



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

ONE UNION STATION
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

Testimony Re: S2279 Regarding: Advanced Placement Courses for All Students Act
Senate Education Committee
March 15, 2022
Paige Clausius-Parks, Senior Policy Analyst

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for elements of Senate Bill 2279 and thank Senator Lawson for sponsoring this bill and Senators Cano, DiMario, Murray, Ciccone, Picard, Lombardo, Seveney, Quezada and Euer for co-sponsoring. This bill would establish a process for the Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and University of Rhode Island to accept advanced placement test scores of three or higher in an advanced placement course for college credit and add requirements to the annual report issued by the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is the lead convener of the **Rhode Island Alliance for College and Career Readiness**. The Alliance was established in 2017 to raise awareness about the connection between college and career readiness, the success of individual students, and the economic prosperity of our state. The Alliance advocates for legislative changes needed to increase college and career readiness and access and to address racial, ethnic, and income disparities.

Many students, especially low-income students, face barriers to college enrollment and success, including insufficient academic preparation, difficulty navigating the application and financial aid processes, and the high cost of college. Improving access and exposure to advanced coursework including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, dual and concurrent enrollment, work-based learning opportunities, and career preparation courses can help address these barriers by exposing students to advanced coursework that prepares them academically for success and by helping them reduce the cost of college.

Rhode Island has experienced consistent growth in the number of students participating in college and career readiness opportunities. In 2020, 6,398 Rhode Island public school students took an AP course and 41% of twelfth graders took an AP exam, more than double in 2010 and above the national average. **Although there has been growth in college and career readiness opportunities, there continue to be gaps in college credits earned by high school students by race, ethnicity, income, and special education and Multilingual/English Learner status.** Closing these gaps will require a thorough analysis of the barriers students face and what can be done to eliminate barriers and provide equitable access to rigorous and engaging learning opportunities that provide paths to success in college and careers for all students.

States can help address barriers and improve college access by ensuring that all students have access to advanced coursework including Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual and concurrent enrollment courses.

We support expansion of the annual report to the General Assembly on the Advanced Placement teacher training program to include data related to the number of students applying AP test scores towards college credit and the number of students issued credits by CCRI, RIC and URI. We urge the committee to consider including the requirement for the report to disaggregate this data by income, race, ethnicity, language status, and disability.

I have enclosed our report [Equitable Access to College and Career Readiness Opportunities](#). This report examines student-centered learning policies and practices that support equitable access to college and career readiness opportunities and provides recommendations for how Rhode Island can ensure that these opportunities are available for all students, particularly low-income students, students of color, and students in high-need communities.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports efforts to expand access to equitable college and career readiness opportunities. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.