

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Erin Oliver, and I serve as the Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment and the Director of Special Services 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.

I started working at UCAP in 2006 as a special education teacher under the Founding Director, Rob Deblois. I was inspired by UCAP's mission and quickly realized how special and unique the school is for our community. Over the last 23 years I have seen well over 1000 students come through these doors, including parents and then their children, and multiple members of families, such as siblings and cousins. There have been years when our waiting list was miles long and we couldn't accommodate all the students who wanted to attend. The reason for all of this is that UCAP is a school like no other. Our small size, wrap-around services and private funding allow us to truly meet our students' needs, resulting in significant gains in school achievement and attendance. Our data shows significant growth in both areas and students overwhelmingly report positive feelings about our school community. UCAP has been doing this work for 37 years and is a model for how schools can work with high need students.

Closing UCAP's doors would create a gap that no other school in our area is designed to fill. 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,
Erin Oliver, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Special Services
Warwick, RI