



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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kyleen Carpenter, and I am a longtime Providence resident, longtime community partner of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), and a longtime educational leader in the State of RI.

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.

In the late 1990s, I began working in the SPIRIT Educational Program which was a summer program established by UCAP's founder, Rob Deblois, in conjunction with City leaders and independent school leaders in Providence and surrounding cities. The first time I met Rob, I was utterly astonished at his dedication to the most vulnerable youth in the City of Providence and beyond (to Central Falls and Pawtucket), and I vowed to dedicate my future educational career to the same youth. In the late 1990s, I worked with other SPIRIT staff members to co-found a charter public high school, Blackstone Academy Charter School, that opened its doors in 2002. I've been co-leading BACS since that time, 24 years. Quite frankly, the thousands of students that we have served over the past 2+ decades would not have had the experience to grow and thrive at BACS without the inspiration of Rob and his staff at UCAP.

To shutter UCAP would remove a critical and significant lifeline to struggling students in Providence. Having worked in urban education for decades, I can attest that youth in 2026 are facing challenges that they never have before: post-pandemic learning loss, severe mental health struggles, community violence, and threats to immigrant communities. Right now would be the exact wrong time to cut this opportunity off for the youth of our City.

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,

Kyleen Carpenter, Head of School, Blackstone Academy Charter School, Pawtucket, RI 02860
Resident of Providence 1993-1997, 2009 - present