



After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education Act (ASPIRE Act)

Access to quality and affordable afterschool programs is critical for our youth, our working families and our communities. Students who regularly attend quality afterschool programs consistently demonstrate better academic performance and behavior in the classroom, stronger peer relations and emotional adjustment and lower incidences of delinquency. Students involved in after-school programs have significantly higher attendance rates, score higher on mathematics and writing assessments, and are more likely to graduate from high school than those who are not involved in such programs. Additionally, these programs provide students with the supervision and instruction their parents seek for them but can't provide because of longer hours in the workplace. S. 2785 was introduced in November by Senators Lincoln (AR), Franken (MN) and Bayh (IN).

Focusing After School Activities for Older Youth

The After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education Act (ASPIRE Act of 2009) is bipartisan legislation expected to be reintroduced in the House and Senate this year that would fund afterschool programs for middle and high school students to improve academic achievement, lower high school dropout rates, and spur interest in high-demand careers. If enacted, ASPIRE would support afterschool programs that give young people the opportunity to explore a variety of careers and gain exposure to career technical programs before they graduate from high school. The ASPIRE Act aims to spark students' interest in technology jobs and other growing industries by encouraging local partnerships between afterschool programs and trade, technical, and business organizations.

Highlights of the Legislation

- Authorizes a national demonstration project to create multi-state, multi-site afterschool programs. These programs would serve to expand the knowledge base for other afterschool interdisciplinary education programs and to disseminate best practices.
- Awards competitive grants to expand or establish afterschool programs that increase student engagement in learning. Grants are provided for terms of 3 to 5 years, and can be renewed for one additional term, based on performance. Grantees must match the grant amount with private funding on an equal basis.
- Supports the expansion and development of afterschool programs that demonstrate how academic content relates to career opportunities, provide opportunities for civic engagement and service learning, and equip students with marketable skills. Programs best suited for ASPIRE grants improve academic achievement by reinforcing core curriculum while also providing opportunities for students to broaden their curriculum through learning outside of the traditional classroom.
- Gives priority to programs that target services to students who are struggling in school, come from low-income families, or attend schools in a rural area.

For more information, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org

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