

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Samantha Armstrong, and I served as a Science Teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) from February 2012 through July 2014.

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.

During my time at UCAP, I was new to my career in teaching and new to the district. The staff and students at UCAP welcomed me with open arms, just as they have done countless times before with anyone who walks through the doors. The opportunity to work several school years with the teachers and staff at UCAP changed my outlook on life and directly influenced the success I have had since. These people are the epitome of excellence in teaching. They give students access to curriculum that they often have not felt successful with previously. They encourage and support students in ways you will not see in other schools or districts across the state. In fact, I learned more in my three years at UCAP than I have learned from any other cohort, in any other setting, since. And that just scrapes the surface of this school. The students are at the center of everything they do and all decisions they make. These students come to UCAP for myriad reasons, but they often center around a failing of traditional educational practices to reach them. For many, UCAP is where they begin to see themselves as capable, successful and productive in academic settings. These successes are reflected in the successes of so many of the UCAP alumni, who have become productive community members decade after decade. Future students also deserve the chance to live up to their potential, and UCAP wants to be there for them.

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,

Samantha Armstrong
Science Teacher- Smithfield High School
Resident of Exeter, RI