



Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program

75 Carpenter Street, Providence, RI 02903-3004 (401) 272-0881 Fax (401) 273-7141 www.ucap.org

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
May 5, 2008

MAY 5 2008
OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

Mr. Peter McWalters, Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Peter;

I am writing to follow up on a letter that I sent you in October requesting your permission to shorten the school year at UCAP by one day. I made this request based upon an unforeseen flood that occurred at our school. As a result of this flood we had to cancel school and send all students home, a process that occupied staff until late morning. We used the rest of the day in question (October 10, 2007) for professional development.

The enclosed copy of my letter explains in greater detail my reasons for requesting a school year of just 179 days for students. I am writing again at this time because the end of the year is approaching in our calendar of end-of year activities is based upon an assumption that my request will be approved. Therefore, I am writing again to seek your approval of this request, which has become a more delicate issue over time.

Should you need anything else to make a decision on this, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you, and I thank you for all of your past support in building and maintaining UCAP as an effective alternative for urban students.

Sincerely,


Robert DeBlois
Director

RD:rbd
Enclosure



Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program

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BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
October 11, 2007

Mr. Peter McWalters
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER

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Dear Peter:

I am writing to request a waiver of the state requirement of 180 school days per year. Specifically, I am asking that UCAP be allowed to shorten the school year *for students only* by one day, to 179 days.

I am making this request with the full knowledge and support of the UCAP Board of Superintendents. The reason we are seeking a waiver of the 180 day requirement is because school had to be cancelled on October 10, 2007, as a result of a serious flood in the building. On this date, students and staff reported to school as usual. Staff spent a good deal of the morning calling the parents of every student and making transportation arrangements. They also worked to contain the flood and rescue property from classrooms and student lockers. After this, non-teaching staff remained for normal school business, while teachers participated in curriculum planning and meetings on school wide issues of concern.

Flooded areas included one half of our classrooms, the front office, the front hallway, and the school entrance. Prior to canceling school, a drywall ceiling collapsed in an upstairs hallway and other areas of the ceiling appeared to be stressed. School was cancelled because it was logistically impossible to operate and because the condition of the building presented a serious safety hazard for students.

For the current school year we scheduled 180 instructional days, along with 3 teacher days. Of these, only one remains at the end of the year. Therefore, if we are to add a day to the schedule, we will need to pay staff for an unanticipated 184th day. This will cost UCAP between \$10,000 and \$12,000. Our budget for the current school year is slightly in the red. In order to accommodate an additional school day, we will have to cut back in other areas such as professional development.

Should you wish to know anything else regarding our reasons for canceling school and seeking a reduced school year, please feel free to contact the school.

Sincerely,

Robert DeBlois
Director

RD/ss



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

May 22, 2008

Mr. Robert DeBlois, Director
Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program
75 Carpenter Street,
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mr. DeBlois:

Thank you for your letter of May 5, 2008 in which you reiterate your request that that the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) be authorized to operate for 179 days for students during the 2007-2008 school year instead of for the normally required 180 days. R.I.G.L.16-2-2. You base your request on a flood that occurred at UCAP, which you describe in these terms:

Flooded areas included one half of our classrooms, the front office, the front hallway, and the school entrance. Prior to canceling school, a drywall ceiling collapsed in an upstairs hallway and other areas of the ceiling appeared to be stressed. School was cancelled because it was logistically impossible to operate and because the condition of the building presented a serious hazard for students.

Your letter further notes that staff assisted with flood control efforts and that, "non-teaching staff remained for normal school business, while teachers participated in curriculum planning and meetings on school wide issues of concern." The controlling statute reads as follows:

R.I.G.L. 16-2-3 Emergency reduction of school year. – In the event of any emergency brought about by the incidence of any epidemic or the threat of an epidemic or any emergency which may endanger the health of children or the physical well being of the community, the school committee of any city or town with the approval of the board of regents for elementary and secondary education may reduce the number of school days to not less than one hundred seventy (170) days; provided, that the compensation of teachers, janitors, clerks, and other employees in the public schools of the city or town shall not be reduced by reason of the shortening of the school year.

Telephone (401)222-4600 Fax (401)222-6178 TTY 800-745-5555 Voice 800-745-6575

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Page 2

After considering the correspondence you have submitted concerning this matter it is my conclusion that a reduction of school year for students at UCAP to 179 days is appropriate. I will therefore recommend to the Board of Regents that such a reduction be granted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McWalters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

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