



2021 JA Teens & Personal Finance Survey



Presented by:



Introduction

From February 26 to March 8, 2021, Wakefield Research conducted a survey on behalf of Junior Achievement USA and Citizens. An online survey to 2,000 nationally representative U.S. teens ages 13-19 who are not currently enrolled in college, and to an oversample of 500 students who graduated high school in 2020. An overview of those findings is contained here in the JA Teens & Personal Finance Survey Executive Summary.

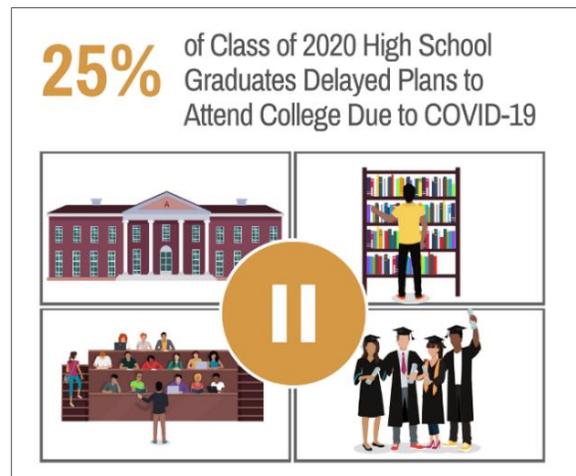
COVID-19 and the Impact on College Attendance and Plans

In the Spring of 2020, there was much concern about how the COVID-19 pandemic would impact the “Class of 2020,” high school students who would be graduating during the greatest epidemic in a century. How would the pandemic and economic impact affect the plans of this graduating class when it came to going to college, working, and preparing for the future?

The 2021 JA Teens & Personal Finance survey looks at the Class of 2020, as well as those teens currently in school and making plans for the future.

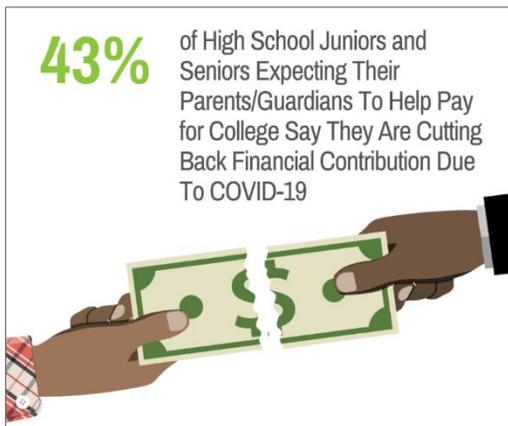
Regarding the Class of 2020 high school graduates, one-in-four (25%) delayed their plans to attend college due to the pandemic. Only about one-in-ten (12%) current high school juniors and seniors plan to delay attending college because of COVID-19.

At the same time, four-in-ten (40%) teens not yet graduated from high school have it as a top goal to earn a college degree in the next 10 years. Meanwhile, only one-in-five (20%) Class of 2020 high school graduates have the goal of getting a college degree in the next 10 years.



The Pandemic’s Impact on Paying for College

One factor that could be playing into the delay of college plans is the financial impact of the pandemic on families. Nearly three-in-four (72%) Class of 2020 high school graduates planning to attend college expect their parents or guardians to pay at least part of their college education, and among them, 37 percent say their parents or guardians will cut back on their planned financial support for college education due to COVID. About four-in-five juniors or seniors in high school (81%) planning to attend college expect their parents or guardians to pay at least part of their college education, and among them, 43 percent say their parents or guardians will cut back on planned financial support for college.



About 3-in 5-Black (60%) and Hispanic (59%) teens in grade 11 or 12 report COVID-19 has affected how they will pay for college, compared to just under half (45%) of their White peers.

Financial Prospects for the Future

Findings from the survey show that the long-term financial impact of COVID-19 is top-of-mind for many of today’s young people. A majority of Class of 2020 high school graduates (60%) and teens who have not yet graduated high school (56%) say they have had discussions about family finances with their parents or guardians. Additionally, approximately the same percentages of Class of 2020 high school graduates (60%) and teens not yet graduated from high school (61%) say that something has happened to parents or guardians as a result of COVID-19, ranging from working remotely to losing a job or borrowing money to pay bills. Nearly a quarter (23%) of Class of 2020 high school graduates are living with parents or guardians to save money due to COVID.



In terms of top goals within ten years of high school graduation, only a third (33%) of Class of 2020 high school graduates say “being financially independent from parents” is a top goal, compared to a higher percentage (42%) for teens not yet graduated from high school.

Despite these findings and the challenges faced by today’s young people, a majority (73%) of teens who have not yet graduated high school remain optimistic about their financial future. Even after delaying post-high school plans, most of the Class of 2020 (65%) remains optimistic about their financial future.

Methodology

The Junior Achievement Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research (www.wakefieldresearch.com) among 2,000 nationally representative U.S. teens ages 13-19 who are not currently enrolled in college, with an oversample of 500 students who graduated high school in 2020, between February 26th and March 8th, 2021, using an email invitation and an online survey.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 2.2 percentage points for the main sample, and 4.4 percentage points for the high school graduate oversample, from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

Disclosure: Citizens Bank and Citizens One are brand names of Citizens Bank, N.A. Member FDIC.