

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexander F. Barada, and I am writing to express my strong support for S-2208 / H-7271 and for the continued stability of the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

UCAP has had a direct impact on my family. Three members of my family have attended this school — my former spouse and both of my daughters. That alone speaks volumes about the trust families place in the program. Parents do not continue sending their children to a school unless they know it works.

I have had the opportunity to meet many of the educators and staff at UCAP, and their commitment to their students is clear. Year after year, this program changes the direction of hundreds of young lives by providing structure, support, and an environment where students who struggled elsewhere can succeed.

It is worth noting that families usually move away from schools that fail their children. The opposite is true here. In my family, one student's success led to another generation attending the same school. That kind of generational trust does not happen by accident — it happens because a program is doing something right.

The possibility that students could lose access to UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning. Programs like UCAP exist because many students need a different path to succeed. Taking that opportunity away would be an injustice to the adolescents who depend on this school.

Our children are our greatest investment in the future. When a school helps one generation succeed and the next generation follows, that is not coincidence — that is proof the program works.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 so UCAP can continue the important work it has been doing for decades.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexander F. Barada

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Angelina Ramos , and I live in Providence. I am the parent of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a significant difference in my child's life. He actually looks forward to going to school everyday.

Before UCAP, my child struggled in traditional school settings. He felt out of place and his anxiety would get the best of him. He was not focused and his grades were quickly falling. On his very first day at UCAP, he brought tears to my eyes when he told me how much he loved his new school.

At UCAP, he has found structure, support, and confidence. He is more outgoing and has made many friends. His grades are phenomenal and he is so proud to show me the work that he is accomplishing.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Angelina Ramos
Providence/West End

March 12, 2026

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Education Committee,

Since 2022, I have had the pleasure of working at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) where I teach literacy support classes, coordinate the library and community speaker program, and lead a student advisory. As a middle-school educator with 21 years of professional experience in Providence, Central Falls, New Bedford, and abroad, I have seen a lot. I urge you to support S-2208 and H-7271 to ensure UCAP's continuity and governance update.

When the news broke that Providence Public Schools elected to withdraw from the Collaborative for next year, jeopardizing UCAP's ability to serve our youth, our community was devastated. Several of my colleagues cried. Students looked at me with great confusion, concern, and knitted brows. They shared comments like, "But I *learn* better *here* than I did at my old school," and "I am *not* going back to [my old school]." Staff, students, and families have all made a conscious choice to be here, and the possibility that we will not keep teaching and learning together is deeply unsettling.

What I have learned over my multi-decade career in education is that ***no one school is the right fit for every learner or every teacher.*** While large, traditional middle schools may be effective for some, the data and history show us that they do not work for all. UCAP exists to provide accelerated, personalized education to students who have struggled for a wide variety of reasons in traditional settings. Our students often require intensive academic and social-emotional support, and UCAP was built specifically to meet those needs. We provide a small setting for kids and families who are seeking a fresh start and another chance at educational progress. The school was founded 37 years ago as a drop-out intervention, and indeed, we are still impacting lives on profound levels. Routinely, I connect with alumni who come back to visit the school, as well as in the wider community. It is not uncommon for me to hear, "I loved UCAP! That place is so important to me!" as well as, "I was so bad in middle school! I am so lucky I got to grow up a little at UCAP and get myself together!"

Under Lynn Prentiss's leadership, the school has made necessary improvements in key metrics, resulting in a jump in our state "star rating." As a professional, I feel both highly respected and pushed to deliver my best each day. We have a beautifully maintained facility that costs the city and the state nothing outside the ordinary. We have a built-in afterschool program that is free and available to every student. UCAP has great positive momentum at this time.

In front of you is an opportunity to update the statutory framework of UCAP so that it may continue to serve Rhode Island's youth who need it most, across multiple districts. Our learners deserve continuity and stability. I urge you to vote S-2208 / H-7271 to the floor for passage.

Respectfully,



Ariana L. Wohl, MAT
Providence, RI 02905
Senate District 28
House District 11

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alexander Desjardin, and I serve as the principal at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

When looking for a school community to be able to build strong relationships and give students a chance to grow into themselves as young adults. The UCAP School gives just that. Over my last 6 years, I have had the pleasure to work with so many students and families, who were struggling for multiple reasons: bigger school, below grade level, attendance, bullying, and lack of motivation, to name a few. When students start at UCAP, we can give them a unique experience that thrives in social/emotional learning, resources for families, academic interventions, extended time, meeting students' needs, and giving them a community to be themselves in. I have countless experiences with community members, families, and students who continue to thank the community for giving the support needed to have students gain their academic motivation, strive to get into a good high school, build stamina to attend school daily, and truly gain life skills to be their best versions. So many students and community members come and visit the school and share the unique success stories they have had over the last 37 years. These experiences are bigger than any budget or reasoning to no longer have the doors open to continue making a difference in the lives of students daily. Our Beyond U program gives our community and students a chance to create opportunities and experiences that families would not be able to provide without our program. Events, trips, cooking, rock climbing, Save the Bay, Washington DC, and Nature's Classroom.

The UCAP School is not your typical school model; we are so much more than an educational setting. We go above and beyond to make sure everyone has the best possible educational experience.

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,
Alexander Desjardin, Principal
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02861

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Arthur Sherman, and I serve as the Physical and Health Education Teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

From the moment I joined the UCAP faculty it was clearly evident how deeply our UCAP community cares for each and every student who sets foot through the door. Students are able to learn in an environment that welcomes and celebrates their individuality. Through these opportunities, students who may feel out of place or overlooked in other learning environments are given daily opportunities to thrive. In Physical Education, for example, I name PE Student of the Month Shout Outs every month of the year. This initiative focuses on celebrating students who show great effort, attitude, participation and sportsmanship regardless of their skill level. I have often recognized deserving students who have shared that in their previous learning communities they would be insecure or intimidated in a Physical Education class, even though they enjoy learning through movement. Praising these students for their hard work, no matter their skill level, has helped them develop self confidence and resilience. Our focus of "Student's Over Everything" at UCAP has afforded me the opportunity to work with these students and find opportunities such as these to help them feel pride in their accomplishments and persevere when they once were uncomfortable in their surroundings. Students at UCAP do not slip through the cracks.

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, including the often shy but developing athletes I teach in the gymnasium.

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,



Arthur J. Sherman, Physical and Health Education Teacher
Richmond, Rhode Island

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anna Prince, and I serve as a school social worker at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

From 2021 - 2024 I had the privilege of working as the full time social worker for UCAP. After stepping away from this position to pursue more advanced clinical training, I have had the unique opportunity to return to work part-time in addition to another full time social worker on a growing student support team. A multidisciplinary team including advisors, counselors, and administrators that has really shown up for under-resourced families with significant mental health needs, trauma histories, and social challenges. At a time when most districts have reduced funding for social work services in schools, UCAP has made mental health counseling, wraparound support and meeting families where they're at a priority. I can honestly say that the work we are able to do here, providing quality in-school clinical services, family support, coordination of care, and bridging the gap between education and mental health is my dream job. It's also a job I believe I would not be able to do with as much consistency, efficacy, or impact at any other school or institution.

What is especially frustrating and confusing about all of this is that from what I've witnessed first hand, the overall progress of the UCAP school has been exponential over the past 5 years. During this time and through the inclusive leadership of the admin team, the UCAP community has built equitable and trauma-informed systems, strengthened relationships between students, staff, and families, and implemented consistent and restorative discipline practices with a focus on social emotional development.

It's heartbreaking to know that our current 7th graders and potential future students, many of whom would meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis and/or have significant trauma histories that get in the way of their ability to learn, might no longer receive the services they deserve. Services that provide them with the emotional and physical safety they haven't been able to access anywhere else.

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,
Anna Prince, School Social Worker
Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Caprice Irving, and I am a social studies teacher for the seventh grade at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

For over 37 years, UCAP has provided accelerated and personalized educational opportunities to students who have encountered challenges in traditional school settings. Our students often require comprehensive academic and social-emotional support, and UCAP was specifically designed to address these needs.

When students initially enroll at UCAP, they frequently exhibit a sense of detachment from the learning process and often express that they have never been motivated to engage with their education. However, UCAP facilitates a transformative experience for them.

During my first year at UCAP, I encountered scholars who chose our institution due to dissatisfaction with their previous educational environments. They voiced concerns about the lack of attention they received, indicating that their former schools did not monitor their attendance or ensure they participated in class. Many scholars have conveyed that they were permitted to fail in their prior schools, were overlooked, and frequently felt like they were blending in with the larger student body.

At UCAP, we are committed to ensuring that every student feels seen, heard, and valued—not solely in academic realms, but also socially. For instance, I currently work with a scholar who transferred to our institution and initially experienced great anxiety about navigating the hallways and participating in classes. As of now, this student is engaging socially and attending classes three times a week, representing a significant transformation from their initial experience upon entering our building. Our community of committed individuals plays a crucial role in empowering scholars to realize their aspirations, equipping them with the necessary tools for success.

Every day, within our institution, exemplifies the grit and perseverance of our scholars. From selecting UCAP as their educational institution to engaging in classes that challenge them both academically and socially, most students feel secure enough within our environment to confront challenges with courage.

Legislation S-2208 / H-7271 aims to modernize UCAP's statutory framework and permit additional districts to refer students. This adjustment will ensure that access to UCAP is contingent upon the specific needs of students.

Our students need continuity and stability in their educational journeys. I implore you to support this legislation to safeguard a proven public education model that has effectively served Rhode Island students for decades.

Sincerely,
Caprice Irving, Teacher
Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Committee Members ,

I am writing to express my strong support S-2208/ H-7271. Since its establishment in 1989, UCAP has consistently provided critical academic and social-emotional support to students in a small, alternative setting, enabling them to bridge learning gaps effectively.

During my twelve years as an educator at UCAP, I witnessed firsthand the transformative impact this institution has on its students. The supportive and caring community at UCAP empowers students to overcome adversity and equips them with the necessary tools for success. Many of the students I served excelled in high school and beyond, finding their voices and achieving immeasurable growth.

UCAP's unique approach to pedagogy, social-emotional learning, and personalized support is exemplary. Rather than closing this institution, Providence Public Schools should look to UCAP as a model for educational excellence.

Students deserve access to high-quality instruction to address achievement gaps. Supporting S-2208/ H-7271 strengthens UCAP's long term sustainability by allowing additional districts to refer students.

I stand firmly in support of UCAP School and urge you to support this important legislation.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Carey Bledsoe

Denver, CO

401-369-3724

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Celeste Dacosta, and I live in Providence, RI. I am the parent/guardian of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a difference in my child's life.

Before UCAP, my child struggled in a traditional school where his grades were low average, struggled connecting to his teachers, fully understanding the lessons, and overall unproductive .

At UCAP, they have found structure, support, and confidence.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thank you,

Celeste Dacosta

Providence

401-489-1504

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Crystal Felix, and I serve as a Math Teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

UCAP is an important alternative space for our students to have access to. Many of the students who come to this school come here because it is a smaller environment that can better meet their needs. Students who are multiple grade levels behind, students who have issues with attendance, students who simply need a different environment where they feel more seen, these are the students we serve! Many kids come into my classroom absolutely hating math or feeling defeated by the subject. I've worked hard in my classroom to foster an environment of safety and learning, where students can realize that they ARE capable of doing math amongst any other things that they put their minds to. Our community is small but mighty! We are patient, flexible, and determined when it comes to meeting the needs of our students.

This school has been instrumental in my growth as an educator as well. I have been able to work closely with the admin in my school and have always felt supported, heard, and understood by them. It would be such a shame to have a place so special not be able to do what it was meant to do, serve our students that need us most!

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,
Crystal Felix, Math Teacher
Cumberland, Rhode Island

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Curtis McLean, father of UCAP Student Zakai McLean , and I live in Providence RI.

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a difference in my child's life.

We believe in UCAP and their mission of no child left behind. My son has found his educational confidence and belief that he can accomplish anything that he puts his mind and effort into. UCAP has been a community environment where I am encouraged to be involved and voice my opinions unlike other schools. It would be a disservice and travesty to look the environment and culture that UCAP provides.

Losing UCAP shouldn't be a thought and it would negatively affect the student, staff, and communities that it services. The future of UCAP should not be in the hands of politicians whose children don't attend the school and/or anyone who has absolutely no connection to UCAP personally. It will be a detrimental mistake to sever ties with UCAP and everything that it encompasses. Students need an environment where staff actually cares about the students, their dreams, and their future.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Curtis McLean
Zakai McLean
Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolina Almonte, and I serve as the MLL Specialist at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

I have worked at UCAP since 2013, and I can confidently say it has been one of the most meaningful places I have worked because of the strong community we have built. As a former student from the Providence school district, I have personally seen the differences between school environments. UCAP has helped adolescents during some of the most important years of their development by providing personalized learning and a supportive environment.

First, UCAP's small setting gives students the opportunity to truly get to know one another and build meaningful relationships. Students often tell us how much they value being part of UCAP because, for the first time, they feel seen, heard, and accepted. Many of our students come from similar backgrounds, which helps them connect with one another and form supportive friendships. Some students share that they experienced bullying before coming to UCAP and were afraid to attend larger schools. At UCAP, we are able to provide them with a safe and supportive environment during some of the most challenging years of their development.

Second, we take the time to understand each student's learning style and meet them where they are academically. We help students grow by emphasizing the importance of education and how it can open doors for their future. Our students work hard not only for themselves, but also because they want to make their families and teachers proud. They know their teachers genuinely care about them because we prioritize building relationships with both students and their families.

Third, UCAP provides an inclusive environment where we are able to accommodate students' individual needs. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are included in general education classes more than 85% of the time, with the support of a special education teacher in their ELA and math classes. This collaborative model ensures that all learners receive the support they need to succeed in their core academic subjects. In addition, UCAP supports Multilingual Learner (MLL) students at all proficiency levels by providing appropriate services, including English Language Development instruction and push-in support within classrooms. These services help language learners develop their English skills while also ensuring they can access their academic content and succeed in their classes.

Lastly, another important component of UCAP is the opportunity for students to accelerate their education. Students are able to move ahead one grade level through our accelerated learning model. For example, a student may enter UCAP as a seventh grader and, after two years, transition into high school as a tenth grader. Similarly, students who enter as eighth graders may complete one year at UCAP and move directly into tenth grade. This model was intentionally designed to help reduce the dropout rate by re-engaging students who may have fallen behind academically and giving them the opportunity to catch up, regain confidence, and continue their education on a successful path.

These supports are the reason UCAP has been able to change the lives of so many students over the past 37 years.

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,
Carolina Almonte, MLL Teacher
Cranston, RI

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carole Young Lerner; I served as a consultant, in the area of Special Education and Support Services, for students at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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 career as a RI educator, I have served as a Reading Specialist and Special Education teacher in both suburban and urban settings. I was also the Director of Special Education for the Woonsocket Education Department (WED) for 13 years. In that capacity I became very familiar with alternative school settings. As a consultant at UCAP, I was constantly impressed with the school's adherence to **proven, research-based education**. Despite histories of previous school struggles, UCAP students thrive and succeed because the following is in place:

Motivation: Students at UCAP feel connected to their school. They are goal focused, supported with a low student/teacher ratio, and engage in personalized social-emotional learning in a way that is impossible in a larger environment.

Attendance: UCAP has active programs, procedures and systems to **ensure** regular attendance for students. Discipline protocols strive to keep students in school whenever possible.

Parental Involvement: Meetings offering flexible hours for working parents, regular monthly get-togethers for UCAP families, and frequent communication between staff and parents create a community of support for students, both internal and external, that is unique to UCAP.

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.

UCAP students deserve continuity and stability. Therefore, I urge you to support this legislation to protect a **proven** public education model that has served Rhode Island students for decades.

Sincerely,

Carole Young Lerner

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Cuthbertson, and I was a founding teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) in 1989, and I retired as the principal in 2020.

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. One factor contributing to its success is a small student body that helps students feel seen and heard and safe.

Currently, I work at the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) as an Advisor to aspiring principals in the Principal Residency Network. This year, I have the honor and privilege of coaching a former student of mine at UCAP who is now an aspiring principal. He is a thoughtful, wise, and knowledgeable leader at a Providence charter school, and I can see the positive impact he has on both students and educators. To me, this demonstrates that UCAP helps students learn to know themselves and sets them on a path toward success.

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,

Christine Cuthbertson, former teacher and principal at UCAP.
Barrington

212 Indian Trail
Saunderstown, RI 02874

March 9, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Catalina Martinez, and I am writing as a former employee and long-term 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 for 37 years, it has served students who need accelerated learning and a smaller, structured environment. My personal connection to the school began when I was initially hired by Rob DeBlois as his personal attendant in 1989 to help care for his needs as a quadriplegic, and to otherwise help him start the school. As a high school dropout from Providence myself, I was the perfect fit to meet with the parents and provide context for the needs of the students. I spent five of the most important years of my life helping to get UCAP off the ground. Once the school found a permanent home in Providence, and with the love and support of Rob and the broader UCAP community, I went to college. Along the way to obtaining an undergraduate and three graduate degrees, there were several instances when I was in college with former UCAP students, which was absolutely thrilling. I also had a graduate fellowship at one point that allowed me to give back to UCAP through bringing students out on Narragansett Bay for intensive field programs, which I did for several years. Today, I have a nearly 25-year career as an oceanographer, and my educational journey truly began at UCAP.

The proposed legislation, 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 the Chair and Members of the Committee to consider my personal testimony, which speaks to the life-changing impact UCAP has had and continues to have on countless Rhode Island students. By supporting 2208/H-7271, you will not only affirm the decades of successful work by UCAP but also secure its future as a vital educational option. I strongly encourage you to pass this legislation.

Sincerely,
Catalina Martinez
Catalina Martinez

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Colleen, and I serve as the 8th Grade English Language Arts teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

In my time at UCAP, I have discovered a community that brings out the best in students, both academically and personally. Since September, many of my students have already gone up 2 to 4 reading levels according to their iReady diagnostics. Students take pride in their academic growth. There is a culture at UCAP of excellence. Students hustle for good grades and take pride in their education. It is also not uncommon for a student to share with me that at their old middle school, they were fighting, skipping class, and smoking at school. I tell them honestly how hard that is for me to believe, such a different young person stands in front me! UCAP is a safe building where students are accounted for and actively participating in their education.

For my students who are accelerating, completing 9th and 10th grade credits in one year, UCAP is a saving grace. Students get held back in earlier grades for a variety of reasons, and getting an opportunity to catch up is a game changer. The impact this has on their high school graduation rate is unmatched. For current 7th graders and future students to lose out on this opportunity would truly be a loss for the city of Providence.

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.

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,
Colleen, 8th Grade ELA Teacher
Providence, RI

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Katie Cowherd, and I previously served as a Teaching Assistant, Assistant to the Director of BeyondU, and Substitute at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP) during the 2022-2023 school year.

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.

I wore many hats during my time at UCAP, and so had the unique opportunity to interact with students in different environments and classes throughout their school day. I saw firsthand how UCAP worked to challenge, support, and enrich every single student. I saw students grow an incredible amount between the day I met them in August and their last day of school in June. UCAP is able to offer a unique level of support in the classroom to really make sure that kids are being supported. When I was at UCAP, every class of students had a TA, ensuring that no student was invisible, and increasing the amount of help that was available to them throughout their day. We were able to get to know students and provide emotional and social support as well as academic. Our classes became families. In such a tiny community, students were able to make real, impactful relationships with the adults and students around them. People forged strong friendships, and were able to lean on the adults around them no matter what was happening at home. In the smaller classes, I was able to spend a lot of time working with struggling students who might have been left to their own devices in a larger setting. I was able to work with students on processing their frustration and anger about school, and help keep them out of trouble. I watched in real-time as students learned to break their own behavioral patterns and mature as students and human beings. I remember vividly working with the different adults at UCAP and being so impressed by their dedication to the development of every student and their well-being. UCAP is a place that really believes in the ability of every student and provides a unique opportunity for them to change.

In the BeyondU program, kids had the chance to deepen their bonds with each other and explore new opportunities. I watched kids become interested in rock climbing, gaming, cooking, and learn to play basketball with their friends. They had the chance to have experiences they would have never had in another kind of school setting. I saw how motivating this program was for students to stay on track in class and watched them learn to be good teammates, group mates, and friends.

UCAP is an incredible, unique place. I have never seen a school that was able to combine such a small setting with that wide range of opportunity in the way that UCAP has. For many of the students I worked with at UCAP, this was the place where they finally felt that they were not invisible to their teachers, and were able to think of themselves as learners. I worked with students who began to interrogate their own concepts of their futures, and learn to aim higher for themselves. I saw students start to believe in themselves.

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,

Katie Cowherd, M.Ed. , Special Education Teacher
Brookline, MA



Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Debra Ferrara, and I serve as the Admission Coordinator/Front Office Manager at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

I have worked at The UCAP School for 12 years and have had the privilege of witnessing many *incredible student success stories* – students who once struggled but later found their path and began to thrive. When I first started at UCAP, I worked as Rob DeBlois' assistant and learned so much from him. One of the most remarkable things I saw over the years is the number of former students who returned to UCAP just to say hello or to thank Rob for giving them the second chance they needed. Seeing those moments firsthand has shown me how deeply his dedication and compassion impacted the lives of so many young people and still does today. The UCAP School is truly one of a kind, and students deserve the opportunity to attend and benefit from everything it offers.

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,

Debra Ferrara
Admissions Coordinator

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

Dear Chairperson and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is **Diana Garlington**, and I respectfully submit this testimony in support of **S-2208 / H-7271, Strengthening UCAP for the Future**.

UCAP was founded in 1989, long before alternative education models were widely available in Rhode Island. For more than 37 years, UCAP has served students who need a different pathway to success—students who benefit from accelerated learning opportunities and a smaller, more structured educational environment. For many young people, UCAP provides not only academic support but also stability, mentorship, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Through my work in community advocacy and youth development in Providence, I have seen firsthand how important it is to have educational options that meet students where they are. Many young people face barriers that traditional school environments are not always designed to address. Programs like UCAP help keep students engaged in learning, connected to opportunity, and on a path toward graduation and career success.

S-2208 / H-7271 strengthens UCAP’s long-term sustainability by allowing additional school districts to refer students and by clarifying governance and admissions authority. These updates reflect the reality of today’s educational landscape and ensure that UCAP can continue to serve students effectively and responsibly.

At a time when many communities are working to keep young people connected to education and out of systems that can derail their futures, it is critical that Rhode Island supports programs that provide flexible and supportive learning environments. UCAP has proven its value for decades, and this legislation will help ensure that it remains a stable and accountable public option for families across our state.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support **S-2208 / H-7271**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Diana Garlington

Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Darshell Silva, and I once served as the Librarian at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

Former students from UCAP still reach out to me to tell me how they would not be where they are in life, if they had not had the chance to attend UCAP. UCAP provides students with one to one help, resources, and experiences that they would not be able to access at traditional schools.

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,

Darshell Silva
West Warwick, RI
(current Librarian at Central High School Providence, RI)

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Beckman, and I serve as the art teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

I have been the art teacher at the UCAP School for the past three years. This is a place that has made an incredible positive impact on the lives of thousands of children and their families. The UCAP School is a place where students who may have struggled in a traditional school setting are given the opportunity and encouragement they need to be successful. Every day, I see students who are gaining confidence, creativity, and courage as they realize that their voices and ideas are important. The small classes and individualized attention have been instrumental in helping many students pave the road to their success. Many students come to our school feeling discouraged about their educational experience, and we are able to help them rediscover their strengths and potential. We are a safe and structured environment where students can focus on their learning and growth.

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,
Elizabeth Beckman, Art Teacher at The UCAP School
West Warwick, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elisa Almonte-Brown, and I am a board member and the former Founder and Director of the Beyond U Program from 2007 to 2020. This program is part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21 CCLC) and is incorporated within the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

UCAP was established in 1989 by Rob DeBloise, driven by the belief that every student deserves a second chance to pursue learning in an environment that supports their holistic development. I had the privilege of working alongside Rob, exceptional educators, and many community members who were dedicated to empowering students who had previously felt disheartened by their educational and life experiences.

During my 13 years of service, UCAP supported thousands of inner-city youth. It became clear that the UCAP model is both unique and transformative. I witnessed firsthand the impact of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) as we created a safe learning space for students, allowing them to express themselves in the presence of trusted adults who prioritized their well-being.

Not a year goes by without encountering a former student. Our conversations often start with, "That was my best school experience," and end with a wistful hope that Rob had opened a high school. They fondly remember their school-based projects with their English teachers, the invaluable social stories shared by their Math teachers, and the enjoyment of participating in a diverse range of after-school programs, weekend field trips, school vacation camps, and summer activities featuring prominent enrichment opportunities throughout Rhode Island.

Bill S-2208/H-7271 strengthens UCAP's long-term sustainability by allowing additional districts to refer students and by providing clarity regarding governance and admission authority. This legislation aligns with the current educational landscape and ensures that UCAP remains a stable, accountable public option for families throughout Rhode Island.

I respectfully urge your support for this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

Elisa Almonte-Brown,
Fund For UCAP Board Member
Current Dean of Climate & Culture at The Hope Academy

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth, and I live in Providence. I am the guardian of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a difference in my nephew's life. Before UCAP, he struggled in traditional school settings. He was behind in reading and didn't have the support nor confidence until he started attending UCAP. I'm forever grateful.

At UCAP, he's found structure, support, and confidence.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lynn Prentiss, and I serve as the Executive Director (ED) at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

In 2003, I had the great privilege of working for the founding ED, Rob DeBlois, as his personal care attendance and Assistant. It was here at UCAP that I found my calling, and ultimately, my core belief system about serving students. Eighteen years later, I am the ED and have finally come home. UCAP is not just a school, a small school, or an alternative placement for kids. UCAP is an equity and student-driven community that puts its students and families needs above all else. For over 37 years, The UCAP School has been

- A safe place for our youth to learn, lead and be themselves.
- A partner of sending districts in ensuring all students achieve and grow towards proficiency expectations.
- Resilient in its efforts to meet kids where they are and support their growth towards the goals they set for themselves.
- Staffed with adults who prioritize relationships and never giving up!
- A school that prioritizes working with youth who struggle academically, to come to school consistently and to develop the kinds of skills that will be met with success in high school and beyond.
- Lead by administrators who teach, lead professional development and assist in all aspects of student life.
- Lead by staff, teachers and advisors whose convictions for serving kids effectively are unwavering.
- Lead by a student body of future lawyers, doctors, athletes, teachers, artists, musicians, leaders and laborers.
- A place that is impossible to truly understand until you have visited and spent time with staff and students.

This shift in legislation will ensure that UCAP continues to serve the students who need more because we simply have the ability and resources to provide more. 100% of our students receive academic and/or social intervention. There is no school that I know of that can say that. In addition, there is no school in our state, or outside of our state that I know of, who is working with urban students who struggle to meet academic expectations in their schools and are encouraged and supported to accelerate in grade so that they no longer would be considered a dropout for not graduating in four years. We provide extensive after school, weekend, school vacation and summer programming to kids that connects them with community-based organizations and human models that show them what IS possible for their future.

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,
Lynn Prentiss, Executive Director of The UCAP School
Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joseph Ortiz , and I serve as the Attendance Support Specialist here at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

UCAP is important to me because it gives students something every young person deserves, the opportunity to feel heard, valued, and seen. Because the school is small, the relationships between teachers and students, and even between peers, are truly special. Here, people know your name, your strengths, and the goals you are working toward. UCAP is more than just a school; it is a community where students and staff support each other to grow together. The resources, guidance, and encouragement students receive here inspires them to believe in themselves and strive for more. When I have conversations with alums or current students they express how good UCAP has been to them and how they wish they can come back or never leave. As someone who is a part of the staff here it makes me feel like we are having a positive impact.

If I could go back to my middle school years, I would have loved to be part of a place like UCAP. I was a shy kid and a tough learner, and for a long time I felt like the traditional public school system didn't really help me come out of my shell. It wasn't until I went to high school in a different city that I finally realized what I had been missing: a learning environment where students are truly supported and encouraged to grow. That's why I believe UCAP is so important. It provides a foundation for students who are searching for confidence, connection, and opportunity. Programs like this should always exist, because they give students the chance to discover their potential and become the best version of themselves.

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,
Joseph "Jojo" Ortiz
Attendance Support
Providence RI

3/20/2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jessica Spencer, and I am a former special education teacher 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 was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be a special education teacher at UCAP from 2002-2005. I left for personal reasons and have been trying to find a place as special as UCAP ever since. The commitment and dedication to giving students a positive school experience where they previously have not felt seen or heard is unmatched in other districts and states. At UCAP, the students grow academically, as expected in a school, but the “magic” happens with their emotional growth. UCAP is more than a school. It is a community where students, and adults, are accepted for who they are and celebrated for their differences. I observed students coming into UCAP for the first time leery of teachers and unable to take risks due to past educational experiences. Then, through their tenure at UCAP, I witnessed young women and men graduate with their shoulders back, head held high, self identifying as students and advocates. I have worked in multiple states and I have never experienced a place as transformative and truly special as UCAP.

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,

Jessica Spencer
Wolcott, VT

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Justin Klemanchuck, and I serve as the After School and Summer Program Director at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

For more than 37 years, UCAP has provided accelerated, personalized education to students who have struggled in traditional school settings. Our students often require intensive academic and social-emotional support, and UCAP was built specifically to meet those needs.

Through my work leading UCAP's after-school and summer programming, I have the privilege of working closely with many of our students beyond the traditional school day. I see firsthand the impact that UCAP has on young people who may have previously felt disconnected from school. Many of our students come to UCAP feeling discouraged or behind academically, but with the individualized support, structure, and relationships they build here, they begin to regain confidence in themselves and their ability to succeed.

Programs like ours provide students with safe spaces to continue learning, build relationships with trusted adults, and develop the skills they need to graduate and move forward successfully. Without UCAP's specialized approach, many of these students would struggle to find the same level of support elsewhere.

S-2208 / H-7271 would modernize UCAP's statutory framework and allow additional districts to refer students, ensuring that access to UCAP is based on student need rather than district limitations.

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,
Justin Klemanchuck
After School and Summer Program Director
Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP)
Providence, RI

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

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joe Killilea, and I serve as a 7th grade ELA teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

This is my 27th year teaching at UCAP, and I feel I have seen the school evolve into an even stronger school year by year. When I started at UCAP, our mission was to help students who had stayed back in previous grades to accelerate their learning and complete more than one grade in a year. These years sometimes felt like we were all rushing to complete grades. Over the next decade, as fewer and fewer students were retained in grade, UCAP's mission changed. We had fewer students who needed to accelerate, but we had many students who had gaps in their learning and who needed individualized attention to catch up in their learning. This mission speaks to me. I value working at a school where the whole staff talks about individual student gaps and how they might close 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,
Joe Killilea, 7th grade ELA teacher
Barrington, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Junissa Hayes, and I serve as a Teaching Partner/In house Substitute at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

The past three years working at UCAP I've witnessed so much growth on how this school has accommodated and adjusted techniques solely on the needs of the children in this space. I believe that a place that will go beyond and over for a child's education is a really special school. My favorite thing about working at UCAP is the fact that it is a small setting and we really are a family at the end of the day. Everyone knows each other's names and there's at least 1 to 2 people or staff that the kids feel comfortable with when it comes to social-emotional support. The kids feel safe and protected in a setting where they are heard, respected and actions are taken so they can receive their education in peace. The teachers at UCAP really do a phenomenal job at their duties and making sure the children are receiving exceptional education and they are always willing to alter any assignment to meet the needs of every student. Every teacher meeting consists of discussions and strategies on how we could help or improve ways to serve our children at UCAP. In a place like UCAP the goal has always been to put the children first and make sure we are doing everything in our power for them to receive the best education and essentially get them ready for high school and also the real world. I've also been the girls head basketball coach for the past 3 years, in this program the children have really demonstrated leadership, sportsmanship and what it takes to be a student-athlete to the community by upholding their grades first and still being successful on the basketball court. For more than 37 years UCAP has stood as a place where education is taken seriously, memories are cherished, alums always come back to visit and truly just a special school for those that have been able to experience it. I'm hoping that we are able to continue to fulfill the needs of these bright students for many years to come.

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,
Junissa Hayes, Teaching Partner/In house Substitute
Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kileena Rose, and I live in Providence. I am the parent of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a significant difference in my child's life.

Before UCAP, my child struggled in the Providence public school system. She faced bullying and was often in fights to defend herself, which left her feeling out of place and isolated. The mental toll of these experiences led her to question her worth and whether she was good enough. She also faced challenges engaging with the curriculum and often felt overlooked in larger classrooms, leading to frustration and a lack of motivation.

At UCAP, she has found structure, support, and confidence. The personalized attention and tailored learning environment have allowed her to thrive academically and socially. The smaller class sizes enable teachers to provide the help and time she needs to be successful and productive. Importantly, she no longer has to worry about being bullied, and this sense of security has fostered her self-esteem and peace of mind.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kileena Rose

Providence, RI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Tavares and I live in Providence, RI. I am the parent/guardian of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a difference in my child's life.

Before UCAP, my child struggled in traditional school settings. She struggled academically and didn't feel supported to work to her full potential. She didn't feel listened to by peers or teachers. Her self-esteem and confidence waned. All 3 of my children and my brother and many friends have attended UCAP through the years.

At UCAP, they have found structure, support, and confidence. Academically my child is thriving. She is encouraged daily to work to her full potential. She feels heard. Her self-esteem and confidence has soared. She feels like UCAP is a family. She loves going to school. She loves learning and it's all thanks to the teachers and staff at UCAP.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Karen Tavares
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leslie Borrayo, and I live in Providence. I am the parent/guardian of a student at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

I am writing to strongly support S-2208 / H-7271. UCAP has made a difference in my child's life.

Before UCAP, my child struggled in traditional school settings like Nathan bishop middle school, where my daughter attended before UCAP. My daughter struggled to stay out of trouble. She was involved in fights because she would get bullied or would skip class because she didn't want to deal with the rest of the kids. My daughter struggled in all her years in providence traditional schools and her grades were always so low she always seemed lost I just didn't know how I could help my daughter but it was until I decided to go and transfer my daughter out of Nathan bishop myself and bring UCAP all the paperwork they need in order to get her in because the counselor in Nathan bishop wasn't responding to them about Analí. Ever since the first day I brought Analí to UCAP I have seen the staff and every teacher in the school support Analí so much that she has improved she has been doing so much better in school. She participates. She does not fight . Shes not involved in any drama . She did cheerleading went to all her practices. I have seen a big change in her and If you ask the teachers when we had a conference I was in tears because I never saw my daughter succeed so much like she is doing now. I was so proud of her presentation and I could see all the effort my child was putting into class and still is till this day. She is a big example of why UCAP should stay in our community . The staff and teachers care they make sure every student is in class and if my daughter misses one class which she has not skipped again since her last school, the staff calls everytime she isn't in school they will call to make sure it's because she is home sick. My daughter Analí now thinks of her future and talks about what she wants to be when she's older. In the past , I could ask her what she wanted to be and she was just not interested but today shes a whole different student with a good head on her shoulders and I want to thank UCAP for everything they've done in my daughters life. They really did everything the others school could not do. I'm so grateful for them. My daughter is in a more stable environment and it would concern me if this school was removed because it's does more of an impact on à child in just one year than all these other schools where they just don't care for the students.

At UCAP, they have found structure, support, and confidence.

The possibility of students being forced to leave UCAP because of changes in district participation is deeply concerning to families like mine. Students who are succeeding deserve stability, not disruption.

This legislation would allow UCAP to continue serving students based on need and would provide long-term stability for the program. For families like ours, that stability matters.

Please support S-2208 / H-7271 to protect students and ensure UCAP can continue its important work.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Leslie Borrayo
Providence

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Anastassia Lindo, and I serve as the 7th grade science teacher at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP).

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.

This is my first year at UCAP. I have built an incredible rapport with my colleagues and students. I'm currently enrolled in a master program at URI. UCAP has been very supportive of my educational endeavors. I've seen UCAP provide students with not only a safe space to learn but a place where they can feel comfortable in their own skin. Collaborating effectively with my team members to ensure that we're maintaining a safe and equitable learning environment. Our school does the best with what it has. I'm grateful for calling this my place of work.

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,

Anastassia Lindo, 7th Grade science teacher
Providence