



## After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education Act (ASPIRE Act, H.R. 6928)

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### Background

On September 18, 2008, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN-4th) introduced the After School Partnerships Improve Results in Education (ASPIRE) Act. This legislation seeks to 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.

### Summary

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

- 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 of at least \$5,000,000 total 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.
- Appropriates \$250,000,000 for the fiscal year of enactment and sums as needed for each succeeding fiscal year. 45 percent of the funding is for national demonstration project grants, 45 percent is for state grants, and 10 percent is for national activities. These activities include providing technical assistance to states or eligible entities carrying out programs under this act, and conducting a national evaluation of program effectiveness.

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*Citizen Schools is a leading national education initiative that mobilizes thousands of adult volunteers to help improve student achievement by teaching skills-building apprenticeships after school. These programs blend real-world learning projects with rigorous academic and leadership development activities, preparing students in the middle grades for success in high school, college, the workforce, and civic life.*

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