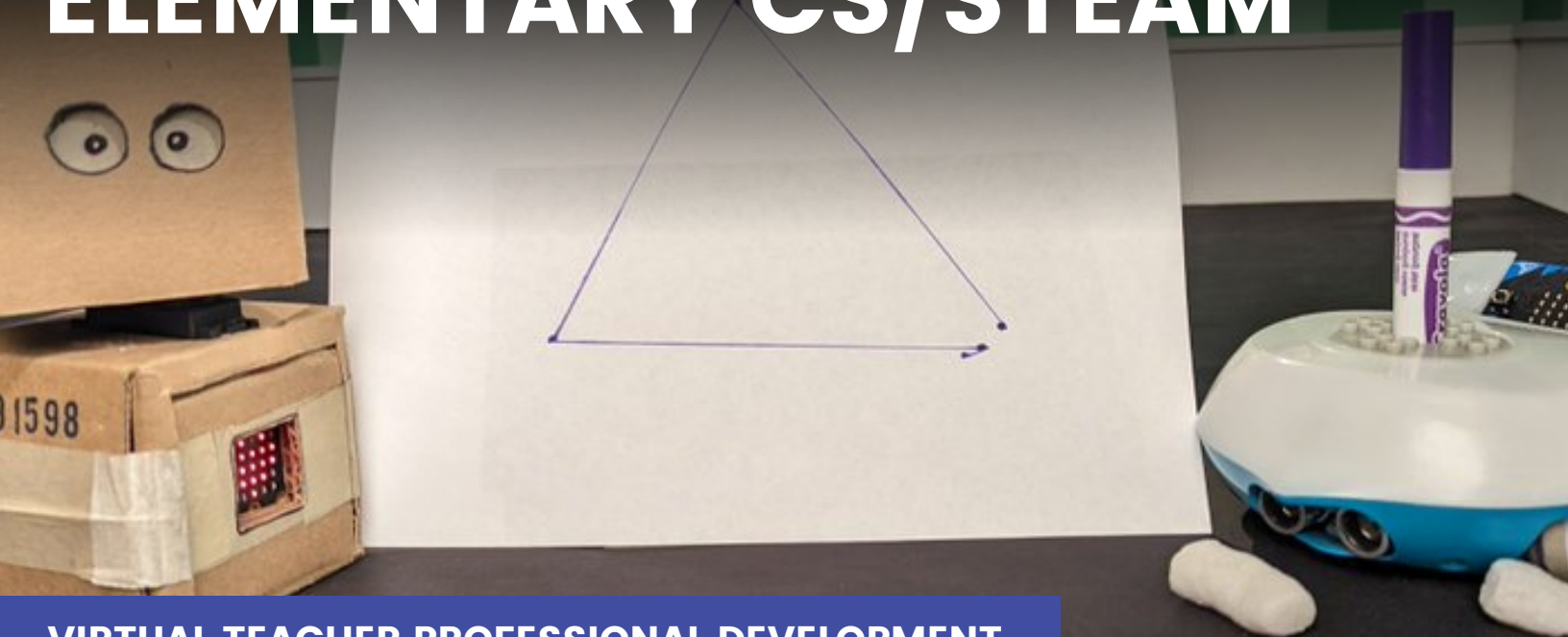
“How long did it take you to not be camera shy?” Xander, Grade 6

“I would love to work with you guys again!”
Aaliyah, Grade 4



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM



VIRTUAL TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It's not just students who get to have fun with CodeJoy;
our educator professional development series is excitedly underway.

Nearly 100 teachers from 17 different school districts have registered.
The classes are full, but those who are interested are encouraged to
register and [get on the waitlist!](#)

Educators across ABC CREATE partner and pilot districts are
currently participating in free, 3-hour, virtual professional development
sessions, led by Kelsey and Matt from CodeJoy. Designed to help
teachers take what they've learned and push themselves to move
forward to classroom STEAM integrations, these live, synchronous
workshops are ideal for teachers who are new to teaching with
technology, as well as more experienced teachers who are looking for
new classroom projects.

CodeJoy

Enthusiasm for the CodeJoy
teacher sessions is high.
Indiana Area School District
teacher David Sheeran says
about the upcoming PD
opportunities,

**"I'll be shouting it from
the mountaintops!"**

2023-2024 CODEJOY PD FOR TEACHERS BY THE NUMBERS



CodeJoy

**3
PARTNERS**



**17
DISTRICTS**



**11
TEACHER
SESSIONS**



**97
TEACHER
REGISTRANTS**



**360
TOTAL
REGISTRANTS**



**3
ROBOTIC
TOOLS**

ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM

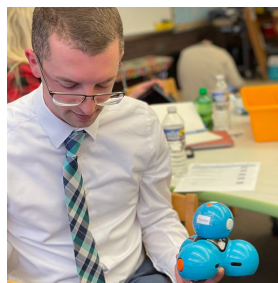


IN PERSON TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are few things we love more than seeing teachers connect and learn together with a new technology in hand. It really is the best and a reminder of just how many curious and passionate educators we're fortunate to have in the Alle-Kiski region.

TECH PLAYGROUND & BOTLUCKS

Sixteen educators attended the January Tech Playground at Allegheny Valley. Several attendees gained enough confidence and excitement about new ideas that they borrowed resources, Finch robots and drones, for use the very next week.



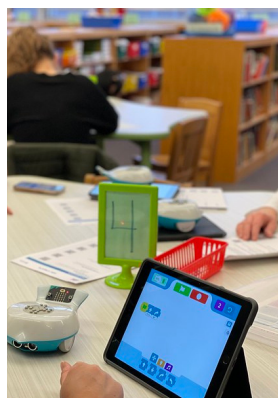
Whether you're new to STEAM or have some experience under your belt, Botlucks are a really fun, stress-free way to meet others and learn new technology skills. These free, two-hour events are open to all teachers from ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts.

[Join us](#) at the next Botluck on Thursday, March 14!

[REGISTER](#)

SCRIPT TRAINING

In January and February, educator teams from Riverview, Franklin Regional, Burrell, Leechburg, and Freeport attended SCRIPT training facilitated by our Intermediate Unit partners (AIU, ARIN, and WIU). Strategic CSforALL Resource & Implementation Planning Tool (SCRIPT) helps school teams create or expand upon their computer science instructional strategy. "It was great to have the other school districts here to collaborate with," said one school leader. "I found it very helpful to hear what they are doing in their Districts and their feedback was very helpful."



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. STEAM



MORE TEACHER-LED LEARNING

ABC CREATE piloted the School2School Showcase earlier this month, our first professional development roadshow!

With sub shortages continuing to make school day PD a challenge, ABC CREATE is piloting this format. The new Showcase invites school teams to visit nearby schools and observe lessons in action.

Attendees shared that it was especially powerful to learn from other teachers in an authentic learning environment, where they could see how students engaged with a particular lesson. They also enjoyed getting “out and about” and seeing another school day in action. We are excited to see what more comes from this innovative solution to peer-to-peer teacher PD.

Learning pathways are one way that ABC CREATE teachers help each other integrate STEAM in the classroom.

A collaborative process is now underway to develop “mini pathways” that will expand on the existing library of resources.

Designed to provide easy entry into STEAM integration, mini-pathways are crafted by experienced teachers as guides to help to make it faster and easier for any teacher to implement engaging lessons filled with STEAM skills.

Twice this winter, a group of seven lead teachers from seven different school districts met to design the first set of mini pathways capturing lessons these teachers have successfully conducted in their classrooms.

1 COORDINATING DISTRICT
4 HOST DISTRICTS
11 TEACHER ATTENDEES
8 CLASSROOM LESSONS



Mini Pathway Writing Sessions are expected to be held this spring. Look for announcements in your email if you'd like to help create the next set.



ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. STEAM



SURVEYING OUR COLLABORATIVE

ABC CREATE 2024 Survey: As part of our annual reflection and in preparation for our 10 YEAR Anniversary, we're asking for your insights on ABC CREATE's impact.



Freeport School District's South Buffalo had the highest return rate for our ABC CREATE Survey in the first 48 hours and enjoyed 300 choquettes delivered to their building to distribute to staff.

28 DAY CHALLENGE ends on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at midnight.

Complete our 5-7 minute survey to have your entry counted within your school building. The highest response rate will enjoy 300 choquettes from La Gourmandine delivered to their building in early March.

SURVEY



PennState
New Kensington

At its February meeting, the ABC CREATE Leadership Team considered how best to envision and accelerate ABC CREATE's future and its impact.

COMMUNITIES + FAMILIES



FAMILY STEAM NIGHTS + DIGITAL PLAYGROUNDS

ABC CREATE districts continue to create, model, and support community-based events, led by expert teachers across the region—engaging school-aged learners, their families, and the greater community in hands-on computer science, STEAM, and future-ready learning experiences.

In December, ABC CREATE was pleased to partner with the STEAM Outreach Club from Penn State New Kensington to facilitate a Winter Wonderland activity with Dash robots for Stewart Elementary School's Family STEAM Night. More than 75 4th and 5th grade students and their family members joyfully engaged in hands-on, holiday-themed STEAM activities such as Grow a Grinch Heart (Science) and Snowball Catapults (Engineering).



Thank you to all of the staff, volunteers, and custodians who made our Holiday STEAM night a success!

@STEAM_Stewart



Photo Credit for Top Right and Lower Right: @STEAM_Stewart

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

SCHOOL, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



ALIGNED PARTNER OFFERINGS

Outstanding organizations and opportunities abound in our region. This quarter, we are pleased to spotlight one such program: Catalyst Connection's Industrial Manufacturing Technician (IMT) Pre-Apprenticeship Program which is designed to provide students with valuable career pathway experience, industry-recognized credentials, and the chance to work with local manufacturers.



CATALYST CONNECTION™
POWERING THE POTENTIAL OF MANUFACTURING



**INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING TECHNICIAN
PRE-APPRENTICESHIP**

Since 2020, students from Burrell High School have been actively engaged in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. Over this period, a total of 37 students have proudly attained certifications, marking significant strides in their career preparation journey. By participating in this program, students not only gain a competitive edge in the job market but also contribute to the growth of our local manufacturing community. The successful completion of our program unlocks a plethora of career pathways within the manufacturing sector. Whether students opt to pursue further academic endeavors or embark directly into the workforce, they are primed with a distinctive advantage through transferable credits at local colleges via our articulation agreements or by stepping into professional roles equipped with credentials and practical expertise. In either pathway, students will have a solid foundation for success!

This program is made available to school districts at no cost, courtesy of Catalyst Connection's current grant funding. To learn more, visit their website or contact Mara Peduto at mpeduto@catalystconnection.org.

LEARN MORE

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S.

SCHOOL, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



ALIGNED PARTNER OFFERINGS

Photo Credit: @the_corner_launchbox

We are fortunate to have many excellent organizations in the region that offer high-quality STEAM programs that support learners' future-ready skill development. Often ABC CREATE serves as the connector, introducing aligned partners and encouraging interactions to provide outstanding opportunities.

The Corner and BUILD.org

Burrell, Riverview, and Westinghouse each sent teams of students to The Corner and BUILD.org's inaugural Idea Challenge Young Innovators Edition event in February. With support from the Readiness Institute at Penn State, the teams worked from November - February to create a unique entrepreneurial idea to solve a customer challenge. Congratulations to the winning team from Burrell!



PSSE Newsletter

The Pennsylvania State STEM Ecosystem is a tremendous resource to ABC CREATE and anyone committed to STEAM education. PSSE's [February newsletter](#) which is chock full of opportunities for students (summer camps, challenges), professional development for educators, as well as grant opportunities and conferences.



[SIGN UP](#)

PA STEELS Vendor Fair

Need resources for teaching the new STEELS standards? IU28 is hosting a vendor fair on March 13, 2024 from 5-8 PM. [Learn more](#) or [register](#).

[REGISTER](#)

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. EXTENDING IMPACT



A THRIVING LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Guided by a vision for this next generation of students, one in which they will be future-ready and positive contributors in the Alle-Kiski Valley region, ABC CREATE continues to intentionally collaborate and expand partnerships.

As Helen Keller once said, *“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”* The fact is, the work of making innovative STEAM education accessible to all students across the region is a tall task. To realize the change we seek, we have to support learning all the time, everywhere, for everyone—a job too great for any one organization or team. Further, the intersections are across realms, and so we must reach beyond our partner and pilot school districts to build partnerships with mission-aligned organizations and leaders in local industry and in our communities.

ABC CREATE is pleased to see more and more partner organizations getting involved, and we will continue to work directly with as many as we can. To name just a few recent highlights:

The Corner and **BUILD.org** engaged local students in the Idea Challenge Young Innovators Edition, giving them hands-on experience with entrepreneurship.

Penn State New Kensington’s **STEAM Outreach Club** joined **ABC CREATE** to lead STEAM activities with **Stewart Elementary** students and families.

ABC CREATE is excited to continue our partnership with **Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church** for summer camp 2024.

Across our diverse region, a true learning ecosystem is beginning to take root in ways that are really exciting. When we work together, we have tremendous potential to make a difference in the lives of kids—and for the vibrancy of our shared community.

A LOOK INSIDE L.E.A.D.S.



LASTING RELATIONSHIPS

As we look toward the future, we reflect on the countless relationships that have made ABC CREATE possible and how they have developed over time.

Simply put, relationships have been essential to our work. In fact, it's easy to think of many educators by name who show up and contribute repeatedly—often because of the relationships they've developed across ABC CREATE. The quality of our relationships impact our ability to foster collaboration and have impact.

As a collaborative, one of our jobs is to spark and forge new relationships by bringing people together and inviting new partners to the table. It's always fun to witness new connections being made, and it's especially gratifying to bring new technology and learning partners into the ABC CREATE community.

The work doesn't stop there, however. We are also attuned to the need to *deepen* relationships with our partners. One critical way we do this is by returning to specific schools or communities time and again until we earn the trust of teachers and families. For instance, ABC CREATE is excitedly planning a family night with Roy A. Hunt Elementary and a summer camp with Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, in both cases for a second year.

Relationships take time and effort. As ABC CREATE approaches our 10th anniversary, we are grateful for all that's been possible because of the relationships among us.

TIPS FOR BUILDING IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS



LOOK TO COMPLEMENT

If your organization is strong in X, seek out a partner strong in Y. Prioritize complementary partnerships: those that have the potential to be mutually beneficial and reciprocal.

LISTEN AND LEARN

Even if (especially if!) you think you have “the answer,” stop and listen to your partners. To form an enduring partnership, you must understand their perspectives and ideas. Be willing to change your plan based on their input.

SHOW UP + FOLLOW THROUGH

Relationships don't happen overnight, and they aren't a given. Be present. Check in. Learn about each other. Keep your word by following through on commitments. Trust is built over time by showing up in ways that matter.

ABC CREATE

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

ELEMENTARY CS/STEAM

ABC CREATE LEADS Botluck

March 14, 5 - 7 PM @ Penn State New Kensington

[REGISTER](#)



Bring a robot, a question, an idea, or just an open mind to this free, 2-hour, in person professional development.

- Novice and seasoned educators welcome; any subject, any grade level
- All [ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts](#) teachers who attend will receive a **\$40/hour stipend**

CS/STEAM

ABC CREATE LEADS Mini-Pathway Writing Sessions

Stay tuned to your email for future sessions.

Mini-pathways writing sessions led by experienced ABC CREATE educators will bring together teachers who are integrating CS/STEAM lessons to capture and share these promising practices for use by other educators.

- Writing sessions will be held during out-of-school time (likely offered in-person and virtually)
- **\$40/hour stipend**-eligible

PARTNERS: SCHOOL, BUSINESS, COMMUNITY

Framing Difficult Issues for K-12 Classroom Discussion and Cultivating an Asset-Based Lens Workshop

March 22, 2024, 8:30 - 11:30 AM

Franco Harris Pittsburgh Center

1435 Bedford Avenue, Suite A, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

[REGISTER](#)



This free, research-based professional learning session will provide opportunities for educators to learn and practice an instructional tool for facilitating classroom discussion of a difficult issue. Presented by Penn State Hammel Family Human Rights Initiative for K-12 educators and administrators (space is limited).

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES

ABC CREATE STEAM Playground @ Burrell Family Night

April 11, 2024, 5 - 7 PM @ Burrell School District, Huston
Middle School

**ELEM EDUCATORS
REGISTER HERE**



ABC CREATE is pleased to join Burrell's upcoming Community Connections to offer another STEAM playground. Explore hands-on STEAM Activities to learn more and get ideas to take back to your classroom/school. The event will also feature food trucks, community connections, and a student showcase.

- Elementary educators from ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts teachers who attend may receive a \$40/hour \$tipend (Registration required to be considered for a \$tipend; while stipends last).
- This is open to the public, so any ABC CREATE educator or administrator is welcome to attend to see a Community STEAM event in action. *No registration required - unless you are an elementary educator hoping for a stipend.*

EXTENDING IMPACT

"How to Host A STEAM Event" Workshop

April 15th, 4:15 - 6:15 PM, @PSNK

REGISTER



Feeling out of the loop with Remake Learning Days, Family STEAM Nights, Summer STEAM Camps, and other ways to engage communities and families? We'd love to make it easier for you to jump on board. Please join ABC CREATE educators who have had great success with their events to get ideas and to gather tips and tricks for hosting an impactful event that runs as smoothly as possible.

- All ABC CREATE partner and pilot school districts teachers who attend will receive a \$40/hour \$tipend
- We will provide light refreshments to help to fuel your brain and your enthusiasm!

ABC CREATE L.E.A.D.S. IN THE NEWS



AI in Pittsburgh-area schools: How are districts handling this powerful new tool?

Kidsburgh | January 22, 2024

AI in Pittsburgh-area schools: How are districts handling this powerful new tool?

January 22, 2024 • Laurie Bailey

[READ STORY](#)



“New Ken-Arnold’s superintendent Dr. Chris Sefcheck knows there are those who may feel students should only learn by taking pen to paper or using computers in the ways that we have for a generation. But he sees opportunity for students to build critical thinking and problem solving skills through these new tools.

“The biggest piece is that artificial intelligence has to be paired with human intellect,” Sefcheck says. “You have to be able to not only know how to use AI, but know how to use your brain for the critical thinking and problem solving that AI doesn’t do for you.”

At Burrell School District, middle school learning coach Courtney Barbiaux enthusiastically pursues AI training — then passes her knowledge on to teachers. She recently gave a presentation on educational platforms including MagicSchool, a free resource that creates lessons, generates questions, produces classroom stations and more on just about any topic.”





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ABC CREATE

L.E.A.D.S.

LEVERAGING EDUCATION
to ACCELERATE DIVERSITY
and SUCCESS

