



Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program

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

February 10, 2009

Peter McWalters, Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of
Elementary and Secondary Education
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Peter:

I am proposing that UCAP be allowed to make-up four snow days by lengthening our current school day by 20 minutes, until June 18, the last day of school. This would mean that UCAP students would spend just 177 days in school rather than the scheduled year of 181 days.

Please understand I am making this proposal so that we maintain our makeup days as valuable instructional time. It is our experience that the last full week of June can be exceptionally difficult for maintaining student attendance. This will be especially true if Providence has the extra days added to the end of the year, but maintains the practice of having all assignments and grades due the previous week.

However, if we add a small amount of time each day by extending our structural periods, students will still receive the benefit of time that is planned and structured as serious instructional time. Therefore, I ask you to consider this request, but to do so as quickly as possible. If we are to move forward with this plan, we need to begin our longer days on March 9th. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Robert DeBlois'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert DeBlois
Director

RD/tb

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

FEB 10 2009

OFFICE OF THE
COMMISSIONER



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

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

April 23, 2009

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

Dear Mr. DeBlois: 

In your letter of February 10, 2009 you, in accordance with R.I.G.L. 16-2-3, requested, that:

“...the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program [UCAP] be allowed to make-up four snow days by lengthening [the] current school day by 20 minutes, until June 18, the last day of school. This would mean that UCAP students would spend just 177 days in school rather than the scheduled year of 181 days.”

In an earlier response to your letter I informed you that I was withholding action on your request because I felt that it was premature. Please be advised that I have now received a request from Providence requesting a five day reduction in the school year because of snow days. This request includes a statement that the school day in Providence will be extended by a about 20 minutes for the rest of the school year after April 20th. I will be recommending that this request be granted.

Under these circumstances I will also recommend to the Board of Regents, that the Urban Collaborative be granted a similar reduction in the school year to 178 days for students and 180 days for teachers, with teachers to receive two days of Professional Development instruction on the 179th and 180th days of the academic year. I expect the Board to act upon my request at its next meeting of May 13, 2009.

Sincerely,



Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education

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



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, 2009

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

Dear Mr. DeBlois:

This is a follow up to my letter dated April 23, 2009, in which I stated that I would recommend to the Board of Regents that your request to reduce the student's school year from 180 days to 178 days be granted. The authority to grant a waiver requested through R.I.G.L. § 16-2-3 (emergency reduction of school year) was delegated to me during the May 13, 2009 Board of Regents meeting:

"The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education, in accordance with its authority to assign to the Commissioner any other additional duties that may be determined by the Board and in accordance with the Board's general supervisory authority over elementary and secondary education, hereby delegates to the Commissioner the authority to grant or to deny approval to reductions in the school year in accordance with R.I.G.L. 16-2-3. The Commissioner's grant or denial of a reduction may be reviewed by the Board."

Rhode Island General Law § 16-2-3 provides a mechanism by which "the school committee or any city or town with the approval of the board of regents for elementary and secondary education may reduce the number of school days" in the event of an "emergency which [sic] may endanger the health of children of the physical well being of the community."

You have requested that the instructional school year for students be reduced to 178 days, with professional development on the 179th and 180th days.

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As with a similar request from the Providence School District, I find your request to be within the parameters of §16-2-3. This decision is based on the reason for your request and the ultimately beneficial manner in which you have proposed to use the 179th and 180th days.

For the foregoing reasons, please be advised that I am granting your requested waiver to the 180 day school year. Please provide me with written verification of the adjusted school year for students (178 days) and the schedule and agenda for the mandatory professional development during the 179th and 180th day.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions that you may have in regard to the issues raised herein.

Very truly yours,



Peter McWalters
Commissioner of Education

cc: Robert G. Flanders, Chairman, Board of Regents
David V. Abbott, Deputy Commissioner/General Counsel