

**Subject: Support for S-2208 / H-7271: Strengthening UCAP for the Future**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gina Paone, and I am a supporter of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

UCAP was founded in 1989, long before alternative education models were widely available in Rhode Island, and has served students who need accelerated learning and a smaller, structured environment for 37 years.

I am a school nurse who has had the privilege to work alongside Tamara, the school nurse for UCAP. We share an office and I have personally seen the positive impact that this school has had on many students' lives. So many students are thriving and truly enjoy the UCAP school experience. Tamara goes above and beyond to understand each of their individual life experiences and listen to their stories. These students need people in their lives who take the time and truly listen and care like her. She has a way of being able to speak with the students about their health and well being where they truly listen and engage with her. This is because she genuinely cares about each and every individual and has made a positive impact in many children's lives.

S-2208 / H-7271 strengthens UCAP's long-term sustainability by allowing additional districts to refer students and clarifying governance and admissions authority. This legislation reflects today's educational landscape and ensures that UCAP remains a stable, accountable public option for families across Rhode Island.

I respectfully urge your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,  
Gina Paone, BSN,RN