

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Arthur Sherman, and I serve as the Physical and Health Education 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.

From the moment I joined the UCAP faculty it was clearly evident how deeply our UCAP community cares for each and every student who sets foot through the door. Students are able to learn in an environment that welcomes and celebrates their individuality. Through these opportunities, students who may feel out of place or overlooked in other learning environments are given daily opportunities to thrive. In Physical Education, for example, I name PE Student of the Month Shout Outs every month of the year. This initiative focuses on celebrating students who show great effort, attitude, participation and sportsmanship regardless of their skill level. I have often recognized deserving students who have shared that in their previous learning communities they would be insecure or intimidated in a Physical Education class, even though they enjoy learning through movement. Praising these students for their hard work, no matter their skill level, has helped them develop self confidence and resilience. Our focus of "Student's Over Everything" at UCAP has afforded me the opportunity to work with these students and find opportunities such as these to help them feel pride in their accomplishments and persevere when they once were uncomfortable in their surroundings. Students at UCAP do not slip through the cracks.

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, including the often shy but developing athletes I teach in the gymnasium.

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,



Arthur J. Sherman, Physical and Health Education Teacher
Richmond, Rhode Island