



## **Parent and Student Handbook**

**2018-2019 School Year**

**UCAP**  
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The Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program has developed this manual to help students and parents to learn about the school. This book is available in English, and Spanish. If you have questions about anything at all about UCAP after reading this manual, please call the office so we can assist you. We look forward to working with you and look forward to the success of your child at UCAP.

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## UCAP Profile:

UCAP is an independent public school. At UCAP, all students work to improve their skills, and some students are given the opportunity of accelerated promotion in grade to make up for a grade they may have repeated. UCAP serves students in grades 7, 8, and 9. The enrollment of UCAP is approximately 140 students from Cranston, Central Falls, and Providence. Most of these students are recruited through the Guidance departments at their district schools in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Some students apply directly to UCAP or are referred through organizations in the community. UCAP is a legally independent entity that is controlled by a Board comprised of the superintendents of the participating districts. The school is funded by the state and the participating school districts. UCAP also maintains close ties to organizations that support the school in a range of other programs beyond the normal school operation.

## Location:

The school is located at 75 Carpenter Street in Providence. At this location, UCAP shares a building with the Bradley School. Directions can be obtained by calling the school, entering the address into your GPS or looking at our website at UCAP.org.

## Mission:

*The Urban Collaborative seeks to intervene in the lives of young adolescents having serious difficulty in school and placed at risk of dropping out, to help each of them obtain the academic and social skills necessary for success in high school and in life. We strive to create a supportive community that will motivate students with a coherent, relevant, and challenging academic program. We stress the importance of taking responsibility, working hard, achieving at high a level, setting goals, taking risks, and having fun.*

## School Day and Calendar:

UCAP operates on the same calendar as the public schools in the participating cities, with some exceptions. Each year, parents receive a yearly calendar. Hours of school are as follows:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. -3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. -3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. -2:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. -3:00 p.m.</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>8:25 a.m. -2:00 p.m.</b>

Each morning, students will be allowed in the building at 8:05 a.m. Students who arrive before this time will not be able to enter the building. At the end of the school day, students are expected to leave the building and the campus by ten (10) minutes after the dismissal times listed above. Students who participate in a *Beyond U Program* activity will be expected to leave the building and the campus within ten (10) minutes of the end of the activity.

### School Cancellations:

In the event of bad weather or other unexpected problems, school will close when (and only when) the city of Providence cancels school.

### Transportation:

Students who live in Providence and Cranston will be supplied RIPTA bus passes (if they meet the distance requirements) and will use public transportation to and from school. Students from Central Falls will be provided with a regular school bus or RIPTIX for transportation to and from UCAP. Times and locations for pick-ups will be communicated to parents during the summer. For special events and programs that take place during non-school hours, students will be provided RIPTIX if parents are unable to arrange other transportation.

### Curriculum:

The goal of the Urban Collaborative is to help students develop the skills, mindsets and habits that will enable them to succeed in high school and beyond. We want students to be excited about learning and discover what interests them. Many students at UCAP have repeated a grade prior to entering our school. For these students, the curriculum will allow them to complete more than one grade in one year, provided they complete the necessary work. For students who have not repeated a grade prior to entering UCAP, the emphasis of the academic program will be to strengthen their academic skills.

Some students at UCAP will participate in Summit Learning, a personalized, web-based curriculum platform that emphasizes self-directed learning. In this way of learning, students take greater ownership of their progress by accessing lessons online at their level that teachers have assigned to them

At UCAP, students take four core academic subjects: English, Math, Science, And Social Studies. The curriculum is based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In addition, each student takes elective classes that include art, computers, health, physical education or cooking.

Students are promoted in grade in a core subject when they complete the requirements for the course. Students can receive extra help after school.

Progress Reports and Report Cards are sent home six times a year, at the Mid-Trimester and Trimester. Students are assigned to Academic Support classes every few weeks to help them catch up if they fall behind and to help them learn the skills they need. UCAP

is moving to PowerSchool, a student information system that allows parents and students to check grades and attendance online with a computer or phone.

We do whatever we can to support and push students to succeed, but ultimately, students who are not performing according to expectations may be placed on probation and may be asked to leave the school. The staff will make all efforts to inform parents about student progress and to involve parents and guardians in plans of improvement. Meetings are available with all teachers upon request and weekly progress reports, via phone calls from the school counselor, can usually be provided at the request of a parent.

### The Classroom:

At UCAP, we emphasize reading and writing in all subjects. Students will be expected to understand the ideas and concepts presented in class and to demonstrate this understanding in a variety of ways. Students will take part in projects and will demonstrate their understanding through such things as poster boards, oral presentations, research papers, creative writing, or computer projects. Textbooks are rarely used at UCAP. Instead, teachers create units for students based upon the school's written curriculum, student needs and interests, and world events.

### Homework:

Students at UCAP should read every night in a place suited for quiet study and concentration. Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's reading by asking questions and talking to them about their reading. Most homework assignments require students to work on projects started in class. Students can receive help with homework after school in Study Hall.

### Use of Computers:

At UCAP, students have many opportunities to work on computers and Chrome books. All student computers are connected to a high-speed Internet line. In addition, all students will be required to take an elective computer course that will provide them with instruction on how to use computers. At UCAP, precautions are taken to make sure students do not misuse computers to visit inappropriate websites or to access files that belong to others. As part of our efforts to ensure safety of all students and proper use of school computers, parents will be asked to sign an agreement regarding the use of technology at UCAP. Students who intentionally misuse computers will face consequences.

### Counseling and Support:

All adolescents face many challenges. With this in mind, UCAP has made the commitment to provide counseling and support for students. UCAP utilizes a case management approach under the direction of the school's two licensed social workers. Prior to a student's enrollment in UCAP, the school social worker, school counselor, will

meet with families to conduct an orientation interview with the student and his or her parent. During the year, the school social worker and counselor meet with all the UCAP students through in-school appointments and/or home visits. When the need arises, students and families are referred to medical and community outreach agencies beyond UCAP.

At UCAP, all students participate in an Advisory of approximately 12 students and a staff member. Students check in with their Advisory each morning. Advisors stay in close contact with each of their advisees, and often can be helpful to students and parents when questions arise at school.

### Student Behavior:

At UCAP we strive to create a community where people treat each other with, courtesy and respect. Developmental Designs guides the social and emotional learning of students. As a part of that process, students write a Social Contract that guides our interactions with each other. The Social Contract is rewritten each year and is posted around the school. Students are asked frequently to reflect on the Social Contract.

Minor to moderate infractions of school rules can result in a range of consequences such as detention, community service to the school, separation from other students for a brief period of time, or loss of some privileges. Any staff member can give these consequences and students will be expected to fulfill consequences in a prompt manner. When students refuse to follow consequences, parents will be contacted to work with us to address the issue at hand and help develop a suitable response to solve the problem.

Other common consequences have included the following: public apologies, in-house suspension, after-school detention, Saturday detention, loss of privileges, parents meetings, and lunch in the office, and extra assignments.

### Suspensions and Removal from UCAP:

Students in UCAP must realize that their attendance at this school is a privilege, and that they are here in order to strengthen their skills and accelerate in grade. UCAP operates as a resource and a program of the participating school departments. All students who participate in UCAP are at the school at the discretion of the teachers, Director, and the Board of Superintendents. Students should demonstrate, through their actions, that they want to remain in this school. When students are asked to leave UCAP, they will return to a school in their local district and may be subject to discipline pursuant to the rules of their local school district. Generally, there are three reasons why a student may be asked to leave UCAP: poor attendance, lack of effort, and poor behavior.

In the cases of poor attendance and/or lack of effort in school, the staff of UCAP will make every effort possible to see that the student corrects these problems, with the help of that student's parent or guardian. In chronic cases, where a student has made no progress in correcting these problems, the student may be placed on probation for a specific period of time, and the parent will be notified that the student is on probation. During the period of probation, the student will meet on a regular basis with a staff member who has been assigned to oversee the probation, and to help the student successfully meet the requirements of the probation. If the student has not met the

requirements of his/her probation by the end of the probationary period, the student may be asked to leave UCAP, and will return to a school in his/her district. Students who successfully meet the requirements of the probation will be allowed to remain at UCAP, and may or may not be kept on probation.

### Suspensions:

In cases where a student's behavior requires immediate attention, and a serious response from UCAP, a student may be suspended or removed from the school. Serious behavior problems include such things as fighting; intimidation of or threats toward another person in school; possession of contraband that may be harmful or dangerous to another person in school; chronic disregard of school rules and policies; or other actions that may threaten the safety and security of persons in the school. Behaviors that may result in suspension or removal can occur at school or off school property, or at any event that is school sponsored or related. This is especially true of situations in which students from the school have a problem and engage in a fight off school property during non-school hours. Such students can be suspended or removed from the school because they have not taken advantage of opportunities at school to resolve the conflict, and their fight, even if off campus during non-school hours, is likely to disrupt the educational process at the school. The decision about whether to suspend a student will rest with the Director. In his/her absence, this decision can be made by the person in charge in the office. Suspensions will last no longer than ten days. The student shall be notified of the charges against him/her. Before a student is suspended, the student will have a chance to present his/her side of whatever problem has occurred, unless the student's presence endangers persons or property, in which case the student shall be removed immediately and given a hearing shortly thereafter. Whenever a student is suspended, his/her parent or guardian will be notified of the reason for the suspension, the date on which the student will be allowed back to school, and any other conditions relating to the student's suspension.

### Removal:

In cases where suspension is not deemed to be an adequate punishment, or when it is deemed that a student and/or UCAP will be best served by the departure of a student, that student will be asked to leave the Urban Collaborative, and will return to a school in his/her district. In these cases, when the Director deems that the student must leave UCAP, the student will be provided with written notice of the reason for the removal and notice of the student's opportunity to request a hearing. If such a request is made, the student will be given a hearing to determine if such an offense has occurred, and if this offense merits removal from school. Depending upon the severity of the incident, the student's sending district may impose its own discipline, including but not limited to, short or long term suspension. If this is the case, the sending district will provide the student with the appropriate due process rights regarding the suspension and removal.

### Hearing and Appeals:

In cases where a student and his/ her parent do not agree with a decision of the Director regarding the removal of a student from UCAP and back to the students district, appeals can be made directly to the Director. These appeals should be made in writing by the

parent or guardian not more than five days after being notified of a decision regarding the removal of a student from UCAP. Upon receipt of a written appeal, the Director will schedule a hearing with a hearing officer who has been duly appointed by the UCAP Board of Superintendents to hear appeals and to make decisions about such appeals on behalf of the Board of Superintendents. The hearing officer will render a written decision no more than ten days after the date of the hearing and provide a copy of the decision to the student. At the hearing, the parent and student are entitled to their own legal counsel, if they so wish. They may cross-examine witnesses and present evidence. Parents or students, who may require translators or any special services that will assist them in communicating their case to the hearing officer, should make such requests in the letter of appeal. Upon a decision by the hearing officer appointed by the Board of Superintendents, the parent and child have the right of further appeal to the Commissioner of Education, in accordance with the appropriate rules and regulations of the Rhode Island Department of Education.

### Parental Role:

At UCAP we believe that students have a much greater chance of succeeding if their parents and the school work together. While the school will make every effort to inform all parents of student events and progress through letters, reports, and notices, the most effective way for parents and teachers to understand each other is through conversations and meetings.

Parents can check grades and attendance on PowerSchool, and are also urged to call school to request quick reports of student behavior and academic progress. When deemed necessary by the school, parents will be called and asked to come to school for meetings with appropriate staff. On a more informal basis, parents will be invited to help out at dances, field trips, or special events for parents at the school. Parents are also welcome to visit school at any time; visits to a classroom can usually be arranged.

Prior to applying for UCAP, parents sign an agreement between themselves and the school. This agreement is as follows:

As a parent or guardian, I agree:

1. To make ourselves available to meet with teachers when it is necessary or helpful to review progress at UCAP.
2. To make ourselves available to meet with teachers when it is necessary or helpful to review progress at UCAP.
3. To make sure that our child attends school everyday, on time and in uniform, and to call the school if anything prevents attendance on any given day.
4. To make every effort to attend special functions that are held at UCAP.
5. To stay in touch with the school and do everything possible to see that our child comes to school every day.
6. To support the consequences given to my child when he/she does not behave or perform to our expectations.



Finally, the most important thing parents can do is to make sure their children are ready for school each day and focused on the importance of school in their lives. Parents can make sure that children are home in the evening at a proper time and have a quiet place to do homework. Parents can make sure that students get to bed at a reasonable hour and are awake and prepared for school on time each day, with things the student may need for a good day at school. Parents can call school when their child tells them something about school that seems unusual, confusing, or disturbing. UCAP seeks to support each and every student so he or she can succeed. Parents should be advocates for their own child, but should realize that the school must make decisions that are in the best interest of all students in the school. Sometimes, the best interest of an individual student or small group of students may clash with the best interests of the larger school community. In the end, UCAP feels that it can be most successful when it operates in an atmosphere of mutual trust between parents and the school. UCAP will do everything it can to merit and maintain this trust.

### Beyond U Programs:

UCAP offers many programs after-school, on weekends, on vacations and during the summer. Programs include assistance with schoolwork, field trips, recreation, art workshops, and community service. Parents will receive a great deal of info about possible programs. Parents should call the school if they have any questions about UCAP *Beyond U Programs*.

### Other things to know about UCAP:

Specials: Aside from core academic subjects, UCAP students take special classes that take place three days per week. These classes are offered so students have a chance to explore new things and gain knowledge that will be helpful to them in the future and in meeting state requirements. These specials include art, computers, health, physical education, and cooking.

### Incentives, Recognition, Awards:

At UCAP, we recognize that many students accomplish great things to prepare themselves for success in high school. To move students toward these great things, we offer incentives such as treats at lunch, pizza lunches, lunches out at restaurants, special privileges like going to lunch early, and other things that appeal to students.

### Interscholastic Sports:

UCAP students participate in is boys and girls basketball in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade league. They can also participate in wrestling Beat the Streets.

### Policy for Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:

Students at UCAP will **NOT** be allowed to use a cell phone or other electronic devices during the school day. We have found that these devices distract students and result in problems between students. We have also found that these devices are often stolen. Therefore, the school will confiscate cell phones or electronic devices that students are using during the school day. When a phone is confiscated for the first time it will be returned to the student at the end of the day. After the first time a phone or electronic device is confiscated, it will only be returned to parent or an adult family member who comes to the school to get the phone. Parents who need to get in touch with their child may call the school at 272-0881. In emergencies, we can locate your child in minutes. Parents and students should ask for a copy of the full cell phone policy a UCAP.

### School Uniform and Dress Code:

In order to encourage a sense of community to provide an atmosphere in which students and staff can work together, and in order to help parents and students be prepared for school everyday, UCAP expects students to wear a uniform shirt on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Students may be out of uniform on Friday. This uniform shirt will be available in many styles (t-shirts, and hoodies) and many different colors. Every student will be expected to wear the school uniform shirt or hoodie. The school does require uniform bottom or shoes. However, it will be against the dress code for students to wear their pants at a level that exposes their undergarments. We ask for the cooperation and support of parents in enforcing the uniform requirement. Also, on out of uniform days, students may not wear anything that shows or mentions illegal substances, depicts guns or nudity, or messages deemed offensive. As always, parents should call the school if they have any questions.