

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Colleen, and I serve as the 8th Grade English Language Arts teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

In my time at UCAP, I have discovered a community that brings out the best in students, both academically and personally. Since September, many of my students have already gone up 2 to 4 reading levels according to their iReady diagnostics. Students take pride in their academic growth. There is a culture at UCAP of excellence. Students hustle for good grades and take pride in their education. It is also not uncommon for a student to share with me that at their old middle school, they were fighting, skipping class, and smoking at school. I tell them honestly how hard that is for me to believe, such a different young person stands in front me! UCAP is a safe building where students are accounted for and actively participating in their education.

For my students who are accelerating, completing 9th and 10th grade credits in one year, UCAP is a saving grace. Students get held back in earlier grades for a variety of reasons, and getting an opportunity to catch up is a game changer. The impact this has on their high school graduation rate is unmatched. For current 7th graders and future students to lose out on this opportunity would truly be a loss for the city of Providence.

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.

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,
Colleen, 8th Grade ELA Teacher
Providence, RI