

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

NO. 1198

H.P. 897 House of Representatives, April 9, 1987
Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and
Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative DIAMOND of Bangor.

Cosponsored by Senator PEARSON of Penobscot,
Representatives HANDY of Lewiston and BOST of Orono.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVEN

AN ACT to Implement Project ASPIRE for High
School Students in the State.

1
2
3

4 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as
5 follows:

6 Sec. 1. Project ASPIRE; University of Maine Sys-
7 tem. There is established Project ASPIRE, to be ad-
8 ministered by the Board of Trustees of the University
9 of Maine System, with technical assistance by the De-
10 partment of Educational and Cultural Services, to
11 raise the aspirations of high school students in the
12 State and to encourage them to pursue post-secondary
13 educational opportunities. Project ASPIRE is a coop-
14 erative program between the University of Maine Sys-
15 tem and school districts which choose to participate.
16 Project ASPIRE allows high school seniors to take
17 regular college courses in their own schools.

1 Sec. 2. Objectives of Project ASPIRE. The
2 project established by this Act shall be adminis-
3 tered, as determined appropriate by the board of
4 trustees, in accordance with section 3 and the fol-
5 lowing objectives.

6 1. Any program shall be implemented only with
7 local school board support and approval and shall be
8 flexible enough to allow tailoring by local school
9 boards to meet the needs of their students.

10 2. To encourage full access, no fee or tuition
11 may be charged to participating students.

12 3. Participation in the program shall not be un-
13 duly limited based on the residence of the students
14 involved.

15 4. Courses shall be offered in important and
16 relevant subjects, such as English; math; and sci-
17 ence; and shall be college level courses for which
18 credit at University of Maine System campuses may be
19 earned.

20 5. Courses shall be offered during the regular
21 school day and taught by teachers employed at the
22 school.

23 Sec. 3. Implementation and review. Project
24 ASPIRE, created by this Act, shall be implemented by
25 the board of trustees as a pilot project during
26 school years 1987-88 and 1988-89. The program shall
27 be established at a limited number of public school
28 sites chosen from among those which apply for partic-
29 ipation. These sites shall represent a balanced mix
30 of geographical location, school size and current
31 percentage of students going on to post-secondary
32 study. The purpose of the pilot projects is to pro-
33 vide experience on which to base an assessment of the
34 benefits, disadvantages, possible improvements and
35 costs of these programs. The board of trustees shall
36 review the operation of the pilot projects and report
37 their findings to the Governor and the First Regular
38 Session of the 114th Legislature by December 15,
39 1988.

1 **Sec. 4. Funding.** The cost of participating in
 2 the pilot projects to school administrative units,
 3 which choose to participate in 1987-88 and 1988-89,
 4 shall be funded through grants from funds appropri-
 5 ated by this Act on the same matching basis as the
 6 division of state and local shares in the unit's
 7 state and local allocation in the previous year. For
 8 projects which are continued after 1988-89, the cost
 9 of participation to the school administrative unit
 10 may be added to the school unit's subsidized cost un-
 11 der the Maine revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter
 12 606.

13 **Sec. 5. Appropriation.** The following funds are
 14 appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the
 15 purposes of this Act.

	<u>1987-88</u>	<u>1988-89</u>
16 <u>UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYS-</u>		
17 <u>TEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES</u>		
18		
19 All Other	\$100,000	\$100,000
20 Provides funds to		
21 the board of		
22 trustees to estab-		
23 lish pilot		
24 projects for a		
25 volunteer, cooper-		
26 ative program with		
27 school units to		
28 encourage high		
29 school seniors to		
30 pursue post - sec-		
31 ondary educational		
32 opportunities.		

1 STATEMENT OF FACT

2 Studies indicate that some high school students
3 in the State fail to pursue post-secondary education-
4 al opportunities because of low aspirations or lack
5 of confidence in their ability to do so. Other high
6 school students may find traditional high school
7 courses uninteresting or insufficiently challenging
8 which often adversely affects their performance in
9 those courses. Low aspirations and poor performance
10 in high school courses limit the ability and desire
11 of students to pursue post-secondary educational op-
12 portunities. There is a direct link between economic
13 development and post-secondary education; and one of
14 the critical elements fostering a favorable climate
15 for economic development is a skilled, thinking work
16 force. Post-secondary education is the appropriate
17 way for many people to acquire those skills. For
18 that reason it is appropriate for the State to ac-
19 tively encourage all qualified high school students
20 to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities.
21 It is the purpose of this Bill to encourage them to
22 do so by providing a mechanism for those students to
23 test and challenge their abilities in college-level
24 courses in their own high schools.

25 The United States Department of Labor data indi-
26 cate that 30 of the 37 highest paying occupations re-
27 quire at least a bachelor's degree. Maine has one of
28 the lowest percentages, 38%, of high school graduates
29 going on to college. Raising the aspirations of high
30 school students to attend college could have a posi-
31 tive effect on the State's economy and the well-being
32 of many of its citizens.

33 The purpose of this bill is to set up and test,
34 on a limited pilot project basis, a program to raise
35 the educational aspirations of Maine students. The
36 program, named Project ASPIRE, would allow high
37 school students to test their skills in college-level
38 courses in their own schools.

39 The program would be administered by the Univer-
40 sity of Maine System with cooperating local schools
41 according to objectives set out in the bill. The lo-
42 cal costs of participating in the pilots would be

1 funded by grants under this bill matching the State's
2 share of education allocation for the previous year.
3 For these projects which continue, the local cost
4 would be counted as local costs under the school fi-
5 nance formula in determining the unit's education al-
6 location in future years.

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