

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Cuthbertson, and I was a founding teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) in 1989, and I retired as the principal in 2020.

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. One factor contributing to its success is a small student body that helps students feel seen and heard and safe.

Currently, I work at the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) as an Advisor to aspiring principals in the Principal Residency Network. This year, I have the honor and privilege of coaching a former student of mine at UCAP who is now an aspiring principal. He is a thoughtful, wise, and knowledgeable leader at a Providence charter school, and I can see the positive impact he has on both students and educators. To me, this demonstrates that UCAP helps students learn to know themselves and sets them on a path toward success.

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,

Christine Cuthbertson, former teacher and principal at UCAP.
Barrington