

Subject: Support for S-2208 / H-7271: Ensuring Stability for UCAP Students

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amanda Lutrario, and I serve as a teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

For more than 37 years, UCAP has provided accelerated, personalized education to students who have struggled in traditional settings. Our students often require intensive academic and social-emotional support, and UCAP was built specifically to meet those needs.

I have worked in multiple settings in and outside of public education for over ten years. This is truly the best school I have ever worked at. The staff and administrators truly care about the students. We work extremely hard to bridge the academic gaps and meet the social needs of all our students. Our smaller setting and intentionally chosen yearly trainings ensure we are able to meet very specific needs. Our teams meet weekly to look at and address student work, growth, and needs so we can make adjustments to instruction and support. We work hard to ensure no student falls between the cracks which is an unfortunately common situation in a large public school with less supports.

Graduated students return to visit each year and tell us how much we have helped them, how much they learned with us, how much their skills have improved while at UCAP, how they are better with their attendance, or how prepared they felt entering high school. As an eighth grade teacher, I also teach the accelerated program. This allows students who have been retained in grade to complete two years of academics in one. These students are at a higher risk of dropping out of school and UCAP helps them get back on track. These students are in a learning environment that will help them adjust to their next placement.

The UCAP school helps students of every kind: social needs, MLL, Special Education, Acceleration, etc. I know we do solid work here and every single student who comes to us will see growth in at least one area of need. There is a real need for The UCAP school and the student we serve deserve to have the very best provided for them in a safe school environment they know and trust.

S-2208 / H-7271 would modernize UCAP's statutory framework and allow additional districts to refer students. This ensures that access to UCAP is based on student need.

Our students deserve continuity and stability. I urge you to support this legislation to protect a proven public education model that has served Rhode Island students for decades.

Sincerely,
Amanda Lutrario, Social Studies Teacher
West Warwick