CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
Center for Financial Literacy

IS YOUR STATE MAKING THE GRADE?

2015 National Report Card

on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools

BY JOHN PELLETIER, DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY
AT CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
OCTOBER 20, 2015

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Links contained within are subject to change without notice. All links accurate as of October 15, 2015.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Holly Tippett for her enthusiastic efforts and dedicated research on this study; her hard work helped develop this report to fruition.
— John Pelletier, Director, Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College

Letter From the President

Here at Champlain College, personal finance education is a requirement for graduation. All students, regardless of their chosen field of study, participate in financial literacy workshops. Giving students the ability to manage their financial lives is crucial to their ability to become skilled practitioners, effective professionals and engaged global citizens.

The youth of America need to learn, even before entering college, how to develop the lifelong habits necessary for a healthy financial life. This is why we are proud that former finance executive John Pelletier leads the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain. John came to us after the Great Recession of 2007–2009, convinced that a more informed citizenry could have helped more families avoid financial hardship during and after the crash. John is a national advocate for personal finance education, from early grades through adulthood.

High school is a particularly important time in the lives of young American students, who soon will be faced with decisions regarding college loans, credit, rents and more. I am pleased that Champlain's Center for Financial Literacy has spearheaded an initiative called "Making the Grade," a report card created in 2013 and revised this fall on the personal finance education efforts of every state.

It is clear that a key to successful personal finance education in high school is the training of competent teachers. Under John's leadership, our center has piloted teacher-training programs in Vermont. We hope these programs will become a model for the nation.

The initial report card spurred several states to improve their personal finance education efforts. Congratulations to those who responded. That was and is our goal: to help improve the financial literacy of our nation. I hope readers of this report will be inspired to improve their knowledge and that of others in this critically important subject.

Sincerely,

DONALD J. LAACKMAN, PRESIDENT
Champlain College

Introduction

In the summer of 2013, Champlain College's Center for Financial Literacy released its first "National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools." To our surprise, the report card received tremendous national and local media attention and still continues to be referred to in the press and in editorial columns.

The report card is an easily digestible concept, and a grade is a nice summary of overall performance. We are glad that it has focused a national spotlight on the lack of personal finance education in many of our high schools. Media coverage is wonderful, but it is particularly gratifying when one's work truly makes a difference. For example, the Center's Report Card was referred to as a helpful resource multiple times in the April 2015 Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's report "Advancing K-12 Financial Education: A Guide for Policy Makers."

The report card was also referenced in an "Iowa Department of Education Financial Literacy Work Team Report" issued in September 2014. The report contained eight recommendations on how to increase the personal finance knowledge of students in that state. The grade of "C" given to Iowa by the Center in the report card was cited as a reason for concern.

Even more gratifying, our report card has helped inform debates regarding financial literacy in many state legislatures. It has been used by the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) in its "Assets & Opportunity Scorecard" of the states and by WalletHub's annual list "2015's The Most & Least Financially Literate States in America."

There was such a positive response to the 2013 report card that we decided to update it biennially. The following 2015 update is more comprehensive than our first version. Previously, we almost exclusively relied on data compiled from three other entities when determining a state's grade. In this report, we have taken the additional step of conducting in-depth research on each state's policies regarding personal finance education.

We have reviewed each state's graduation requirements, educational standards and assessment policies. In addition, we have reviewed state legislation and rulemaking on personal finance education. And we reached out to state education policy experts for clarification of financial literacy policies and practices during our research. We are very grateful to these state education officials for being so helpful.

According to the National Foundation for Credit Counseling's (NFCC) "2015 Consumer Financial Literacy Survey", 41% of adults gave themselves grades C, D or F with regard to their personal finance knowledge, 29% have not saved anything for retirement, 34% have no savings, 60% do not have a budget and 24% do not pay their bills on time.[1] Such negative financial outcomes and low levels of consumer knowledge and confidence make it crystal clear that financial literacy in America should be a national priority.

1 *2013 Consumer Financial Literacy Survey: http://www.nfcc.org/newsroom/FinancialLiteracy/files2013/NFCC_NBPCA_2013%20FinancialLiteracy_survey_datasheet_key%20findings_032913.pdf*

Introduction (continued)

We know that financial literacy is linked to positive outcomes like wealth accumulation, stock market participation and retirement planning, and to avoiding high-cost alternative financial services like payday lending and auto title loans. Conversely, financial illiteracy in part led to the Great Recession. To minimize the impact of any future financial crisis, Americans must be educated in personal finance. A great place to start is with our students. In too many of our states, our youth receive little, if any, personal finance training in elementary school, middle school, high school and college.

With our high school students working hard in a new academic year, it is an appropriate time to reflect on how our high schools provide personal finance education to their students. After eight months of intensive research, our Center has graded all 50 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) on their efforts to produce financially literate high school graduates. What the grading shows is that we have a long way to go before we are a financially literate nation.

In this 2015 report card, we attempt to measure how well our high schools are providing personal finance education. Although there have been improvements made over the past few years, more can be done. When it comes to report cards, everyone wants an A. But when the Center graded 50 states and D.C. on their financial literacy education, only five states earned an A.

Sadly, 26 states received grades of C, D or F. Less than half were given grades that you would want your children to bring home from school—grades A or B, and 29% had grades of D or F.

As you will see in this report, a B grade does not necessarily mean that a state requires an adequate level of instruction. The Center estimates that half of Grade B states allocate less than one-quarter of a half-year course in high school to personal finance topics. This means that students in 10 of these Grade B states receive between 7 and 14 hours of personal finance instruction in all of high school. In fact, our research identifies just 10 states that appear to require 15 or more hours of personal finance education in high school.

Grade	2013 Report Card	2015 Report Card*
Grade A	14% of states (7 states)	10% of states (5 states)
Grade B	26% of states (13 states)	39% of states (20 states)
Grade C	16% of states (8 states)	22% of states (11 states)
Grade D	22% of states (11 states)	6% of states (3 states)
Grade F	22% of states (11 states)	24% of states (12 states)

**May not equal 100% due to rounding.*

Why High Schools?

Clearly, personal finance education should start early at both home and school. But measurement is very hard to do in people's homes and in primary school. There is no national effort to meaningfully track data on this topic at the elementary and middle school levels. College data is not gathered at a national level on this topic, and for many individuals, educational opportunities end with high school anyway. Fortunately, personal finance education data can be obtained for state-by-state comparison purposes at the high school level. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 68% of 2014 high school graduates were enrolled in colleges or universities.[2] For those graduates who choose to go on to higher education, personal finance education in college is often scant and scattered, with few colleges offering a personal finance elective and even fewer requiring personal finance instruction as a graduation requirement. Regardless of when a young person's formal education ends, they will be thrust into situations where they need to know how to manage daily living expenses. So, high school seems like the best and most logical place to deliver personal finance education to America's youth.

Admittedly, a high school focus could omit some of the students who have dropped out of high school. The National Center for Education Statistics indicates that the high school dropout rate (the percentage of 16- through 24-year-olds who are not enrolled in school and have not earned a high school credential) was 7% in 2013.[3]

The Case for High School Financial Literacy

Personal finance education in high school provides students with the knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial well-being. Here are just some of the reasons our young people need to learn about personal finance:

- The number of financial decisions an individual has to make continues to increase, and the variety and complexity of financial products continues to grow. Young people often do not understand debit and credit cards, mortgages, banking, investment and insurance products and services, payday lending, rent-to-own, credit reports, credit scores, etc.

- Many students do not understand that one of the most important financial decisions they will make in their lives is choosing whether they should pursue post-secondary education or not after high school, and if they decide to pursue additional education, what field to specialize in.

- Most college students borrow to finance their education, yet often do so without fully understanding how much debt is appropriate for their education or the connection between their area of study and the income level that they can expect upon graduation. Many students attend college without understanding financial aid, loans, debt, credit, inflation and budgeting.

2 *United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Economic News Release, College Enrollment and Work Activity of 2014 High School Graduates." http://www.bls.gov/news.release/hsgec.nr0.htm*

3 *U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics and the Institute of Education Sciences. "Fast Facts, Dropout Rates." https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=16*

The Case for High School Financial Literacy (continued)

- At many colleges, financial literacy education is largely composed of brief, federally mandated entrance and exit loan counseling for students. Student feedback indicates that most do not comprehend the information presented, and view it as one more requirement of the financial aid process rather than a learning opportunity.

- Employee pension plans are disappearing and being replaced by defined contribution retirement programs, which impose greater responsibilities on young adults to save and invest, and ultimately spend retirement savings wisely. If they fail to do this, they could become a significant economic burden on our society.

- A recent study indicated that only 24% of Millennials (ages 18 to 34) surveyed could answer four out of five questions correctly in a financial literacy quiz.[4] By comparison, 48% of Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1962) were able to answer four out of five of these quiz questions correctly. While Boomers should be more knowledgeable, our young citizens are dangerously illiterate in this area.

- On an international financial literacy test of 15-year-olds, the U.S. ranked behind China, the Czech Republic, Poland and Latvia, and was statistically tied with Russia—what a "Sputnik moment."[5]

- A Charles Schwab survey indicated that parents are nearly as uncomfortable talking to their children about money as they are discussing sex.[6]

- Seven in 10 college students from the Class of 2013 graduated with student debt that averaged $28,400 and delinquency rates on student loans continue to soar.[7, 8]

Financial literacy leads to better personal finance behavior. There are a variety of studies that indicate that individuals with higher levels of financial literacy make better personal finance decisions. Those who are financially illiterate are less likely to have a checking account, rainy day emergency fund or retirement plan, or to own stocks. They are also more likely to use payday loans, pay only the minimum amount owed on their credit cards, have high cost mortgages, and have higher debt and delinquency levels.

As a society, we need more training programs that increase the number of financially literate citizens who are able to make better and wiser financial decisions in their own lives. Such programs are not just good for the individual but also helpful to society. The 2008 financial crisis clearly shows that a lack of financial literacy was one of the factors contributing to poor financial decisions by individuals, and that the choices made had negative consequences on our country.

4 *Mottola, Gary. "The Financial Capability of Young Adults—A Generational View." FINRA Foundation Financial Capability Insights. http://www.usfinancialcapability.org/downloads/FinancialCapabilityofYoungAdults.pdf*

5 *Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). "PISA 2012 Results: Students and Money: Financial Literacy Skills for the 21st Century (Volume VI)." PISA, OECD Publishing. http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-volume-vi.pdf*

6 *Charles Schwab & Co. "2011 Teens & Money Survey Findings, Insights Into Money Attitudes, Behaviors and Expectations of 16- To 18-Year-Olds." http://www.schwabmoneywise.com/public/file/P-4192268/110526-SCHWAB-TEENSMONEY.pdf*

7 *The Institute for College Access & Success and The Project on Student Debt. 2014. "Student Debt And The Class of 2013." Retrieved from http://ticas.org/sites/default/files/legacy/fckfiles/pub/classof2013.pdf*

8 *Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Research and Statistics Group, Microeconomic Studies. "Quarterly Report on Household Debt and Credit." http://www.newyorkfed.org/householdcredit/2015-q1/data/pdf/HHDC_2015Q1.pdf*

The Case for High School Financial Literacy (continued)

As former President Bill Clinton recently stated, financial literacy is "a very fancy term for saying spend it smart, don't blow it, save what you can and know how the economy works."[9] Financial literacy, just like reading, writing and arithmetic, builds human capital by empowering individuals with the ability to create "capital for humans" to use in their lifetime—for buying a home, going to college, having a rainy day and a retirement fund. Financial literacy education is not a handout but rather a helping hand that gives individuals the knowledge and skills that can help them solve financial problems or prevent difficulties from occurring.

We would not allow a young person to get in the driver's seat of a car without requiring driver's education, and yet we allow our youth to enter the complex financial world without any related education. An uneducated individual armed with a credit card, a student loan and access to a mortgage can be nearly as dangerous to themselves and their community as a person with no training behind the wheel of a car.

The basics of personal financial planning—teaching young people about money, its value, how to save, invest and spend it, and how not to waste it—need to be taught in school and at home. When they graduate, high school students should, at a minimum, understand how credit works and know how to budget, save and invest. They should also understand the connection between income and careers and how student loans work. And they need to understand the critical importance of rainy day and retirement funds, and the amounts they will need in those funds.

Methodology

At the end of this report are brief overviews of how each state approaches personal finance education in their public high schools. The Center's research includes reviews of high school graduation requirements, academic standards as they relate to personal finance and state laws, regulations and rules that relate to how each state delivers personal finance, education in their public high schools.

The state grades in this report are also based on a review of financial literacy legislation summaries maintained by the National Conference of State Legislatures for the last 14 years (1999 to 2015; however, only 2010 to 2015 are currently accessible on their website); on the Council for Economic Education's "2014 Survey of the States", Economic and Personal Finance Education in our Nation's Schools; and on data compiled by the Jump$tart Coalition on Personal Financial Literacy (their online data on state financial education requirements). For more information, see the "Sources Used For Grading the States and Additional References and Resources" section of this report.

As thorough as the Center's researchers tried to be, it is possible that some of the grades in this report are based on incomplete or inaccurate information and thus might be too severe or too lenient for a particular state. We want the grades to be based on the best information possible, and so we welcome any corrections or additional data for future updates. We encourage you to send any information that you believe we should be made aware of to cfl@champlain.edu.

9 *Klein, Asher and Jackie Giordano. "Bill Clinton Visits USC to Teach Kids Value of Financial Literacy." Channel 4, Southern California. http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Bill-Clinton-Visits-USC-to-Host-Financial-Literacy-Event-282070241.html*

Guide to Grading System

Grade	Percent and Number of States (plus D.C.)*
Grade A	10% (5 states)
Grade B (15 or more hours of instruction)	10% (5 states)
Grade B (less than 15 hours of instruction or hours of instruction cannot be estimated)	29% (15 states)
Grade C	22% (11 states)
Grade D	6% (3 states)
Grade F	24% (12 states)

**May not equal 100% due to rounding.*

The Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College has graded all 50 states and the District of Columbia on their efforts to teach the ABC's of financial literacy to high school students. The grading system used in this report has been modified slightly from the 2013 report card. The grading was changed to take into account new information compiled by the Center as part of its primary research on each state's high school education policies. The previous report was based primarily on research conducted by third-party, non-profit organizations. As discussed below, state assessment testing on personal finance concepts is no longer part of the grading methodology in 2015. The Center did not believe that testing in this area was currently at a level to warrant giving a state extra credit for their efforts (with the exception of Utah, which still received the highest grade possible despite this change). See the section of the report below titled "Why Assessments Are Not Part of the 2015 Grading Methodology."

For an interactive version of this report card, visit the Center's website: http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/report-making-the-grade

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE GRADING SYSTEM

A

The state requires personal finance instruction as a graduation requirement that is equal to a one-semester, half-year course (minimum of approximately 60 hours of personal finance instruction in an academic year).

B

The state mandates personal finance education as part of a required course. In some of these states, local school districts determine whether the personal finance instruction requirement is met through a stand-alone course offering or embedded in another course.

C

The state has substantive personal finance topics in its academic standards that the local school districts are expected to teach. Implementation is left to local school districts with no material oversight by the state. There is no specific delivery mechanism identified for financial literacy instruction. A state may also receive a C grade if it requires a stand-alone personal finance elective course.

D

The state has modest levels of personal finance education in its academic standards that local school districts are expected to teach. Implementation is left to local school districts with no material oversight by the state. There is no specific delivery mechanism identified for financial literacy instruction.

F

The state has virtually no requirements for personal finance education in high school. High school students in these states are able to graduate from high school without ever having the opportunity to take a course that includes financial literacy instruction.

It is important to note that states with a grade of C, D or F have local school districts that may require a stand-alone financial literacy course as a graduation requirement. When this occurs, it is a local school district policy and not a statewide policy. This report only grades the educational policies of state governments, not local school districts.

The Center's grading system is based on the belief that, at a minimum, all high school students should be required to take a designated course that includes personal finance topics—even if these topics are just a modest part of the overall course offering.

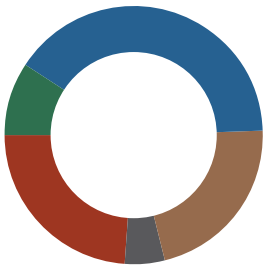
We recognize that creating a stand-alone course or other course in which personal finance is embedded can be difficult to achieve. States often tell us that adding a personal finance course requirement is just not possible due to local control issues.

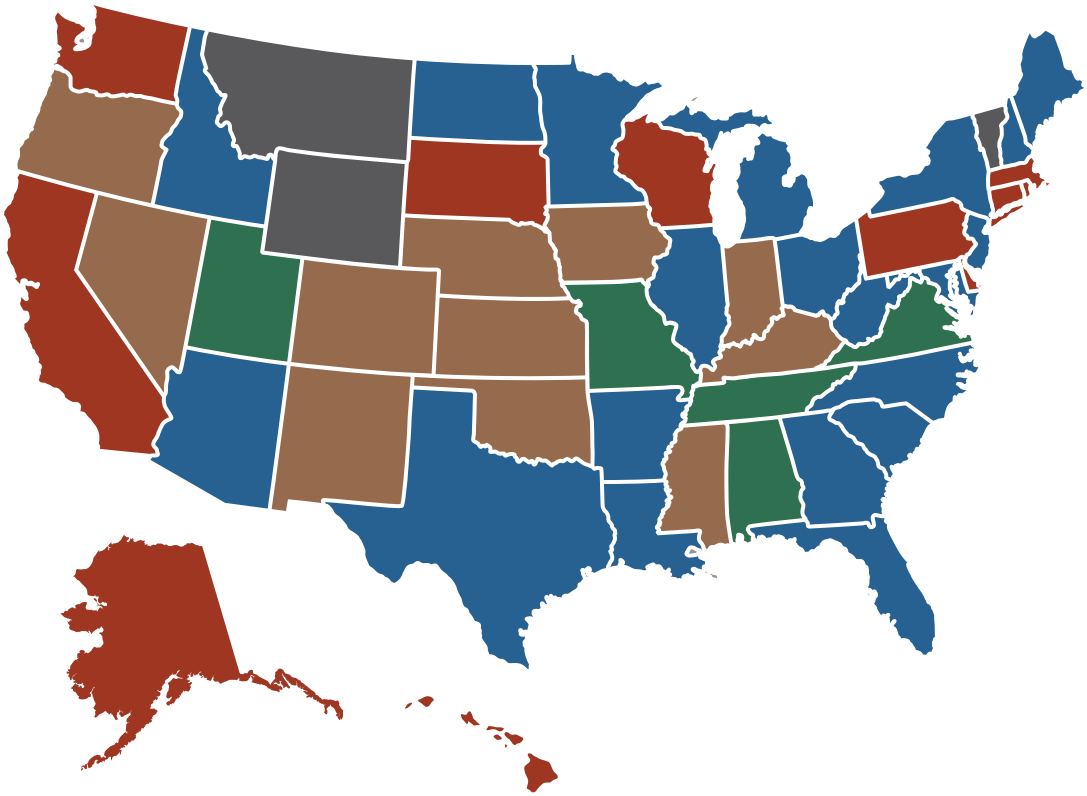
A Quick Guide to the Grading System (continued)

Ironically, many of these states have adopted national educational standards, such as the Common Core for high school English and mathematics, and other national standards for science, social studies and physical education. We believe that if a state can use national models to mandate what must be taught in certain topics like mathematics, language arts, sciences and social studies, they can follow a similar path to requiring instruction in financial literacy.

State-by-state grades are as follows, with expanded explanations for each state's grade in the "State Summaries" section at the back of this report.

A	B	C	D	F
9.8%	39.2%	21.6%	5.9%	23.5%
5 STATES	20 STATES	11 STATES	3 STATES	12 STATES





How Do Grade A & B States Deliver Personal Finance to High School Students?

Course Offering	Grade A States
Full-year course—half of course (60 hours of instruction) is dedicated to personal finance topics	Alabama (career preparedness course) and Virginia (economics and personal finance course)
Half-year stand-alone, personal finance course	Tennessee and Utah
Local school district determines whether personal finance instruction is delivered as a half-year course or as half of a full-year course	Missouri (If full-year course offering is used, it is offered in social studies or practical arts.)

Course Offering	Grade B States
Embed personal finance instruction into half-year economics course	Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina (civics and economics course), South Carolina and Texas
Full-year course—less than half of course is dedicated to personal finance topics	West Virginia (Civics for the Next Generation)
Subject to local school district control, personal finance instruction is offered as either a stand-alone course or embedded into other required courses (generally through economics, civics, family and consumer sciences, business, life skills, career readiness or mathematics courses)	Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, North Dakota and Ohio
Embed personal finance instruction into half-year civics course with a section on free enterprise	Louisiana
Require nine weeks of consumer education instruction	Illinois

State Assessments by Grade

A

Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, Utah & Virginia

Tennessee and Utah both require a half-year course in personal finance as a graduation requirement. Alabama and Virginia both require that personal finance instruction be given as part of a full-year course. Based on our review of the educational standards of these full-year courses, we concluded that students in these states are receiving the equivalent of a half-year personal finance course. Missouri allows local school districts to determine whether the personal finance instruction is delivered in a stand-alone half-year course or is embedded as half of the instruction in a full-year course.

Utah—the only state in the nation worthy of the Grade A+

The state of Utah should be commended for its efforts. Utah requires that all high school students take a half-year course exclusively dedicated to personal finance topics, and students are required to take an end-of-course assessment examination created and administered by the state. The state requires that educators teaching this course obtain a specific endorsement in general financial literacy that includes coursework on financial planning, credit and investing, and consumer, personal and family economics. The state also provides its educators with tools, resources and many professional development opportunities. General financial literacy is a funded mandate in Utah.

B

Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas & West Virginia

States with a B grade have personal finance topics in their educational standards and require local school districts to implement them. To graduate from high school in a B state, a student must take a course that includes personal finance topics. Most states identify a specific course that must be taken to graduate from high school that includes financial literacy instruction. Other states have very specific standards that must be taught as a graduation requirement but leave how the instruction is implemented up to local school districts.

These states require that personal finance topics be taught and embed them in economics, civics, family and consumer sciences, business, life skills, career readiness or mathematics courses. The chart on the previous page titled "How Do Grade A & B States Deliver Personal Finance Education to High School Students?" shows the different types of courses in which personal finance topics are required to be taught.

Not All Grade B States Are Created Equal

Grade B implies that the state is doing a fine job of providing financial literacy. However, the fact that a state requires personal finance instruction as a graduation requirement is not enough. The amount of instruction required should be a component of the grading process. For each Grade B state, the Center has looked at the educational standards of the required course and has estimated the amount of time allocated to the topic of personal finance based on the Carnegie unit system of 120 hours of instruction for a full-year course and 60 hours of instruction for a half-year course.

State Assessments by Grade (continued)

For example, if a half-year economics course has 45 standards or learning objects and 15 standards are personal finance in nature, then we would estimate that a third of the course is allocated to financial literacy topics, or approximately 20 hours of instruction. For purposes of these calculations, we have assumed that approximately equal instruction time is allocated to all 45 standards.

Based on this methodology, we identified five states that appear to require that one-quarter or more of a half-year course, which is 15 or more hours of instruction, be dedicated to financial literacy topics. We also found 10 states where the personal finance instruction appears to be less than one-quarter of a half-year course and ranges from approximately 7 to 14 hours of personal finance instruction in high school. Five of the states allow local districts to implement the financial literacy education requirement either through a stand-alone course or another course with personal finance embedded in it. It was impossible to estimate the hours of instruction in these states. The chart below summarizes these results.

For grading purposes, the Center has treated all Grade B states identically in the "State Summaries" section. However, based on our research, it is possible to provide further refinement and analysis of these Grade B states; therefore, we have further divided the Grade B states based on our estimates of the intensity of the required personal finance instruction. The Center was surprised by the wide variability of the amount of instruction required in these Grade B states. This analysis is set forth in the chart below. States received the "refined" grade of B+, B or B- depending on whether courses allocated more than, equal to, or less than one-quarter of the course to personal finance topics.

States with a Grade B	Grade B Refined	Estimated Number of Hours of Financial Literacy Instruction Required in a 60-Hour, One-Semester Course	Estimated Percentage of Financial Literacy Instruction Required in a 60-Hour, One-Semester Course
Illinois	B+	30–38 Hours	50% to 63%
Florida	B+	37 Hours	62%
Georgia	B+	16 Hours	27%
New York	B	15 Hours	25%
Texas	B	15 Hours	25%
West Virginia	B-	14 Hours	23%
Arkansas	B-	13 Hours	22%
Arizona	B-	12 Hours	20%
North Carolina	B-	12 Hours	20%

See next page

State Assessments by Grade (continued)

States with a Grade B	Grade B Refined	Estimated Number of Hours of Financial Literacy Instruction Required in a 60-Hour, One-Semester Course	Estimated Percentage of Financial Literacy Instruction Required in a 60-Hour, One-Semester Course
Idaho	B-	11 Hours	18%
New Hampshire	B-	10 Hours	17%
Minnesota	B-	9 Hours	15%
Michigan	B-	8 Hours	13%
Louisiana	B-	7.5 Hours	13%
South Carolina	B-	7 Hours	12%
Maine*	Local Implementation	Cannot be estimated	Cannot be estimated
Maryland*	Local Implementation	Cannot be estimated	Cannot be estimated
New Jersey*	Local Implementation	Cannot be estimated	Cannot be estimated
North Dakota*	Local Implementation	Cannot be estimated	Cannot be estimated
Ohio*	Local Implementation	Cannot be estimated	Cannot be estimated

**These states have personal finance standards that are required to be taught, but how they are taught is left up to the local school districts, and the topics can be taught in a stand-alone course or integrated into another required course.*

Grade B and the Local Control Issue: Local control done right—Maryland

Maryland is a great example of a state that has properly balanced local control and personal finance education. It requires that very specific and robust personal finance topics be taught in public high schools, but districts are allowed to determine how these topics should be integrated into the curriculum. Maryland has 24 school districts. Seven of these districts require a stand-alone personal finance course as a graduation

State Assessments by Grade (continued)

requirement, and the remaining districts embed financial literacy instruction into other courses required for graduation. Maryland also provides its educators with curriculum, tools and continuing education opportunities to help them meet this requirement and closely monitors how each school district is delivering personal finance education to its students.

Few states leave such topics as graduation requirements and minimum educational standards exclusively to local school districts to determine. There are often many requirements placed on local districts with regard to academic standards, graduation requirements and assessments.

Based on our research, we know that it is possible to maintain a local-control philosophy and have students obtain personal finance instruction prior to high school graduation. We do not believe, as some states have argued, that local control and required personal finance education are incompatible.

Five Grade B states have implemented significant and substantive personal finance education requirements and have allowed a high degree of local control with regard to the delivery mechanism used, with Maryland leading the way.

These states require that personal finance topics be taught to all students as a graduation requirement but leave the implementation to the local districts. Local control with state oversight confirming that school districts are meeting their obligations can be a successful way of delivering personal finance education.

C

Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma & Oregon

States were given the grade of C because they require that substantive personal finance topics be taught in high school by inclusion of these topics in the states' instructional guidelines. However, it is left up to the local school board to determine how and where to integrate these topics into the classroom.

Unlike Grade B states, Grade C states do not require students to take a course with personal finance topics included. There is often a large difference between graduation requirements—something all students must do—and instructional guidelines—something all schools must provide instruction on. It appears that in some of these states this requirement can be met by offering an elective, which means that many students will graduate without any exposure to these personal finance topics if such an elective is offered.

It is not clear how the states determine if the local schools are in fact meeting requirements. The states are not monitoring how the required academic standards are being taught at the local school district level. Two of the states, Mississippi and New Mexico, earned a C grade because they require that each high school offer a personal finance course as an elective. This at least gives students and parents the choice of taking such a course.

State Assessments by Grade (continued)

D

Montana, Vermont & Wyoming

Those states receiving a D grade require that modest levels of personal finance topics be included in instructional guidelines and that the school districts implement them. Schools are not instructed to include the topics in any course needed for graduation. In Grade D states, personal finance concepts are often taught in elective courses, if they are taught at all. How these standards are implemented is left up to the school districts. It is not clear how the states ensure that the schools teach these topics. These states are not monitoring how the required academic standards are being taught at the local school district level.

F

Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Washington & Wisconsin

These states have few requirements or none at all for personal finance education in high school. High school students in these states are able to graduate without ever having the opportunity to take a course that includes financial literacy instruction.

Not All Grade F States Are Created Equal

This report card is student-centric in nature. If a student in the state can graduate without ever having the opportunity to take a course or otherwise being exposed to personal finance, then the state receives the grade of F. Obtaining a Grade F does not mean that the state is ignoring these important issues. California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin have created programs that promote financial literacy education in high schools. However, this support does not eliminate the possibility of a student leaving high school without access to any financial literacy instruction prior to graduation.

Wisconsin is a great example of a Grade F state doing many things to promote financial literacy in public high schools. Wisconsin created an Office of Financial Literacy in 2000 and a Governor's Council on Financial Literacy in 2010, which gives awards and grants to individuals and corporations for financial literacy education activities. Yet, according to the council, only 44% of Wisconsin school districts have a one-semester financial literacy requirement. For many years, Wisconsin has hosted the National Institute on Financial & Economic Literacy, which has provided teacher training to hundreds of educators. In 2006, Wisconsin also created a nationally recognized Model Academic Standards for Personal Financial Literacy for school districts to use when implementing financial literacy curricula into their classrooms.

Although Washington has been given a Grade F in this report, new legislation went into effect in the summer of 2015 that should improve their grade in any future report card. The grade given to Washington in the future is entirely dependent upon how the Washington Superintendent of Education implements this new legislative requirement.

Percent of Public High School Population by Grades

States that have a personal finance instruction graduation requirement that is estimated at 15 or more hours of instruction are clearly making this type of instruction an important part of their students' education. Only 20% of states meet this standard, but the good news is that this rigorous standard exists in some fairly large states, meaning that approximately 37% of the public high school student population must meet the standard.

Personal Finance Hours of Instruction in High School	Public High School Student Population*	Percentage of Public High School Students Resident in These States**	Percentage of States (and D.C.)**	Number of States (and D.C.)
Grades A, B+ and B: States requiring 15 to 60 hours of personal finance instruction	5,449,575	37%	20%	10 States
Grades B-, C, D and F: States requiring less than 15 hours in personal finance instruction	8,024,133	54%	71%	36 States
Grade B states where it is not possible to estimate the number of hours of instruction required by the state	1,279,517	9%	10%	5 States

**Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, and National Center for Education Statistics "Digest of Education Statistics, 2012."*

***May not equal 100% due to rounding.*

Making the Grade: Population and State Percentages

Grade	States	Public High School Student Population*	Percentage of Public High School Population in the United States**	Number of States (and D.C.)	Percentage of States (and D.C.)**
A	Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia and Utah	1,314,596	8.9%	5 States	9.8%
B+	Florida, Georgia and Illinois	1,905,324	12.9%	3 States	5.9%
B	New York and Texas	2,229,655	15.1%	2 States	3.9%
B-	Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina and West Virginia	2,272,900	15.4%	10 States	19.6%
B (local control)	Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, North Dakota and Ohio	1,279,517	8.7%	5 States	9.8%
C	Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Oregon	1,850,770	12.5%	11 States	21.6%
D	Montana, Vermont and Wyoming	95,889	0.6%	3 States	5.9%
F	Alaska, California, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin	3,804,574	25.8%	12 States	23.5%

**Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, and National Center for Education Statistics "Digest of Education Statistics, 2012."*

***May not equal 100% due to rounding.*

Why Assessments Are Not Part of the 2015 Grading Methodology

In the 2013 report card, the Center used personal finance assessments as part of its grading criteria. The 2015 report card no longer uses assessments as part of the methodology. The Center certainly is in favor of high school students taking a professionally created end-of-course financial literacy test. Such a test should be substantive in nature, created by experts, and subjected to a field test, validation study and thorough psychometric review. As you will see in the section below titled "Why We Need A National Financial Literacy Assessment Exam," such a high-quality examination does not yet exist. The state that is closest to meeting this stringent requirement is Utah, and they are the only state that has been given an A+ grade in this report card.

In 2013, the report card relied on data compiled by the Council for Economic Education (CEE) in its 2011 Survey of the States and on data compiled by the Jump$tart Coalition. The 2011 CEE Survey of the States identified five states that required student testing on personal finance topics. Those states were Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana and Tennessee. The 2014 CEE survey identified six states that required student testing on personal finance topics. Those states were Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, and Texas. The only state referenced in both surveys was Georgia. Needless to say, this material level of change in a few years raised concerns. Based on this concern, the Center contacted all states in the 2011 and 2014 surveys that indicated which they required student testing.

The Center concluded that there was confusion in some states about the meaning of "student testing" on these CEE surveys. Every high school course where a grade is given requires some level of student testing. That is not the same as a state-mandated test created and administered by experts, which has been scientifically validated. Some states told CEE in their survey responses that student testing was required even though the state had not created or administered a professional financial literacy assessment.

During its research, the Center identified five states that are requiring assessment of varying degrees of quality and intensity on personal finance topics as identified in the chart on the following page.

Why Assessments Are Not Part of the 2015 Grading Methodology (continued)

State	2015 Report Card Grade	2013 Report Card Grade**	Description of the State's Assessment Program
Utah	A+	A	Law requires end-of-course assessment created and administered by the state.
Georgia	B	A*	Requires an end-of-course assessment created and administered by the state for the required economics course. The course and the assessment include personal finance topics/questions.
Missouri	A	A	Requires an end-of-course assessment created and administered by the state for local districts that meet the personal finance education requirement by embedding topics into another required year-long course. Students who take a stand-alone personal finance course are not required to take this end-of-course assessment.
Colorado	C	B*	Law requires that assessment given to students must align with the state financial literacy education standards. Modest levels of questions on these topics are included in mathematics and social studies high school assessments.
Kansas	C	B*	Law requires the state Board of Education to include questions relating to personal finance in the statewide assessment for mathematics or social studies. Modest levels of questions on these topics are included in the relevant assessments.

**State's higher grade in 2013 report card was solely due to the inclusion of assessments in the grading criterion in the 2013 report card.*

***The following states received higher grades in 2013 report card based on assessment requirements noted in the 2011 CEE Survey of the States report that the Center has confirmed are not required by the state: Idaho and Louisiana.*

How Can My State Flunk When My Child's School Has a Personal Finance Class?

We recognize that there are schools in states in the Grade C, D and F categories that offer and sometimes even mandate personal finance training. So readers from such districts might be shocked or angered by the grade their state has received. These wonderful, yet isolated, cases are due to local control, not a state requirement. Such instruction, when it occurs, is the result of the actions of local school boards, superintendents, principals and/or teachers. The states are not requiring that this be taught. So, these pockets of excellence are financial literacy islands within each state.

Many of the states that have poor grades have advocates in their legislature who are trying to do something. In many of these states, bills are routinely introduced to promote personal finance but are never passed.

In Vermont (Grade D), the state where Champlain College's Center for Financial Literacy is located, the quality of the instruction is entirely dependent upon the support of the local superintendents, principals, school boards and, most importantly, teachers. Technical education students (those entering into trades after graduation) are the most likely to receive personal finance training. Some high schools offer a personal finance elective and some do not. Providing only a personal finance elective will result in the majority of students graduating without any financial sophistication training. Approximately 10% of Vermont high schools mandate personal finance as a graduation requirement. Vermont is a typical example of a state with Grades D or F.

When Should Personal Finance Be Taught in High School?

High school students should not take personal finance instruction prior to grades 11 or 12. Personal finance concepts are most relevant just prior to the time when the student will be managing their daily living expenses. Students should be taught shortly before they are thrust into financial independence, when they either get jobs or go to college.

Studies of adults and students consistently show that personal finance knowledge and skills obtained in a classroom setting fade over time. This is not shocking or surprising. The same thing could probably be said for foreign languages and mathematics. That is why the best time to teach these topics to students is right before they will use them in real-life situations.

Alabama (Grade A) recommends that these topics be taught in grade 9. Oklahoma (Grade C) has a passport requirement where these topics can be taught at any time in grades 7–12. A local school district could technically meet this requirement by providing all of the required instruction in middle school. California (Grade F) suggests that if a school district teaches these topics it should occur in grade 9. The Center does not believe that the sole provision of this type of education in middle school or in grades 9 or 10 is optimal.

The Five Keys to High School Financial Literacy

So what are the elements to a successful financial literacy educational program at the high school level?

THERE ARE FIVE KEYS TO SUCCESS:

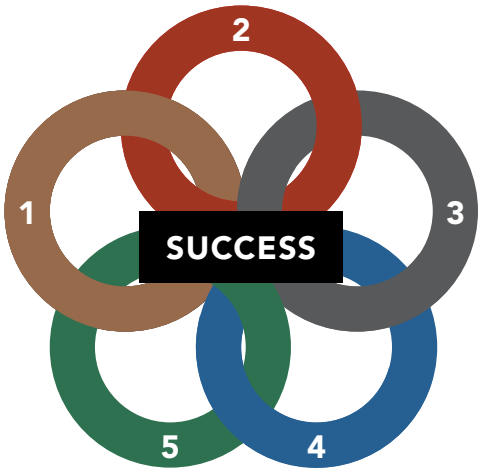
1 Financial literacy topics must be taught in a course that students are required to take as a graduation requirement.

2 Teacher training is critical. To effectively educate our students about personal finance, we need confident, well-trained educators.

3 Funding is needed to ensure that these classes are offered to all high school students.

4 In order to make sure that the high school classroom personal finance training is working, we need to give students quality standard assessments on knowledge and behaviors.

5 Educators need easy access to quality curriculum, lesson plans, calculators, videos, games, applications, activities, projects, case studies, articles and expert volunteer speakers. This can often be provided to educators online by the state.



Financial Literacy Education Should Be a High School Graduation Requirement

Requiring an exclusive course in personal finance, or as a material part of a half-year course for graduation, will result in a high-intensity level of personal finance training. A half-year, semester-long course provides 60 hours of classroom instruction time (based on a Carnegie unit). One-quarter or more of such a class allocated to financial literacy will result in 15 or more hours of personal finance instruction. These material amounts of instruction time exclude students' efforts on financial literacy homework.

The financial literacy topics taught should be based on quality learning objectives and standards. These standards should compare favorably with highly regarded, nationally and/or internationally recognized financial literacy standards. Three source documents to use when judging these educational standards should include: (1) Jump$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy's fourth edition (2015) of the "National Standards in K–12 Personal Finance Education"; (2) Council for Economic Education's 2013 "National Standards for Financial Literacy"; and (3) Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment's (PISA) 2013 publication "PISA 2012 Assessment and Analytical Framework: Mathematics, Reading, Science, Problem Solving and Financial Literacy".

Teacher Training is Critical

Naturally, we look to our teachers to help young students become financially literate. But educators need financial literacy training. Educators must be given the confidence, skills and curriculum tools that they need to successfully bring personal finance education into their high school classrooms.

In 2011, the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College conducted a survey regarding high school personal finance education that was sent to all Vermont administrators (principals, assistant principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents and curriculum directors).[10] Of the respondents, 95% felt that they had teachers currently on staff who could teach personal finance, based on the Jump$tart Coalition educational standards.

Ironically, these same administrators concluded that there was a woeful lack of personal finance instruction available for educators. Having someone who "could" possibly teach a financial literacy course is very different from having a highly trained educator teach a personal finance course.

Financial literacy educators come from different disciplines. An educator who is keenly interested in financial literacy topics may have never received professional training on how to teach a personal finance course. Just imagine the reaction of parents if untrained educators were allowed to teach language arts, mathematics, history, civics or a foreign language.

Teacher training in financial literacy is critical to educators' confidence and their ability to be effective, yet it is often not required and may not even be readily available to them. The Center's high school and middle school graduate level financial literacy educator training pilot program, consisting of 45 hours of instruction, was the focus of a study that measured the impact of similar, but not identical, educator training programs conducted by different groups in three states. Each site provided robust educator training on personal finance topics and, through surveys, obtained information on the educator confidence, attitudes and behaviors before and after the education intervention.

The percentage of participants who agreed they had the knowledge necessary to effectively teach their students about personal finance increased from 38% before the intervention to 80% after the intervention.[11] After the training was completed, the educators made positive financial changes in their own lives. For example, the percentage of participants who took steps to improve their credit scores increased from 39% before the training to 71% after the training. This study shows how impactful educator training in this area can be.

A 2009 survey of more than 1,200 K–12 teachers, students in college learning to be educators and their professors sought to better understand participants' training and education in personal finance, their opinions about the importance of financial education and their capacity to teach these topics. Here are some of the findings of this study:[12]

10 *Center for Financial Literacy, Champlain College. "Financial Literacy Education in Vermont High Schools: A Snapshot." http://www.champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy/cfl-resources/financial-literacy-education-in-vermont-high-schools*

11 *Hensley, Billy. "Research Report, Content-Based Teacher Professional Development Pilot Project." National Endowment for Financial Education and Jump$tart Teacher Training Alliance. Retrieved from http://www.jumpstart.org/assets/files/Teacher%20Alliance/J$TTA%20Pilot%20Research%20Report.pdf*

12 *Way, Wendy and Karen Holden. "Teachers' Background and Capacity to Teach Personal Finance: Results of a National Study." National Endowment for Financial Education. http://www.nefe.org/Portals/0/WhatWeProvide/PrimaryResearch/PDF/TNTSalon_FinalReport.pdf*

Teacher Training is Critical (continued)

- Nearly 64% of teachers did not feel qualified to use their state's financial literacy standards.
- Fewer than 20% of teachers reported feeling "very competent" to teach any of the six personal finance topics surveyed.
- Only 37% of K–12 teachers had taken a college course offering financial education-related content (this could have been an economics course).
- Teachers who had taken a college course with financial education-related topics were 50% more likely to rate themselves as competent to teach financial literacy subject matter.
- Nine out of 10 of the teachers believe a personal finance course should be a high school graduation requirement.

A successful state high school financial literacy program trains educators and sets minimum standards for who is allowed to teach personal finance. An educator should be required to have certain expertise and training prior to being authorized to teach a personal finance course. Most states have fairly stringent requirements on what background an educator must have to teach mathematics, language arts, social studies and science courses. Rarely are such types of requirements applicable to financial literacy educators. Being self-taught is not optimal for education results. Currently, the vast majority of states do require educators to have demonstrable personal finance expertise prior to being allowed to teach a course. Utah currently has the most robust requirements in this area in the nation.

Why We Need a National Financial Literacy Assessment Exam

Along with math, reading and science, financial literacy is now considered an essential skill that young people need to succeed in life. In fact, the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) recently added financial literacy to the topics it measures across countries in a test given to 15-year-olds. The results of this international assessment are depressing. The United States ranked 9th out of the countries that participated, behind many current and former communist countries and in a statistical tie with Russia.[13] Despite this international focus, the United States does not have a proven and generally accepted critical skills-based financial literacy assessment tool for high school students. Assessment tests, when they exist at all, tend to be curriculum-based. Curriculum-based assessment is not consistent with how educators measure other subjects, such as language arts and mathematics.

An effective test will measure the full range of knowledge and skills critical for participation in the economy without relying on any specific curriculum or instructional model. While there have been a number of

13 *OECD. "PISA 2012 Results: Students and Money: Financial Literacy Skills for the 21st Century (Volume VI)." http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/PISA-2012-results-volume-vi.pdf*

Why We Need a National Financial Literacy Assessment Exam (continued)

efforts to develop financial literacy assessments, they suffer from several serious weaknesses. Existing tests are largely curriculum-based and oftentimes measure a narrow, idiosyncratic curriculum. In addition, financial literacy knowledge assessments have little consistency from one state to another. And assessments are often technically flawed and do not accurately measure the financial literacy skills needed.

Educators and administrators should have access to a quality test based on a set of standards that incorporates topics addressed in seminal financial literacy literature and widely accepted national, state and international financial literacy programs. This means that students in different states or school districts who take the assessment will be tested on content standards that are critical to success, regardless of what curriculum was used to teach them.

All questions in such a test should be reviewed by psychometricians (experts who measure the validity, reliability and fairness of an examination program). Psychometric analysis of the assessment is critical, not only to ensure quality but also to ensure that the test scores yielded are clearly interpretable by educators and administrators. An equity reviewer should review each question prior to release to ensure representativeness and freedom from bias.

The assessment questions should be clearly stated (readable and not confusing), relate to important content and skills (topics students should understand and that should be taught) and be evidence-based (each question will provide evidence of each student's skill and knowledge, or lack thereof, on the relevant personal finance topic covered by the assessment question).

Policy makers need high-quality data on students' financial literacy skill levels in order to make informed decisions on how to structure successful financial education strategies in high school. Data is needed to:

- Expose gaps in financial literacy knowledge,
- Identify which financial literacy education strategies are the most successful,
- Find best practices in the classroom that can be shared with educators across our nation, and
- Come up with ongoing efficiency improvements in personal finance education.

An effective test will help ensure that financial literacy standards are being met, and will identify topics and standards that require further emphasis. A standard test will allow for the measurement of growth in financial literacy for students and ensure continuous improvement in classrooms and schools. The creation of a well-regarded national financial literacy assessment tool should be funded and made available to states, school districts and researchers. States desperately need access to a low-cost, high-quality test created by assessment experts, which has been subjected to a field test and validation study.

What Can Be Done About Funding?

Financial literacy initiatives cost money. States should allocate money to schools and educators so that they can have access to quality curriculum, classroom tools, educator training and a quality end-of-course assessment tool. Unfunded mandates are not likely to be successfully implemented.

How can these new programs be funded in a time of fiscal austerity? One place to look is partnerships with local and national financial institutions. For example, the national accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers and Discover Financial Services both have large multi-year programs that support bringing financial literacy to our nation's schools.

Another source of funding, advocated by the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College, could be the creation of a National Public Education Foundation for Financial Capability that could receive a percentage of all fines and penalties paid to federal regulators by financial service companies accused of breaking federal regulations and laws. The following are some of the unique methods used by some states to create a funding mechanism for financial literacy initiatives:

- New Jersey passed a law in 2011 that authorized credit unions to take deposits from the state (e.g., tax receipts). In exchange for the ability to be the state's bankers, the credit unions who accepted these funds were required to spend money on financial literacy education.

- Texas assesses an annual fee from financial service firms that facilitate payday and auto title loans, and uses the fees to fund financial literacy education initiatives.

- West Virginia created a consumer education fund supported by taking 10% of all civil penalties collected by the state's division of banking.

- Vermont also has a fund, maintained by the state's Department of Financial Regulation (DFR), that is funded by certain DFR operations.

- Maine tapped into their unclaimed property fund (e.g., financial assets that escheat to the state) to help fund state financial literacy initiatives.

- Delaware requires businesses making short-term consumer loans (payday loans) and auto title loans to pay an annual fee of $1,500 for each licensed office into a financial literacy education fund.

Educators Need Access to Curriculum and Tools

Educators need ready access to financial literacy tools and curriculum to successfully bring personal finance instruction into the classroom. The natural place that an educator will look for resources is on the website of their department of education (or its equivalent). We have identified 15 states that have such resources housed at a department of education or its equivalent. They include California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Virginia. Links to these websites are included in the "State Summaries" section of this report. It should also be noted that the websites of many state treasurers and state financial industry regulators include personal finance education material for students and adults. Some of these website links are also included in the "State Summaries" section of the report.

What Can I Do to Promote Personal Finance Education?

If there is a positive outcome we can obtain from the aftermath of the Great Recession, it is the realization that we must become a financially literate nation. Perhaps if more of us proactively support personal finance training in our public schools, collegiate institutions and workplaces, we could prevent another horrible economic and financial crisis in the future.

If your state has a failing grade, advocate for changes with your local school principal, superintendent, school board and state legislative representative. You can also partner with your state chapter of the Jump$tart Coalition, the Council for Economic Education and/or Junior Achievement. Go to the Jump$tart Coalition page called "Making the Case," where you will find lots of good information. Review the K–12 section of the toolkit created by the White House in 2012 titled "Every American Financially Empowered: A Guide to Increasing Financial Capability among Students, Workers, and Residents in Communities". Read the 2015 report from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau titled "Advancing K–12 Financial Education: A Guide for Policymakers".

Armed with information, and a copy of this report card, meet with your local high school principal or school board and convince them that personal finance should be part of the curriculum. On the state level, you should contact your local state representative or senator. Given that our nation has suffered greatly in recent years from financial illiteracy, elected officials should listen closely to and hopefully act on your argument.

The Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain recognizes that the lack of teacher training is a major barrier to quality personal finance education. We offered a graduate level course for teachers in Vermont as a pilot program from 2011–2013 and hope to do so again in the future. The goal of the course was simple—we want middle and high school teachers to leave this 45-hour course, taught by more than 25 instructors, with the confidence, skills and curriculum tools that they need to successfully bring personal finance instruction into their classroom.

Champlain College's educator training program was a proud member of the Jump$tart Teacher Training Alliance Program. This program has been through a multi-year pilot program and is available nationally to other partners interested in providing similar teacher training in their states. The training program is based

What Can I Do to Promote Personal Finance Education? (continued)

on rigorous measurement of teacher confidence and behaviors. Perhaps you can partner with local leaders to create a similar training program for teachers in your state.

Most states have adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and language arts, to be implemented by 2015. These new education standards require students to think mathematically about real-world issues. What's more real than creating a budget, getting a credit card, applying for a loan and saving for retirement? Our nation has a unique opportunity to leverage these standards to provide critical personal finance skills to our youth. You can use the curriculum changes that are happening right now in most states as a catalyst for change in your school districts. Get involved in discussions on this important change—attend school board meetings.

Collaboration among many stakeholders has already led to an initial mapping of essential personal finance concepts and skills that can appropriately be integrated into teaching of the Common Core State Standards as well as to the development of mathematical tasks and identification of non-fiction texts. A website, MoneyAsYouLearn.org, offers guidance to teachers and school districts through lesson plans, problem sets, nonfiction texts and other resources that elucidate the topic of personal finance within the context of the Common Core.

Extra Credit: Other State Initiatives

Some state legislatures have required that personal finance be a stand-alone course offering or be incorporated into other courses. Some have also required that the personal finance knowledge of students be assessed or that a course be offered as an elective in every high school. In addition to these mandates, states have taken many other types of actions to promote financial literacy. In the "State Summaries" section, some states are recognized for unique efforts to promote personal finance education. Those include some of the following, often taken as a result of laws and resolutions passed by such states' legislatures:

Nonbinding Resolutions

Many state legislatures have used resolutions to promote the importance of personal finance education:

- Many declare April to be Financial Literacy Month.
- Senate and House resolutions are used to request or urge the department of education or local school boards to take actions to promote personal finance.

Create State Advocate(s)

Many states have tried to increase the attention that is given to personal finance by making financial literacy advocacy legislatively part of a government official's job description. The individuals tasked with this responsibility at the state level are usually state treasurers and/or regulators of the financial services industry.

Extra Credit: Other State Initiatives (continued)

Resource Bank

State law or regulation requires a governmental agency to create and maintain an online library of financial resources and materials.

Study or Committee

Legislatures have created task forces and committees to study how to increase states' financial literacy and to make recommendations in formal reports to governors and legislatures. Some consist entirely of government officials (with the goal of having government agencies collaborate to develop financial literacy education programs for adults and children) while others are public, private and non-profit partnerships that focus on either K–12 issues exclusively, or more broadly on bringing personal finance education to all citizens in a state. Some of these public/private groups have been given the task of creating and promoting financial literacy education opportunities for all citizens in a state. These groups are often given the power to raise money from non-governmental sources to fund financial literacy initiatives.

Report From State Department of Education (DOE) or its Equivalent

Some states have requested a report from the DOE on financial literacy that covers such K–12 topics as: (1) recommended financial literacy education standards and guidelines; (2) curriculum recommendations and tools for the classroom; (3) how to provide teacher training on this subject; (4) surveys on whether and how K–12 schools are currently providing this training to students; and (5) recommendations for how financial literacy should be integrated into the curriculum (when should it begin, what classes should it be a part of, should it be a stand-alone high school graduation requirement?).

Action by Board of Education or its Equivalent

Some state legislatures have required their board of education or its equivalent to consider and vote on whether to include a unit on financial literacy as part of a broader change to their state's entire curriculum.

Allow Personal Finance Education to be Taught

It appears that in some states it was not even clear that the local school boards had the authority to offer a personal finance course. Thus, laws were passed that allowed the course to be taught or incorporated into an existing class requirement.

Assist Schools That Want to Offer Financial Literacy

Some states have required the DOE to develop model financial literacy programs, including standards, guidelines, and model curricula, and a resource bank of tools for teachers to use in the classroom. In addition, sometimes states make available grant dollars or other technical assistance to help local schools seeking to bring personal finance education into their classrooms.

Pilot Programs

States have established high school pilot programs. In such programs, school districts are chosen to have a multi-year pilot program where personal finance is a graduation requirement. The DOE is required to report on the implementation and effectiveness of the pilot program and the feasibility of implementing the program on a statewide basis.

Extra Credit: Other State Initiatives (continued)

School Bank Branching

Some states have passed legislation to encourage banks and credit unions to establish bank branches in the schools that are staffed with students.

Teacher Training

States have passed legislation to fund one-time K–12 teacher training programs. Texas passed a law requiring that the state's collegiate institutions that graduate K–12 educators be required to offer a personal finance course.

College Personal Finance Efforts

Some states have taken action to improve the personal finance knowledge of their state's college students:

- States have been concerned with on-campus solicitation by credit card providers, especially when free gifts are given in exchange for a student filling out a credit card application form. These and other concerns were also addressed by the U.S. Congress in their Credit CARD Act of 2009.

- Virginia is the only state that requires public institutions of higher education to make provisions for the promotion of the development of student life skills through the inclusion of principles of economic education and financial literacy within an existing general education course, the freshman orientation process or other appropriate venues.

State Summaries

What follows are brief overviews of how each state approaches personal finance education in their public high schools. When you read through the summaries, you will see links that should take you directly to the documents that were used to inform each state's summary and the state's grade. Specifically, you will see them for high school graduation requirements, academic standards as they relate to personal finance, and key state laws, regulations and rules that relate to how each state delivers personal finance education in their public school systems. In some states, you will see links that connect to initiatives that we believe are relevant for understanding how well the state performs. We understand that over time, these links might 'expire,' so we have archived the links in our systems. They were live as of September 18, 2015.

Grade Color Key

A B C D F

Alabama

GRADE A

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, starting with the Class of 2017, Alabama requires that all high school students take a one-year career preparedness course. This course can be taught in Grades 9–12; however, the state Department of Education recommends that students take the course in Grade 9. See: Alabama High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The career preparedness course has 23 standards, of which 13 cover personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 68 hours of instruction in personal finance, which is the equivalent of a one-semester personal finance course. See: Alabama Career Preparedness Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Alabama measures student achievement in financial literacy. Personal finance concepts are most relevant after a student graduates from high school when they are thrust into a situation where they must manage their daily living expenses. Recommending that students take a course of this nature in Grade 9 is not optimal, since knowledge obtained will fade over time. The Grade 9 students will not use much of what they learn until many years after the instruction is completed.

Alaska

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course. Alaska high school students must earn a minimum of 21 credits with three credits in social studies. See: Alaska High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Alaska does not have any personal finance standards. Alaska has economics concepts in the government and citizenship standards, but these standards do not include personal finance concepts. Alaska's employability standards also lack personal finance concepts. For all standards see: Alaska's Academic Standards.

Arizona

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, beginning with the Class of 2012, Arizona has required high school students to complete a half-year course in economics. See: Arizona Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The economics course standards in Arizona consist of five high-level concepts that must be taught, one of which is personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 12 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Arizona Social Studies Standards. In 2013, the Arizona legislature passed a law requiring academic standards for social studies to include personal finance concepts. This law notes that the State Board of Education (Board) is not authorized to require a separate personal finance course as a graduation requirement. The law allows local school districts to prescribe a separate personal finance course that is in addition to or higher than the personal finance course of study and competency requirements that the Board requires. See: Arizona Education Statute.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Arizona measures student achievement in financial literacy.

Arkansas

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, as part of the Smart Core curriculum, Arkansas requires high school students to complete a half-year course in economics for graduation. Depending on the teacher's licensure, it can count as a social studies credit or career focus credit. See: Arkansas High School Graduation Requirements (see pages 6–10).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Two out of nine strands in the economics standards focus on personal finance concepts. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 13 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Arkansas Social Studies Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Arkansas measures student achievement in financial literacy.

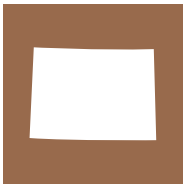
California

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course, and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses. Graduation from high school in California requires students to take three years of social science, including U.S. history and geography; world history, culture and geography; one semester of American government; and one semester of economics. See: California Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS. California educational content standards describe what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade. These content standards do not include personal finance concepts that high school students must learn. See: California Content Standards. Curriculum frameworks offer local districts guidance for implementing content standards. California's curriculum frameworks describe the curriculum and instruction necessary to help students achieve proficiency, and they specify the design of instructional materials. These frameworks are tools that local school districts may use but they are not required. See: California Frameworks and also see: California Financial Literacy and Mathematics. Pursuant to a California 2013 law, frameworks (but not the content standards) in social sciences, health and mathematics are required to be updated to include financial literacy concepts, but such concepts are not required to be taught by local school districts (the law requires textbook updates). California does not mandate specific textbooks to be used at high school but does for grades K–8. The California Education Code requires that local districts adopt textbooks aligned to the state content standards. See: California Education Code related to Textbooks. The California Department of Education recommends a ninth-grade elective course in personal finance be offered, but local districts are not required to offer such a course. Recommending that students take a course of this nature in Grade 9 is not optimal, since knowledge will fade over time. The Grade 9 students will not use much of what they learn until many years after the instruction is completed.

EXTRA CREDIT. California Department of Education offers educators a robust list of financial literacy resources. See: California Grades K–12 Financial Literacy Resources.



Colorado

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. See: Colorado High School Graduation Local District Guidelines.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Colorado academic standards include a Personal Financial Literacy Expectations Addendum to social studies and mathematics standards. See: Colorado Personal Finance Standards. Local district graduation policies must align with the Colorado academic standards. Colorado law requires each school district to revise its curricula to ensure that it includes financial literacy in the district's programs of study, and that each district adopts assessments that are aligned with the financial literacy standards. A district may include assessment of financial literacy standards within assessments that address standards in other subject areas. See: Colorado Revised Statute 4 (b).

ASSESSMENTS: Colorado is using assessments to determine if graduates are qualified to graduate. High school students are given assessments in mathematics and social studies prior to graduation. It is our understanding that these assessments include a modest level of questions related to personal finance concepts. Economic concepts represent 22% of the social studies assessment, and approximately half of these are personal finance topics. Based on that information, we estimate that about 11% of the social studies assessment exam is personal finance in nature. See: Colorado Social Studies Assessment Criteria (page 3). We have been informed that the mathematics assessments are being revised and some modest portion of this assessment will also include personal finance concepts.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Colorado monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement. And, since the social studies and mathematics assessments include relatively few questions related to personal finance, the assessments may not provide an accurate snapshot of the quality and quantity of the content being delivered.

EXTRA CREDIT: Colorado law requires the Colorado Department of Education to provide online financial literacy resources for teachers and school districts. See: Colorado Financial Literacy Resources.

Connecticut

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course. And personal finance is not required to be offered or taken. See: Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The Connecticut Department of Education has developed financial literacy education frameworks to assist educators in developing courses to include personal finance. See: Connecticut Personal Finance Education Frameworks.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2015, Connecticut implemented a law that requires the State Board of Education to make available financial literacy curriculum, other materials and assistance to local and regional school districts. These tools are to be designed by three education-related state entities. See: Connecticut Enabling Legislation SB 319. Since 2007, Connecticut legislators have introduced more than 10 bills in an attempt to bring financial literacy into their schools. Through a memorandum of understanding with the Banking Department, the State Department of Education has received funding since 2008 to add personal finance as online and/or traditional courses in Connecticut high schools. The department uses the funding to provide annual competitive grants to school districts. The grants must be used in a manner consistent with this requirement. Jump$tart Connecticut research found that 90% of Connecticut high schools offer a personal finance course, but less than 7% require students to take a course in personal finance for graduation. See: Connecticut Jump$tart Report.

Delaware

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course. Students are required to take a specific number of social studies courses and career pathway courses. See: Delaware High School Graduation Requirements (scroll to section 4.0).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Delaware has standards in place for personal finance education for schools to use if they offer a personal finance course. See: Delaware Personal Finance Standards and click on "High School Personal Finance Standards."

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2009, a law was passed that created the Financial Literacy Education Fund. The law requires businesses making short-term consumer loans (payday loans) and car title loans to pay an annual high-cost loan license fee surcharge into the fund of $1,500 for each licensed office. The fund provides grants to school or other organizations for K–12 Financial Literacy programs. The fund is in its fifth round of grants. See: Delaware Financial Literacy Education Fund.

District of Columbia

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course. Four credits are required in social studies, but none of them include any personal finance concepts. See: District of Columbia High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There is no personal finance content in the social studies standards; however, economics is included as an elective. See: District of Columbia Social Studies Standards.

Florida

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, a half-year course in economics is a graduation requirement for all high school students. The economics course is required to include personal finance concepts. See: Florida High School Graduation Requirements (3(d)).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The high school social studies curriculum standards consist of 34 content standards for economics and 56 content standards for financial literacy. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 37 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Florida Economics Standards and search for Social Studies, 9–12 grades, financial literacy.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Florida measures student achievement in financial literacy.

Georgia

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, high school students in Georgia are required to take a half-year course in economics for graduation. See: Georgia High School Graduation Requirements (page 5).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The economics course has 22 standards and six of these standards are personal finance in nature. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 16 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Georgia Economics Standards.

ASSESSMENTS: Georgia requires statewide end-of-course assessments on all of their core high school courses, including economics. We received confirmation from the offices of Curriculum & Instruction and Assessment that the economics assessment includes questions related to personal finance. See: Georgia High School Assessments Based on the economics course standards, we estimate that approximately 27% of the assessment questions are personal finance in nature. However, we are unable to determine if this level of assessment provides Georgia with an accurate and meaningful measurement of the quality and quantity of the personal finance education being delivered to students.

Hawaii

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course, and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses. Four credits are required in social studies, but none of them include a specific course with personal finance concepts. See: Hawaii High School Graduation Requirements 2016+.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Hawaii has not revised its social studies standards since 2005, although they will be updating them over the next year. There are currently three strands of economics, but no personal finance topics are included. See: Hawaii Social Studies Standards (pages 148-149). The planned updates present an opportunity to include personal finance standards.

EXTRA CREDIT: In the 2010 legislative session, Hawaii created the Financial Literacy Education and Asset Building Task Force, which made a variety of recommendations. For the full report, see: Hawaii Task Force Final Report.

Idaho

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Idaho requires high school students to complete a half-year course in economics for graduation. See: Idaho High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The economics course standards are composed of 16 learning objectives, three of which are personal finance concepts. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 11 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Idaho Economics Content Standards and click on Content by Grade, 9th – 12th Econ, and search Goal 3.4: "Explain the concepts of good personal finance" (page 3).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Idaho measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Idaho Department of Finance hosts an extensive online resource of educational links on financial literacy topics. See: Idaho Department of Finance Resources.

Illinois

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Illinois requires high school students to take a nine-week course in consumer education. See: Illinois High School Graduation Requirements (see page 11).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Specifically, the graduation requirements state that each student shall be required to take consumer education for 50 minutes per day for a period of nine weeks in any of grades 9–12. According to Illinois graduation requirements, nine weeks is equal to one-quarter of a full academic year. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 30–38 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Illinois Consumer Education Proficiency Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Illinois measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: Illinois has created a financial literacy fund in the state treasury. The money will be used to defray the costs of professional development in financial literacy for teachers; reward schools, students and/or teachers who achieve outstanding results in personal finance; and other financial literacy education activities. See: Illinois Financial Literacy Fund.

Indiana

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. However, Indiana high school students must meet the financial literacy education standards prior to graduation. Indiana allows each school district to determine how they will provide that instruction. See: Indiana High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: In 2009, Indiana required schools to incorporate into their curriculum (in grades 6 through 12) instruction in personal financial responsibility. See: Indiana Code. By the end of 12th grade, every student should have met the Financial Literacy Education (FLE) High School Standards. Schools may prepare their students to be proficient in the FLE High School Standards through instruction in business education, family and consumer sciences, or other subject areas if those are not available. The Department of Education created guidelines to help local school districts provide opportunities for students to receive financial literacy education by integrating it within its curriculum or by conducting a seminar that is designed to foster overall personal financial responsibility. See: Indiana Financial Literacy Standards and Guidelines for Schools Including Personal Finance.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Indiana measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: Professional development is provided for financial literacy teachers and teachers may use nationally recognized standards and curriculum units. See: Indiana Teacher Resources. Indiana University hosted the National Summit on Collegiate Financial Wellness in June 2015.

Iowa

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. See: Iowa High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The Iowa Core contains Iowa's statewide academic standards. Financial literacy standards are part of the Iowa Core's 21st Century Skills and are applicable for every grade in high school. See: Iowa Financial Literacy Standards.

CAVEAT: Schools are expected to include Iowa Core 21st Century Skills and other 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects. Local school districts determine how and where to integrate these topics into the classroom. It is not clear how Iowa measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: In September 2014, the Iowa Financial Literacy Work Team Report was released with eight specific recommendations. The report indicates that an increased emphasis on implementation of existing financial literacy standards is needed, and that additional resources should be provided to educators and schools to help them achieve full implementation of these standards. The work team was opposed to the creation of a financial literacy course or high school graduation requirement in this area. The report notes that the Department of Education does not currently collect data around the implementation of the financial literacy standards, and that there is no way to monitor implementation in this topic area. The report includes many excellent recommendations that would help increase the quality of financial literacy instruction in Iowa classrooms. The governor and state officials convened a summit on financial literacy that targets middle and high school students in an effort to help reduce their college debt and avoid credit card problems after high school graduation. See: Iowa Financial Literacy Summit.

Kansas

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. See: Kansas High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: While the graduation requirements specify that concepts of economics be taught, no specific course is identified. Local districts determine how to deliver the content. The economics standards include seven strands, one of which is personal finance. Specific content included in these standards is not mandated but is made available as suggested content to "assist in the planning of lessons and units." By leaving the course selection to the local districts, it is impossible to know how high school students in Kansas are taught these required concepts of economics. See: Kansas Standards for History Government and Social Studies.

ASSESSMENTS: While Kansas law states that "The state board of education shall include questions relating to personal financial literacy in the statewide assessments for mathematics or social studies," it appears that the assessments as they relate to personal finance are modest in nature. Therefore, it would be difficult for the assessments to provide an accurate snapshot of the quality and quantity of the personal finance content being delivered. See: Kansas Law Requiring Assessments to Include Personal Finance Section "e".

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Kansas monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Kansas State Board of Education wrote a letter to the superintendents of all the local education districts urging them to include personal finance in their required curriculum for all high school students. They suggest ways for districts to provide instruction in these concepts. See: Kansas State Board of Education Letter. According to the letter, the state board will monitor course offerings and the Kansas State Department of Education will provide a progress report to the legislature next year.

Kentucky

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Kentucky does not require school districts to offer a stand-alone personal finance course, nor is it embedded in a course required for graduation. See: Kentucky High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The Kentucky Academic Standards contain the minimum required standards that all Kentucky students should have the opportunity to learn before graduating from Kentucky high schools. The standards address what is to be learned but do not address how learning experiences are to be designed or what resources should be used. That is left to local school districts to decide. Kentucky requires high school students to obtain vocational studies instruction, which includes personal finance concepts. See: Kentucky Academic Standards (pages 709-71). Kentucky requires three credits in social studies, which include an economics strand, but this strand does not include personal finance concepts.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Kentucky measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: Kentucky has a Web page that provides resources for teachers who are teaching financial literacy topics as required by the high school vocational studies standards. Financial literacy topics are integrated into the state's K–12 practical living/vocational studies standards. See: Kentucky Financial Literacy Resources.

Louisiana

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Louisiana requires that high school students take a half-year course in civics with a section on free enterprise. See: Louisiana High School Graduation Requirements (see page 4).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The half-year civics course has eight standards, one of which is in financial literacy. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately seven and a half hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Louisiana Civics Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Louisiana measures student achievement in financial literacy. Based on the current graduation requirements, for students starting high school in 2014–2015 (the class of 2018), civics with a section on free enterprise will no longer be a course required for graduation but could be offered as a social studies class option. Depending on how this new requirement is implemented, in any future report card, Louisiana is likely to have its grade reduced to either a C, D or F. See: Louisiana Administrative Code (search for Title 28, Part CXV, page 55).

Maine

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Maine requires students to take two years of social studies and history, including American history, government, civics and personal finance. These subjects may be provided to students in a separate or integrated study basis. See: Maine High School Graduation Requirements (2B) and Maine Proficiency Requirements (section 4).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Local school districts determine whether to teach personal finance as a separate course or to integrate the topic into other courses. Local school districts can offer students multiple pathways to meet the personal finance requirement, and such options can include courses that are not social studies in nature. See: Maine Department of Education Announcement about Financial Literacy. Instruction hours cannot be estimated, since each school district selects how they will meet the personal finance education requirement. Maine provides national prototypes of personal finance education standards from the Council for Economic Education and the Jump$tart Coalition for local school districts and educators to use. See: Maine's National Social Studies Standards and Framework.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Maine measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2013, a law was passed requiring the Commissioner of Education to review the standards for personal finance during the next five-year review process starting in the 2015–2016 school year. See: Maine Legislation to Review Personal Finance Standards. Maine makes a range of nationally recognized financial literacy resources available to educators. See: Maine Financial Literacy Resources. Since 2013, the Alfond Scholarship Foundation has made a $500 gift available to every child born in Maine through the establishment of a college savings fund in that child's name.

Maryland

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, personal finance must be taught in elementary, middle and high school. See: Maryland Personal Financial Literacy Regulation. Local school districts are allowed to determine how these topics should be integrated into the curriculum. As of 2014, seven districts require a stand-alone personal finance course for graduation, while the remaining 17 districts embed personal finance concepts into courses required for graduation. In most of the 17 districts, personal finance is embedded in a required U.S. history or government class. See: Maryland Financial Literacy Education Report 2014.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Maryland regulation requires all local school districts to align the required financial literacy instruction with the curriculum developed by the Maryland Department of Education. See: The Maryland State Curriculum for Personal Financial Literacy Education. Hours of instruction cannot be estimated since each school district determines how they will deliver the required personal finance education, and implementation methods vary by local school district.

CAVEATS: According to the Maryland Department of Education, all 24 school districts require personal finance to be taught either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course. However, it appears that these requirements were not fully implemented for the Class of 2014 because the same report includes a survey of seniors asking who "received instruction on managing personal finances" and only 50% of the respondents recalled that instruction. However, based on the above referenced report, we anticipate the survey findings to improve in future years as this requirement is fully implemented. It is not clear how Maryland measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: Maryland has appointed a financial literacy education advisory council tasked with implementing and monitoring personal financial literacy education throughout the public schools. This council, working with the Department of Education, researches and tracks the implementation and effectiveness of the local education agencies' delivery of the standards. See: Maryland Financial Literacy Education Advisory Council.

Massachusetts

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course, and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses. The MassCore, which is the state's recommendation for subjects to be taken prior to graduation, does not specify economics or personal finance. See: Massachusetts MassCore recommendations.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Massachusetts has curriculum frameworks for social studies, and they include a framework for a 12th-grade elective in economics. However, there are no personal finance concepts included in the curriculum framework. See: Massachusetts Social Studies Framework (pages 81–84).

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2015, the State Treasurer announced the creation of a Financial Literacy Task Force whose goal will be to improve the financial literacy of all Massachusetts residents with an emphasis on students in grades K–12. See: Massachusetts Treasurer's Task Force. The Massachusetts Treasurer's Office has a Financial Literacy Trust Fund that supports financial literacy for residents and organizations throughout the state. See: Massachusetts Financial Literacy Trust Fund. In 2012, the state legislature established a Financial Literacy Advisory Committee to advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on the development of a 3-year financial literacy pilot program for high schools in gateway municipalities. In 2013, grants were awarded to 10 high schools to pilot innovative personal finance programs. See: Massachusetts Financial Literacy Innovation Grants. The advisory committee will evaluate the success of the high school pilot program and will issue a report on the effectiveness of the program after its first three years of implementation. Since 2005, Massachusetts legislators have introduced more than 20 bills that attempt to have financial literacy taught in the state's schools. So far, none of these bills have been passed by the state legislature.

Michigan

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Michigan requires that high school students take a half-year economics course for graduation. See: Michigan Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are four high-level economics "expectations" or standards, which consist of 44 specific sub-standards. Personal finance is one of these economics standards and contains six specific sub-standards. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately eight hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Michigan Social Studies Standards (pages 68–71).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Michigan measures student achievement in financial literacy.

Minnesota

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Minnesota requires that high school students take a half-year course in economics. See: Minnesota Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Minnesota implemented new social studies standards in 2013–2014. Personal finance is now embedded in an economics course required for graduation. There are 34 economics education benchmarks, five of which are personal finance in nature. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately nine hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Minnesota Social Studies Standards (2011 standards, pages 12, 108–117).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Minnesota measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: Minnesota's Commissioner of Commerce convened the Minnesota Financial Literacy Interagency Work Group in 2012, bringing together 10 state agencies that have existing programs, outreach efforts or policy interests in financial literacy. The Work Group is focused on expanding opportunities for Minnesotans to improve their financial literacy. See: Minnesota Financial Literacy Interagency Work Group.

Mississippi

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, taking a course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. There are four different pathways to a high school diploma. In the traditional pathway option, students are required to take a half-year class in economics as part of the social studies mandate. For all four pathways, see: Mississippi High School Graduation Requirements. Personal finance must be offered as an elective course in Mississippi high schools. The 2014 Public School Accountability Standards allow a half-year course in financial technology, or resource management or national endowment for personal finance, to be offered in lieu of a half-semester course in personal finance. See: Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards (see Appendix B).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Mississippi has created a Business and Technology educational framework for the Personal Finance elective course. See: Mississippi Business and Technology Framework.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Mississippi monitors school district implementation of these personal finance education requirements or how they measure student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2014, Mississippi passed a law authorizing the Department of Banking and Consumer Finance to establish programs for the education of the public with respect to financial literacy. See: Mississippi Financial Literacy Public Education. Mississippi is one of only two states in the U.S. that requires personal finance to be offered as an elective, which guarantees that all students have access to these topics.

Missouri

GRADE A

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, high school students in Missouri are required to take either a half-year course in personal finance or a half-year of personal finance instruction embedded in a full-year course of social studies or practical arts. See: Missouri High School Graduation Requirements (page 5). However, we are unable to confirm that all full-year courses allocate half of their content to personal finance instruction.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The standards for the personal finance course are robust. See: Missouri Personal Finance (click on link to "personal finance competencies").

ASSESSMENTS: Missouri created an assessment on financial literacy at no cost to the districts. Students who take their personal finance embedded in either social studies or practical arts are required to take the assessments, and the local district determines the pass rate. The assessment is optional for students choosing to take personal finance as a stand-alone elective. Students are also given the option of "testing out" of the personal finance course requirement if they obtain a score of 90% or higher on the assessment exam. However, we are unable to determine if the assessment provides Missouri with an accurate and meaningful measurement of the quality and quantity of the personal finance education being delivered to students.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Missouri monitors school district implementation of these personal finance education requirements.

EXTRA CREDIT: Personal finance assessment requirements, as well as teaching resources, are available at the following site: Missouri Personal Finance Assessments Details.

Montana

GRADE D

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, personal finance is not included in the graduation requirements either as a stand-alone course or embedded in another course, and schools are not required to offer financial literacy courses. See: Montana High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Montana requires students to take two years of social studies but does not identify specific social studies courses to be taken. The social studies content standards indicate what all students should know when they graduate. They consist of six content standards that are made up of 36 benchmarks. The economics content standards consist of six benchmarks. One of these benchmarks (or 3% of all social studies benchmarks) includes personal finance concepts. See: Montana Social Studies Standards (page 6).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Montana measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

Nebraska

GRADE: C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. Nebraska requires students to take 30 credit hours of social studies, which includes economics concepts. Local districts determine how they want to deliver the content. See: Nebraska High School Graduation Requirements (pages 4–5).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Nebraska has adopted social studies standards that include economic concepts. Approximately one-third of these economics standards are personal finance in nature. The economics standards required to be taught at the local district level must include these personal finance concepts. Local districts are required to have standards that are the same as, equal to, or more rigorous than the state social study standards. See: Nebraska Social Studies Standards (pages 8–16).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how the Nebraska Department of Education ensures that personal finance education is actually delivered in an effective manner at the local school district level and how student achievement in this area is measured.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Nebraska Treasurer's office has launched an initiative to promote financial literacy education for high school students. See: Nebraska Treasurer's Financial Literacy Initiative. Nebraska's Department of Education has created links that are tied to their standards for teachers to use in their classrooms. See: Nebraska Financial Literacy Resource.

Nevada

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. The state does mandate that financial literacy topics be taught in high school but leaves it up to the local districts to specify how the content will be provided. See: Nevada High School Financial Literacy Requirement (scroll to NRS 389.074).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The same rule specifies the minimum content required to be taught. See: Nevada High School Financial Literacy Requirement. The Nevada Department of Education provides guidance for teachers. See: Nevada Financial Literacy Guidance. This document states that it "is not policy nor is it meant to be a curriculum guide, rather, it is a tool to aid school districts in the implementation of the law requiring instruction in financial literacy." It also suggests that financial literacy content could be provided via accounting and finance, business management, entrepreneurship, family and consumer sciences, economics and civics courses.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Nevada measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Nevada Department of Education provides an extensive list of financial literacy resources. See: Nevada Financial Literacy Standards and click on "High School Student Resource List."

New Hampshire

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, New Hampshire requires that all high school students take a half-year course in economics in order to graduate. See: New Hampshire High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are six standards of economics for grades 9–12 and one of those standards covers personal finance topics. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 10 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: New Hampshire Social Studies Standards (pages 81–86).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how New Hampshire measures student achievement in financial literacy.

New Jersey

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, New Jersey requires students to complete a half-year course in financial, economic and entrepreneurial literacy, or to complete one or more electives that integrate the required content and skills. See: New Jersey High School Graduation Requirements (pages 29–30) and New Jersey Financial Literacy Q&A.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There is one standard for each discipline area (financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial). Based on this information, we estimate that students may receive approximately 15 hours of personal finance instruction. See: New Jersey Personal Finance Standards ("FAQ"). Hours of instruction cannot be estimated for all students since each local school district determines how they will deliver the required personal finance education, and implementation methods vary by local school districts.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how New Jersey measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: The New Jersey School Board Association surveyed school districts to find out how they were delivering the personal finance concepts, with nearly half of the responding districts stating that they are offering a stand-alone financial literacy course. See: New Jersey Survey on Personal Finance Implementation.

New Mexico

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. See: New Mexico High School Graduation Requirements. However, personal finance must be offered as an elective. The personal finance elective can be offered as a social studies, family and consumer sciences, business, or mathematics elective. See: New Mexico High School Graduation Requirements Statute (I (7)).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: New Mexico includes some personal finance concepts in the economics strand of its social studies standards. See: New Mexico Social Studies Standards. Districts may meet their personal finance elective requirement through offering an online course.

CAVEAT: Specific personal finance standards for the required elective course were not on the public education website. It is not clear how New Mexico measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: The New Mexico General Services Department sought proposals to provide financial literacy education to students throughout New Mexico in 2015. See: New Mexico Grant Details for Financial Literacy Education. New Mexico is one of only two states in the U.S. that requires that personal finance be offered as an elective, which guarantees that all students have access to these topics.

New York

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, New York state requires students to take a half-year course in economics to graduate. See: New York Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Schools are encouraged to administer the economics requirement through a course titled Economics, the Enterprise System and Finance. This course has four standards, one of which includes personal finance content. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 15 hours of personal finance instruction. See the social studies standards in the New York Social Studies Framework (Grades 9–12, pages 48–50).

CAVEAT: This grading is based on the assumption that the vast majority of schools teach and require the recommended course. However, we are aware that there could be exceptions in schools that offer an economics course that does not include personal finance. It is not clear how New York measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: A recent bill was signed into law requiring teenagers participating in the New York state summer youth employment program to study personal finance.

North Carolina

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, North Carolina requires high school students to take a half-year course in civics and economics to graduate. See: North Carolina Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are 10 standards in the civics and economics course; two of them pertain to personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 12 hours of personal finance instruction. See: North Carolina Civics and Economics Standards (pages 25–31).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how North Carolina measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: North Carolina's Department of State Treasurer has launched a program called Futures, which provides financial educational opportunities for North Carolinians of all ages. See: North Carolina Futures Program. The Department of Public Instruction has also created a website that provides financial literacy resources. See: North Carolina Teacher Resource Website.

North Dakota

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, North Dakota requires that students take either a full-year course in problems of democracy or a half-year course in government, plus a half-year course in economics, to graduate. Individual school districts may require a stand-alone personal finance course in lieu of including personal finance in the aforementioned courses. See: North Dakota High School Graduation Requirements (page 2).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: North Dakota requires each school district to ensure that its curriculum for either economics or problems of democracy includes personal finance concepts. However, we cannot find curriculum standards for these two courses on the Academic Content Standards list maintained by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's website and, therefore, are unable to estimate the number of hours students are required to receive instruction on personal finance concepts. See: North Dakota Rule on Personal Finance (page 11).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how North Dakota measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

Ohio

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Ohio requires that students be provided with instruction in financial literacy. Specific courses in which the personal finance concepts are included are left to each district to determine. See: Ohio High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are 25 content statements in Ohio's economics and financial literacy curriculum. Fifteen of those strands include personal finance concepts. Assuming a local school district implements the proposed half-year course in personal finance and economics, we expect that those students will receive 36 hours of personal finance instruction. See: Ohio Economic and Financial Literacy Learning Standards (page 17). Also see: Ohio's Proposed Financial Literacy Standards. Hours of instruction cannot be estimated for all students, since each local school district determines how they will deliver the required personal finance education, and implementation methods vary by local school districts.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Ohio measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2008, the Ohio Department of Commerce created a financial literacy fund, which provides support for adult education throughout Ohio. See: Ohio Financial Literacy Grant Fund. Ohio has developed regional, university-based centers for economic education that are available to assist with educator professional development and related resources. See: Ohio University Based Centers for Economic Education.

Oklahoma

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. Oklahoma requires students to demonstrate competency in 14 areas of personal finance. Local school districts determine when these topics are taught and whether these topics are integrated into existing courses or taught as a separate course. See: Oklahoma High School Graduation Proficiency Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Oklahoma has a passport approach to graduation requirements, which apply to students in grades 7–12. The passport method allows school districts to determine which grades and which courses they will embed the personal finance standards in. They could be embedded in a variety of courses from 7th to 12th grades. See: Oklahoma Passport.

CAVEAT: Since the passport requirements apply to 7th through 12th grades, local districts could include personal finance concepts in middle school and/or the early years of high school. Personal finance concepts are most relevant after a student graduates from high school, when they are thrust into situations in which they must manage their daily living expenses. Recommending that students take a course of this nature earlier than Grades 11–12 is not optimal, since knowledge obtained will fade over time. Additionally, it is not clear how Oklahoma measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: Oklahoma provides resources online for districts and teachers to refer to. See: Oklahoma Personal Financial Literacy Resource and Standards and Oklahoma Personal Finance Teacher and Student Resources.

Oregon

GRADE C

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, a specifically identified course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. Oregon requires three credits of social studies for graduation but does not identify required courses. See: Oregon High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Oregon has identified competencies that are required for graduation for each subject area, including social studies. Personal finance standards are included in the social studies standards. So, while there are no specific courses required, there is an expectation that students are competent in these areas prior to graduation. See: Oregon Social Studies Standards (page 17 of high school standards).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Oregon measures student achievement in financial literacy, since the social studies assessment is optional, or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

EXTRA CREDIT: Financial literacy educational standards apply from kindergarten through 12th grade. Personal finance concepts are included in the statewide social studies assessment, but the assessment is optional for local districts. See: Oregon Assessments Statute.

Pennsylvania

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Pennsylvania does not require specific courses for graduation. The state does require assessments, which students must pass in order to demonstrate competency in key areas, but the assessments do not include courses that teach personal finance concepts. See: Pennsylvania State Code for High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Pennsylvania's academic standards describe what students should know and be able to do, particularly with regard to the competency areas that are assessed by the state. The Pennsylvania Academic Standards website gives you access to economics; family and consumer sciences; career education and work; and business, computer, and information technology high school standards. All of these standards include some level of personal finance concepts. These courses may be offered as electives or as courses required for graduation as determined by each local school district.

CAVEAT: According to a governmental report, only 38 (or 7.6%) of the state's 500 school districts require students to take a course in personal finance before graduation. See: Pennsylvania 2013 Report to the Governor on Personal Finance Education in PA.

EXTRA CREDIT: Pennsylvania passed a law in 2010 requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to disseminate economic education and personal financial literacy curriculum materials to public and private schools, and to develop a clearinghouse of these resources on its website. See: Pennsylvania Economic Education and Financial Literacy. A separate fund was created to support the implementation of this program. The legislation required the DOE to recognize schools that implement exemplary economic and personal financial literacy programs. In 2010, state law also established the Pennsylvania Task Force on Economic Education and Personal Finance Education. The Pennsylvania Task Force Report contains many useful findings and recommendations. That same law also required the DOE and the Department of Banking and Securities to issue a biennial report to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding the status of economic and personal finance education in Pennsylvania schools, and to review current programs and initiatives and make recommendations for future program needs. For example, according to the 2013 report, 28% of Pennsylvania high school students take a course devoted to economics or personal finance. See: Pennsylvania 2013 Report to the Governor on Personal Finance Education in PA.

Rhode Island

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Rhode Island does not specify required courses for graduation. High school students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in six core areas including social studies. The decision as to whether to offer courses in financial literacy and whether to require that students take these courses is a local school district decision in Rhode Island. See: Rhode Island High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Rhode Island has social studies standards, which include an economics standard. However, these standards focus on economics and do not cover personal finance concepts. See: Rhode Island Economics Standards.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2014, the Rhode Island Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approved a recommendation from a group of students that they endorse (but do not require) the Council on Economic Education's (CEE) standards for personal financial literacy. See: CEE National Standards for Financial Literacy. In the process of researching personal finance standards, the student-led research group discovered that 84% of the state's 20 school districts surveyed indicated that they offer one or more financial literacy classes as electives, and three of those districts have personal finance as a graduation requirement. See: Rhode Island Commissioner's Field Memo. While we understand that these CEE standards have been endorsed by this council, we cannot find these standards or a link to them posted on the Department of Education's website as of July 3, 2015.

South Carolina

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, South Carolina requires students to take a half-year course in economics. See: South Carolina Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are five economics standards, one of which covers personal finance topics. The economic standards consist of a total of 25 indicators, which are statements of the knowledge and skills a student should obtain from this instruction. Only three of these indicators focus on personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately seven hours of instruction in personal finance. See: South Carolina Economics Standards (pages 115–119).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how South Carolina measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: South Carolina's Department of Education provides online resources for teachers of economics and financial literacy. See: South Carolina financial literacy resources.

South Dakota

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, South Dakota requires high school students to take a half-year course in either personal finance or economics, but does not require students to choose personal finance or require schools to offer personal finance. See: South Dakota High School Graduation Requirements (page 3).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: South Dakota does have personal finance standards. See: South Dakota Personal Finance Standards. The economic standards do not include personal finance concepts. See: South Dakota Economics Standards (page 26).

Tennessee

GRADE A

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, high school students in Tennessee are required to take a half-year course in personal finance. See: Tennessee High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: The standards for the personal finance course are robust. See: Tennessee Personal Finance Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Tennessee measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Tennessee Department of Treasury has established a Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission, which provides a clearinghouse of Tennessee Resources for Financial Literacy. The Commission also offers resources, training and other activities for all Tennessee residents and families as well as educators. In addition to the high school personal finance course, Tennessee has developed personal finance curricula for students in Grades K–8.

Texas

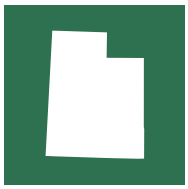
GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Texas requires students to take a half-year course in economics for graduation. See: Texas Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are 24 strands in the Texas economics standards, six of which cover personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 15 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: Texas Economics Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Texas measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: In 2012, the Texas legislature created the Texas Financial Education Endowment to support statewide financial education and credit-building programs. The endowment fund was created by the legislature as part of a regulatory program for credit access businesses. Each credit access business, a financial service provider that facilitates payday and auto title loans, is required to pay an annual assessment to the endowment fund to sustain the financial capability and education programs. See: Texas Financial Endowment Fund. The Texas Department of Education provides online resources for teachers of personal finance. See: Texas online teaching resources. Texas requires personal financial literacy education in mathematics instruction in Grades K–8, requires each school district to offer a half-year course in personal financial literacy and mandates that such courses include instruction in the methods for paying for post-secondary education. See: Texas K–8 Financial Literacy Requirements. Texas also requires that a personal finance course be offered as a mathematics credit for high school career and technology education. See: Texas Financial Literacy Requirements Career and Technology Education. Texas requires that state colleges that train future K–12 educators offer them personal finance training. See: Texas State College Teacher Training.



Utah

GRADE A+

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Utah requires all high school students to take a half-year general financial literacy course as a graduation requirement. See: Utah High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Utah has very robust and specific competency-based standards that are applicable to the mandated course. See: Utah Personal Finance Standards.

ASSESSMENT: Utah requires students to take a standardized end-of-course personal finance exam that was created by a third-party provider and administered by the state.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Utah State Office of Education has also created a Utah Educator Website exclusively dedicated to financial literacy. In 2014, the Utah legislature passed a law that added requirements to its preexisting high school education mandate. As a result of this law, Utah is clearly the leader in high school personal finance education in the nation. The new law requires:

- General financial literacy course must address (in addition to a broad list of topics already legally required) the costs of going to college, student loans, scholarships and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and technology that relates to banking, savings and financial products;
- The State Board of Education to make available to teachers online resources for financial and economic literacy education, including modules with interactive activities and turnkey instructor resources;
- High schools to administer an online, end-of-course assessment to students that take the general financial literacy course, and funds the creation of such assessment by a third-party expert provider;
- The State Board of Education to provide professional development opportunities in financial and economic literacy; and
- The State Board of Education to implement a teacher endorsement in general financial literacy that includes course work in financial planning, credit and investing, consumer economics, and personal and family economics. This means that educators must have demonstrable expertise in the subject matter before they are allowed to teach the general financial literacy course.

The law was a funded mandate with a total of $450,000 allocated for the implementation of these additional requirements.

Vermont

GRADE D

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, taking a course with personal finance concepts is not a graduation requirement. Local districts may offer a personal finance course either on a stand-alone basis or embedded into another course offering. High school graduation requirements are determined by the local school districts. See: Vermont School Quality and Education Quality Standards Concepts (page 2).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: In 2014, Vermont adopted Vermont Education Quality Standards (EQS) that require local school districts to deliver curriculum aligned to Vermont Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs) approved by the State Board of Education. Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in global citizenship (including the concepts of civics, economics, geography, world language, cultural studies and history). Although global citizenship includes economics, it does not include financial literacy. In addition to the EQS and PBGRs, educational standards have been approved by the state board of education that include some financial literacy topics. See: Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities (Framework).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Vermont measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement. The financial literacy topics identified in the Framework are classified as "vital results." Vital results standards are the responsibility of teachers in all fields of knowledge. Thus, personal finance topics lack a subject matter home in the framework. The financial literacy concepts are fairly sparse and briefly cover the topics of personal economics and career choices.

EXTRA CREDIT: The Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College created a Financial Literacy Task Force of governmental, business and non-profit leaders that made recommendations for policymakers with regard to increasing Vermonter's financial literacy, see Vermont's Financial Literacy Action Plan. In 2015, a law was passed creating a financial literacy commission to make policy recommendations to the governor and legislature. See: Vermont Financial Literacy Commission Law (page 16). The Office of the State Treasurer has created a website that provides financial literacy resources. See: Treasurer Financial Literacy Resources. The Treasurer also administers a Financial Literacy Trust Fund.

Virginia

GRADE A

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, Virginia requires that students take a full-year course titled Economics and Personal Finance in order to graduate. See: Virginia High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Nine of the 18 standards for the Economics and Personal Finance course are in personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 60 hours of instruction in personal finance, which is the equivalent of a one-semester course. See: Virginia Economics and Personal Finance Standards. For additional information, see: Virginia Financial Literacy FAQs.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Virginia measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: Virginia makes financial literacy resources available online for teachers. See: Virginia Financial Literacy Resources.

Washington

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Washington state requires high school students to complete several courses in social studies, including U.S. history, Washington state history and contemporary world history. See: Washington State High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: Washington has economics standards embedded in their 12th grade social studies standards, but there are no personal finance concepts included in those standards. See: Washington State Economics Standards (pages 107–113).

EXTRA CREDIT: The Washington state legislature recently amended a law that went into effect on July 24, 2015, which requires the Superintendent of Education to integrate financial education, skills and content knowledge into the state learning standards. See: Washington State Legislation for Financial Education (page 7). However, Washington's grade does not reflect the passage of this law because it has not yet been implemented. Any grade given in a future National Report Card by the Center for Financial Literacy will be based on how this new requirement is actually implemented. Washington state also offers some financial literacy education through its career-ready program for 6th through 12th grades. See: Washington Financial Literacy Education 6–12.

West Virginia

GRADE B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? Yes, West Virginia requires students to take a full-year course called Civics for the Next Generation. See: West Virginia High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: There are 43 social studies, economics, personal finance and geography learning objectives in Civics for the Next Generation, five of which relate to personal finance. Based on this information, we estimate that students receive approximately 14 hours of instruction in personal finance. See: West Virginia Economics and Personal Finance Strands (pages 105–106).

CAVEAT: It is not clear how West Virginia measures student achievement in financial literacy.

EXTRA CREDIT: The West Virginia Treasurer's office launched a program, NetWorth, which promotes financial education through all West Virginia public schools beginning in kindergarten. The program has won numerous national honors, including awards from the Council of State Governments and the Institute for Financial Literacy. See: West Virginia NetWorth Program.

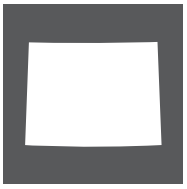
Wisconsin

GRADE F

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Wisconsin does not require any specific courses for graduation. See: Wisconsin High School Graduation Requirements.

EDUCATION STANDARDS: In 2006, a statewide task force consisting of representatives from both the public and private sector developed Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Personal and Financial Literacy. These standards are rigorous and are to be used by local districts and teachers as guides (but are not mandatory) for developing local grade-by-grade curriculum. See: Wisconsin Personal Finance Standards.

EXTRA CREDIT: Wisconsin created an Office of Financial Literacy in 2000 (see: Wisconsin Office of Financial Literacy), and then in 2010, by executive order, it created the Governor's Council on Financial Literacy. See: Wisconsin Governor's Council on Financial Literacy. The Council's mission is to improve financial literacy in Wisconsin by expanding teacher training in financial literacy, incentivizing K–16 educational institutions to implement financial literacy through grants and awards, and providing an annual report on their progress to the Governor and the Department of Financial Institutions' Office of Financial Literacy. See: Wisconsin Executive Order Creating the Council. In 2013, the Offices of Financial Literacy and Public Instruction released a Financial Literacy Survey Report. See: Wisconsin Financial Literacy Survey Report 2013. This survey of Wisconsin school districts indicated that 44% required a course in personal finance for graduation. In districts with a required course, 89% have aligned their course to Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Personal Financial Literacy. 74% of Wisconsin school districts include personal finance content integrated within courses other than a discrete course, and 60 percent of local districts report offering personal finance content at grade levels other than high school. A summary document provides the financial literacy accomplishments the state has achieved as of fall 2015. The highlights indicate that 54% of Wisconsin high school graduates are receiving personal finance through a graduation requirement and that 36% of Wisconsin school districts do not have a one semester personal finance course requirement. See: Wisconsin Financial Literacy Highlights



Wyoming

GRADE D

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement? No, Wyoming does not require any specific courses for graduation. Wyoming requires three years of instruction in social studies, including economic systems and institutions. See: Wyoming High School Graduation Requirements (Section 9).

EDUCATION STANDARDS: While Wyoming's requirements indicate that economics must be taught as part of the social studies credits, there are minimal significant personal finance concepts included in those standards. See: Wyoming Social Studies Academic Standards (page 13). Wyoming's Career and Vocational Education Standards also include some personal finance concepts. See: Wyoming Career and Vocational Education Standards.

CAVEAT: It is not clear how Wyoming measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.

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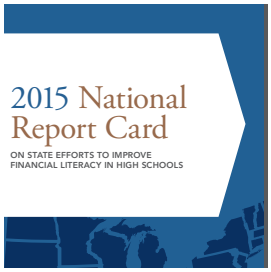
About the Center for Financial Literacy and Champlain College



Champlain College's Center for Financial Literacy (the Center) is committed to improving the personal finance knowledge of our nation's K–12 and college students, teachers and adults.

Established in 2010 in direct response to the recent financial crisis, the Center's programs have been created to increase knowledge of money matters in classrooms across the nation; ensure college students graduate with the skills to make sound decisions about spending, credit, debt and investments; and help adults navigate difficult financial situations like buying a home and saving for retirement.

The Center for Financial Literacy is a partnership among several financial institutions, non-profit entities and governmental agencies. The Center also advocates for more financial education opportunities at the local, state and national level.

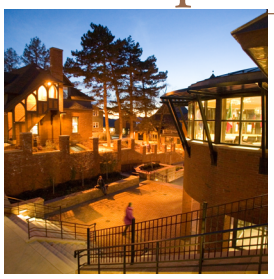
The Center has developed innovative graduate level training for K–12 teachers designed to give them the confidence, skills and curriculum tools to teach personal finance in their classrooms. This teacher training program was created in partnership with the Jump$tart Coalition's Teacher Training Alliance Program. The Center also participated in a national pilot project and study that shows how educators receiving this type of training dramatically improve their confidence when teaching personal finance, and how this also results in positive behavioral changes by the educators in their own personal lives. The Center has followed some of the educators that have completed this training into their high school classrooms to measure their impact on the knowledge and behaviors of students that take a half-year course (or its equivalent) in personal finance. In addition, the Center has measured the knowledge and behaviors of students that have not taken a personal finance course. Those findings will be released with the National Endowment of Financial Education prior to the end of 2015.

The Center's teacher training initiatives and Champlain College's undergraduate student training programs were recognized by the White House in a May 2012 report. The Center has also been recognized as a source of useful information and curriculum tools by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau in its 2015 report "Advancing K–12 Financial Education: A Guide for Policymakers". The Center has partnered with MarketWatch on a "Money for Life" series of videos geared toward giving sound financial advice to Millennials. The Center established a Vermont Financial Literacy Task Force that issued its final report in December 2014 which has so far resulted in two laws being passed by the state of Vermont in support of financial literacy. The Center is known throughout the country for its National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools. The Center also offers an award-winning game for middle and high school students, called Awesome Island, that is designed to help educators introduce financial literacy concepts into the classroom in a fun and engaging way. The Center has partnered with a third-party assessment creation firm, which has been involved with the creation of both major assessments being used in Common Core states, to produce a high school financial literacy assessment examination. After two years of work, the assessment questions are complete. Once funding is obtained, the Center will have these assessment questions reviewed by an independent, nationally regarded, psychometric firm that will conduct a multi-state field test and validation study. Once this research is complete, the Center plans to make available a high-quality, scientifically validated test that can be used by high schools and post-secondary education institutions. In the long term, it is our hope that with a strategic sponsor, the Center will be able to offer this exam free of charge to states and local school districts.

The Center is also proud to be a partner in a program that requires all Champlain College undergraduate students to participate in educational opportunities designed to give them financial sophistication prior to graduation. Champlain is one of the few colleges that require students to take such personal finance training.

For more information on the Center, click here: champlain.edu/centers-of-excellence/center-for-financial-literacy.

Champlain College



Founded in 1878, Champlain College is a small, not-for-profit, private college in Burlington, Vermont, with additional campuses in Montreal, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Champlain offers a traditional undergraduate experience from its beautiful campus overlooking Lake Champlain and over 60 online undergraduate and graduate degree programs and certificates. Champlain's distinctive career-driven approach to higher education embodies the notion that true learning occurs when information and experience come together to create knowledge. Champlain College is included in The Princeton Review's "Best 380 Colleges for 2016." Champlain College is featured in the 2016 Fiske Guide to Colleges as one of the "best and most interesting schools" in the United States, Canada and Great Britain. For more information, visit champlain.edu.

John Pelletier is Director of the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College, and was formerly chief operating officer and chief legal officer at some of the largest asset management firms in the United States. Follow John's tweets here.