

Subject: Support for S-2208 / H-7271: Strengthening UCAP for the Future

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is William Huling, and I am proud to be a former board member of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP). Having witnessed UCAP's impact firsthand, I can say that its mission and approach remain as relevant and vital today as when it was founded in 1989. At that time, alternative education models were not widely accessible in Rhode Island. For 37 years, UCAP has opened doors for students who benefit from an accelerated pace of learning and a supportive, close-knit environment.

What drew me to UCAP was the unmistakable sense of unity and shared purpose that infuses every aspect of the school community. UCAP stands out as a safe, encouraging environment where students are empowered to aim high. Through a steadfast commitment to equitable outcomes, the school delivers accelerated learning and a wide range of extended learning opportunities, all while weaving social and emotional learning into the daily experience of every student.

At The UCAP School, academic excellence is more than a goal—it's a journey built on personalization, dedication, high expectations, a growth mindset, and thoughtful goal setting. These principles foster a genuine love of learning. Equitable outcomes are at the heart of the UCAP experience, inspiring creativity and challenging the community to embrace diversity, honor individuality, and deliver a curriculum that is both meaningful and culturally relevant. UCAP's model demonstrates that accelerated learning is not only possible, but it's also transformative—helping students graduate on time, build grit, and realize that they are capable of overcoming any challenge.

The school's extended learning opportunities take education beyond the classroom, encouraging students to explore their interests, build connections, and envision their future in high school and beyond. Social and emotional learning is a daily practice that strengthens students' resilience, nurtures healthy relationships, and cultivates the skills needed for personal well-being and empathy. These values form the bedrock of success for every member of the UCAP community—students, families, staff, and community partners alike.

The proposed legislation, S-2208 / H-7271, is crucial for UCAP's continued success and sustainability. By allowing additional districts to refer students and clarifying governance and admissions processes, this legislation aligns UCAP with today's educational needs and ensures it will remain a stable, accountable public option for Rhode Island families.

I respectfully urge your support for this important legislation so that UCAP can continue to serve as a beacon of opportunity and achievement for students across our state.

Thank you for your consideration.

William H. Huling
Franklin, MA