



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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Peter McLaren and I have served in various capacities in science education ranging from classroom teaching, education policy, and professional development at the local, state, and national levels for over 30 years. For the past four years I have served as a Science Education Consultant at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), located at 75 Carpenter Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

In 1994, during my tenure as a middle school science teacher in East Greenwich, Rhode Island I first became acquainted with UCAP through its strong reputation for effectively supporting students who faced academic challenges. As a teacher, I consistently sought to understand how schools across the state implemented innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and UCAP quickly distinguished itself in that regard. I was profoundly impressed by the school's ability to provide accelerated and personalized instruction to students who had struggled in traditional educational environments. I learned that UCAP served learners who often require substantial academic and social-emotional support, and the school was intentionally designed to meet those needs with precision and care.

A specialized school, such as UCAP is particularly effective for students at risk of failing or dropping out because it provides a more personalized and supportive environment than a traditional setting. Smaller class sizes, flexible instructional models, and strong teacher-student relationships help ensure that students feel recognized and capable. UCAP offers social-emotional support, counseling services, and early-intervention systems that address challenges before they intensify. Through my work at UCAP as a consultant I saw, firsthand, what I became aware of back in 1994, a school that provides individualized attention, emotional support, and meaningful academic pathways can greatly support students to remain engaged, confident in their abilities, and progress successfully toward graduation.

I fully support of S-2208 / H-7271. I feel it would modernize UCAP's statutory framework and allow additional districts to refer students. Passage of these bills will provide a clear legal structure that guides practice and protects the rights and well-being of the students it serves and ensures that access to UCAP is based on student need.

I close this letter with two simple questions...If not UCAP then who? Who will take up the cause to support these students? Since 1989 UCAP has been a proven model for making a difference for students who, so often, are either ignored or forgotten. UCAP students deserve continuity and stability. I strongly urge you to support this legislation and safeguard a proven public education model that has served Rhode Island's students effectively for decades.

Sincerely,  
Peter J. McLaren



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