

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carole Young Lerner; I served as a consultant, in the area of Special Education and Support Services, for students 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.

During my career as a RI educator, I have served as a Reading Specialist and Special Education teacher in both suburban and urban settings. I was also the Director of Special Education for the Woonsocket Education Department (WED) for 13 years. In that capacity I became very familiar with alternative school settings. As a consultant at UCAP, I was constantly impressed with the school's adherence to **proven, research-based education**. Despite histories of previous school struggles, UCAP students thrive and succeed because the following is in place:

Motivation: Students at UCAP feel connected to their school. They are goal focused, supported with a low student/teacher ratio, and engage in personalized social-emotional learning in a way that is impossible in a larger environment.

Attendance: UCAP has active programs, procedures and systems to **ensure** regular attendance for students. Discipline protocols strive to keep students in school whenever possible.

Parental Involvement: Meetings offering flexible hours for working parents, regular monthly get-togethers for UCAP families, and frequent communication between staff and parents create a community of support for students, both internal and external, that is unique to UCAP.

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.

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

Sincerely,

Carole Young Lerner