

**From:** [Dan Corley](#)  
**To:** [Legislation](#)  
**Subject:** UCAP legislation  
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Dear Chairwoman Gallo and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Corley. I am a board member of the Fund for UCAP, a long-time supporter of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), and the founder and Head of School of Community Preparatory School. I have spent my career working with students who are often overlooked or underserved by traditional systems.

My connection to UCAP goes back to its founding. I first met Rob DeBlois in 1987, when he visited Community Prep and began envisioning how to transform his summer program, Spirit, into a public school. UCAP was founded in 1989, and I had the privilege of working with Rob over many years as a colleague and friend. Together, we worked to strengthen UCAP and Community Prep, supported small-school collaboration across the state, and helped advance charter school legislation in Rhode Island. From the beginning, UCAP was designed to serve students who needed something different—students for whom traditional settings were not working.

That mission remains as important today as it was then.

I want to address directly a claim you may hear—that school districts can serve UCAP students just as effectively within their own systems. I was present at a meeting where Providence Public Schools presented a “study” intended to support that claim. When I asked whether the students being compared had similar academic histories, test scores, and behavioral challenges to those who attend UCAP, I was told they did not. UCAP students were being compared to the general student population.

That is not a valid comparison. It is, quite simply, an apples-to-oranges analysis. If we are serious about understanding what works for these students, we must evaluate programs based on the populations they actually serve—not on averages that obscure the very challenges UCAP is designed to address.

You will hear from UCAP alumni and families. Their experiences speak more clearly than any flawed study. UCAP works because it is intentionally designed for students who have struggled elsewhere.

The legislation before you—S-2208 and H-7271—recognizes both the success of UCAP and the need to ensure its long-term stability. It does so by:

- Clarifying governance,
- Expanding the ability of districts to refer students, and
- Aligning the law with today’s educational landscape.

This is not about expanding UCAP beyond its mission. It is about preserving a proven, accountable public school option for students who need it most and ensuring that access to that option is not undermined by structural limitations in outdated law.

I believe strongly that Rob DeBlois would be proud of the vision reflected in this legislation—not

only preserving UCAP, but positioning it to serve future generations of students more effectively.

I respectfully urge you to support S-2208.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Corley

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Founder and Head of School, Community Prep School

Board Member, Fund for UCAP