



The Honorable Joseph McNamara  
Chairman, House Committee on Education  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: Support for H7271 – UCAP Stability and Student Access**

Dear Chairman McNamara and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lynn Prentiss, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I write in strong support of H7271, legislation that is essential to ensuring the continued stability and accessibility of UCAP for the students we serve.

UCAP is a public alternative education program designed to serve middle and high school students who are at risk of retention or dropping out and who have not succeeded in traditional school settings. For more than 37 years, UCAP has helped students who are behind academically, disengaged, or at risk of not graduating on time reengage with school and get back on track.

H7271 addresses a fundamental structural issue. The current collaborative statute was designed for a different era—one in which multiple districts jointly governed programs like UCAP. That framework no longer reflects the reality of today's education system. Rather than allowing that outdated structure to disrupt students, this legislation modernizes the statute to ensure continuity, stability, and access based on student need.

You will hear concerns about cost. It is important to view cost in the proper context. UCAP serves students who typically require more intensive academic and social-emotional support. For this population, UCAP is a cost-effective option that can prevent far more expensive outcomes, including out-of-district placements. This legislation does not increase costs—it ensures that a proven program remains viable.

You will also hear claims that UCAP is underperforming or that districts can serve these students equally well within their own systems. UCAP exists precisely because these students were not succeeding in traditional settings. The students and families currently enrolled at UCAP have found success in an environment designed specifically for their needs, and many do not want to be forced into a different placement.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this bill is not about expansion. It is about preserving a proven public education model and aligning the law with current educational realities so that students are not negatively impacted by structural limitations.

Our students deserve continuity. They deserve stability. Most importantly, they deserve access to a program that is designed for them.

I respectfully urge your support of H7271. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lynn Prentiss  
Executive Director  
The UCAP School