

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ruth Marris Macaulay, and I am a supporter of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

UCAP was founded in 1989, long before alternative education models were widely available in Rhode Island, and has served students who need accelerated learning and a smaller, structured environment for 37 years.

I am retired after 34 years as a middle and high school teacher and department head. I was also a mentor teacher for 20 years in the teacher education program at Brown University. I have seen firsthand what a difference focused and individualized instruction in small groups can do to help students whose needs are not easily met in large public-school classrooms. UCAP has an impressive record of helping such students to succeed in the classroom and through its after-school programs which I have enthusiastically supported. Why on earth would it make sense to return students to an environment in which they formerly failed to thrive? The issue appears to be about the allocation of funding rather than the needs of the students. The time is ripe for a thoughtful and compassionate approach that has long-term results, not for slick, cost-saving “efficiency” measures that do not invest in the future. Different students have different needs, an issue recently addressed by former Providence mayor Jorge Elorza in an editorial in the New York Times, advocating for a shift in thinking about education: “Instead of a top down model that delivers a one-size-fits-all experience, we need an open, dynamic system where educators have the freedom to design new schools- and parents have the power to choose among them.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/17/opinion/democrats-students-school-choice.html> UCAP is one of those dynamic schools of which we have far too few.

S-2208 / H-7271 strengthens UCAP’s long-term sustainability by allowing additional districts to refer students and clarifying governance and admissions authority. This-legislation reflects today’s educational landscape and ensures that UCAP remains a stable, accountable public option for families across Rhode Island.

I respectfully urge your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Ruth Marris Macaulay (Ms.)

East Providence