

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Neida Gilmete, and I serve as the School Counselor 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.

I have been employed at UCAP for about 5 years. It has been more than just a job for me. I have had great experiences with staff, students, and families. And I have really flourished and grown in this position. I have enjoyed working with students from Providence and their families. I have made great connections with community workers and families. This school is very special. I have never worked at a place where students' best interest is a priority. We treat each student as an individual and meet their specific needs. We are able to provide a safe environment for students with high needs academically and social-emotionally. I have seen this school go above and beyond for students and be able to implement more than I have ever seen other schools do. We are special and we need to be able to continue this for our students and our families.

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,
Neida Gilmete
School Counselor
Providence, RI