



College for Certain

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Aspire Partners with Great Public Schools Now To Launch the Passion and Learn Project

Innovative teacher retention project aims to cultivate teachers' passions.

Los Angeles, Calif. – Today, Aspire Public Schools announced the launch of its Passion and Learn Project with funding from [Great Public Schools Now](#). The project funds 18 Aspire teachers across four Los Angeles schools to pursue their passion in education through the development of a Passion Project.

The Passion and Learn Project is premised on the “Five Hour Rule”: invest at least five hours every week into deliberately learning. The project highlights the benefits of devoting these hours each week to reading, learning, and innovating. Creating protected time for some of our most effective teachers advances Aspire’s efforts to support teachers not just in the first years of their careers, but also as they become more experienced and effective educators over time.

“We want to give our highest performing Aspire teachers regular time to learn and experiment as a way to sustain their excellence and to retain them at Aspire,” said Kate Ford, Area Superintendent for Aspire Los Angeles. “Long term job and life satisfaction are dependent on a person feeling interested, stimulated, and engaged. To that end, our new Passion and Learn Project honors our teachers’ achievement of being high performing and recognizes the need for the time and freedom to continue growing and developing. This project is a teacher retention strategy that puts both the initiative and the power to innovate squarely in teachers’ own hands.”

This first cohort of 18 K-12 teachers, selected on the basis of effectiveness in the classroom, evidence of ongoing inspiration to colleagues, and proven commitment to innovation, are awarded an expense budget to develop and pursue a specific passion, including an up to 15-day sabbatical during the 2017-18 school year. We believe these great teachers will be inspired and energized by their passion projects in ways that will transfer powerfully to their students. They will also form a cohort led by regional leaders with the goal of learning together and sharing hopes, dreams, and challenges. The cohort will meet regularly with each other and with regional leaders to discuss each other’s projects and a syllabus of innovation-driven, research-backed readings.

“Supporting educators is one of Great Public Schools Now’s top priorities because we know that irreplaceable teachers make a profound and immediate impact in schools and communities,” said Myrna Castrejón, Executive Director for Great Public Schools Now. “We’re delighted that Aspire Public Schools has taken a creative and thoughtful approach to retaining their best teachers and believe the Passion and Learn Project can inspire educators to stay in classrooms for years while providing a model for other organizations to follow.”

The Passion and Learn Project reinforces Aspire’s commitment to the excellence, desire to innovate, and sustainability of these teachers. Through carving out time and creating collaborative communities, some of

Aspire's most effective teachers will have opportunities to be creative, innovative, and thoughtful professionals.

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About Aspire Public Schools

Aspire Public Schools operates 40 high-performing, college-preparatory public charter schools serving 16,000 students in underserved communities across California and Memphis, Tenn. Founded in 1998, Aspire is one of the nation's largest open-enrollment public charter school systems serving predominantly low-income students, delivering a rigorous *College for Certain* education to students in grades K-12. An unrelenting focus on college preparedness led to 100 percent of graduating Aspire seniors being accepted to four-year colleges or universities over the last eight years. Currently in its 18th academic year, Aspire is one of the nation's first charter school systems. Visit Aspire Public Schools at www.aspirepublicschools.org.

About Great Public Schools Now

Great Public Schools Now is a California non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring all Los Angeles students receive a high-quality education by accelerating the growth of high-quality public schools. Learn more at [Great Public Schools Now](#).

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