

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lynn Prentiss, and I serve as the Executive Director (ED) 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.

In 2003, I had the great privilege of working for the founding ED, Rob DeBlois, as his personal care attendance and Assistant. It was here at UCAP that I found my calling, and ultimately, my core belief system about serving students. Eighteen years later, I am the ED and have finally come home. UCAP is not just a school, a small school, or an alternative placement for kids. UCAP is an equity and student-driven community that puts its students and families needs above all else. For over 37 years, The UCAP School has been

- A safe place for our youth to learn, lead and be themselves.
- A partner of sending districts in ensuring all students achieve and grow towards proficiency expectations.
- Resilient in its efforts to meet kids where they are and support their growth towards the goals they set for themselves.
- Staffed with adults who prioritize relationships and never giving up!
- A school that prioritizes working with youth who struggle academically, to come to school consistently and to develop the kinds of skills that will be met with success in high school and beyond.
- Lead by administrators who teach, lead professional development and assist in all aspects of student life.
- Lead by staff, teachers and advisors whose convictions for serving kids effectively are unwavering.
- Lead by a student body of future lawyers, doctors, athletes, teachers, artists, musicians, leaders and laborers.
- A place that is impossible to truly understand until you have visited and spent time with staff and students.

This shift in legislation will ensure that UCAP continues to serve the students who need more because we simply have the ability and resources to provide more. 100% of our students receive academic and/or social intervention. There is no school that I know of that can say that. In addition, there is no school in our state, or outside of our state that I know of, who is working with urban students who struggle to meet academic expectations in their schools and are encouraged and supported to accelerate in grade so that they no longer would be considered a dropout for not graduating in four years. We provide extensive after school, weekend, school vacation and summer programming to kids that connects them with community-based organizations and human models that show them what IS possible for their future.

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,
Lynn Prentiss, Executive Director of The UCAP School
Providence, RI