

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Caprice Irving, and I am a social studies teacher for the seventh grade at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

For over 37 years, UCAP has provided accelerated and personalized educational opportunities to students who have encountered challenges in traditional school settings. Our students often require comprehensive academic and social-emotional support, and UCAP was specifically designed to address these needs.

When students initially enroll at UCAP, they frequently exhibit a sense of detachment from the learning process and often express that they have never been motivated to engage with their education. However, UCAP facilitates a transformative experience for them.

During my first year at UCAP, I encountered scholars who chose our institution due to dissatisfaction with their previous educational environments. They voiced concerns about the lack of attention they received, indicating that their former schools did not monitor their attendance or ensure they participated in class. Many scholars have conveyed that they were permitted to fail in their prior schools, were overlooked, and frequently felt like they were blending in with the larger student body.

At UCAP, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, and valued—not solely in academic realms, but also socially. For instance, I currently work with a scholar who transferred to our institution and initially experienced great anxiety about navigating the hallways and participating in classes. As of now, this student is engaging socially and attending classes three times a week, representing a significant transformation from their initial experience upon entering our building. Our community of committed individuals plays a crucial role in empowering scholars to realize their aspirations, equipping them with the necessary tools for success.

Every day, within our institution, exemplifies the grit and perseverance of our scholars. From selecting UCAP as their educational institution to engaging in classes that challenge them both academically and socially, most students feel secure enough within our environment to confront challenges with courage.

Legislation S-2208 / H-7271 aims to modernize UCAP's statutory framework and permit additional districts to refer students. This adjustment will ensure that access to UCAP is contingent upon the specific needs of students.

Our students need continuity and stability in their educational journeys. I implore you to support this legislation to safeguard a proven public education model that has effectively served Rhode Island students for decades.

Sincerely,
Caprice Irving, Teacher
Providence, RI