

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Haley Bergantino, 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 have seen firsthand the difference UCAP makes. The program helps middle school-aged students feel like they truly belong, giving them a sense of independence and confidence while supporting them academically so they can reach the grade level of their peers. It is so important to set students up for success early, and UCAP provides a unique opportunity for them to accelerate their learning while receiving the individualized support they need.

I have also worked with UCAP leadership for many years and have consistently seen a positive, student-centered environment. Students enjoy attending UCAP—they are engaged, excited, and genuinely happy to be part of the school community. That kind of enthusiasm for learning is invaluable and speaks volumes about the program's impact.

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,
Haley Bergantino
West Warwick, RI