

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mackenzie Sweet, and I serve as a Special Education Teacher 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.

As a special educator, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the profound impact that the resources and supports at our school have on students' growth. Over time, I have seen remarkable improvements not only in academic learning, but also in students' behavior, confidence, and overall engagement. Students who once struggled to participate are now actively involved, building skills that will serve them far beyond the classroom. These changes are not accidental, they are the direct result of intentional programming, dedicated staff and student commitment. I urge you to consider the real, human impact of this decision and to support this bill so that we can sustain and expand these positive outcomes for all students.

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,

Mackenzie Sweet, Special Educator
Providence, RI