

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Paula DeBlois, and I serve as the Chair of the Fund for UCAP Committee (FFU), the fundraising arm of The UCAP School.

UCAP was founded more than 36 years ago by my brother-in-law, Rob DeBlois. Rob had many career options, but he knew he wanted to dedicate his life to providing others with the same opportunities he was fortunate to have growing up. He believed that one way to achieve this was by creating an educational experience that would help young people succeed in further education and in life.

Rob recognized that a school offering personal attention, a safe and caring environment, and after-school programs driven by students' interests could make a profound difference. Such a setting would not only keep students safe, supervised, and nourished, but also show them that they matter and that people care deeply about their success.

To bring this vision to life, Rob consulted with educational experts from across the country, including nationally acclaimed educator Ted Sizer. The collaborative model UCAP was built upon was innovative at the time. Prior to the existence of charter school legislation, Rob successfully worked to have legislation passed that established the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

Thirty-seven years later, sustaining the collaborative model has become increasingly difficult. The superintendents of participating school districts serve as the board overseeing the school. Today's superintendents are already stretched thin, and taking on additional governance responsibilities has become increasingly challenging.

S-2208/H-7271 would strengthen UCAP's long-term sustainability by allowing additional districts to refer students and by clarifying governance and admissions structures. This legislation reflects today's educational landscape and ensures that UCAP can continue serving students who need an alternative path to success. For decades, UCAP has helped young people who were at risk of falling behind rediscover their confidence, complete their education, and move forward with purpose. Supporting this legislation will help ensure that future generations of students continue to have access to this life-changing opportunity.

I respectfully urge your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Paula DeBlois
Fund for UCAP Board Chair