



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2025

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## More Teens are Participating in Financial Literacy Courses, but Gaps in Learning Evident, According to New Survey

*42% of teens are “terrified” they won’t have enough money for the future*

**COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo.** – The JA Teens & Personal Finance Survey, conducted by [Junior Achievement](#) and [MissionSquare Retirement's Foundation](#), reveals that more high school students are being offered financial literacy courses, yet significant knowledge gaps in the curriculum must be filled to help the nation’s youth prepare for their futures.

According to a new survey of 13 to 18-year-olds fielded independently by Wakefield Research, 45% of high schoolers took a personal finance or financial literacy class at school, up from 31% in 2024. Of those students who took their school’s curriculum, 64% found it extremely or very helpful, yet diving deeper, data reveals otherwise.

### Topline Data

- 68% of teens agree that saving for retirement is something they can think about later in life.
- 43% of teens believe that an interest rate of 18% on debt is manageable and can be paid off over time.
- 80% of teens have never heard of FICO credit scores or do not fully understand their purpose.
- 42% of teens are terrified they won’t have enough money to cover their future needs and goals.
- Teenagers’ three most appealing investing strategies are savings accounts, side hustles, and keeping cash at home.
- When they receive money, only 36% save a part for their future, 23% save for their education, and 13% invest.

“More states are adopting financial literacy requirements, but this research would indicate that not all of the courses offered are having the desired impact on student knowledge,” said Tim Greinert, President of Junior Achievement USA. “It’s important that financial literacy courses use evidence-based approaches to positively affect knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, and go beyond simple online courses that may or may not promote those learning outcomes.”

Junior Achievement is a leader in financial literacy programs, with rigorous, multi-year curriculum that aligns with state educational standards that is shown by [third-party evaluations](#) to have a positive impact on students’ financial readiness.

“There is so much for teens to absorb when learning about finances and planning for their future, they often struggle to envision what lies ahead,” said Andre Robinson, President and CEO of MissionSquare Retirement. “By offering engaging programs that boost their financial knowledge and decision-making skills, literacy courses will help inspire them to build a strong foundation of lifelong financial resilience and success.”

Students K-12 have access to nearly 100 Junior Achievement organizations across the country that offer a wide [range of programs](#) that use proven programs, engaging curricula, and experienced volunteers to guide students through skills ranging from personal finance, investing, and economics to entrepreneurship, career planning, and creative thinking.

Full research results [can be found here](#):

#### **Survey Methodology:**

The Junior Achievement and MissionSquare Foundation Teens & Personal Finance Survey was conducted by Wakefield Research ([www.wakefieldresearch.com](http://www.wakefieldresearch.com)) among 1,000 nationally representative US Teens ages 13-18, between February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025, using an email invitation and an online survey. Data was weighted to ensure a reliable and accurate representation of U.S. teens ages 13-18.

*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 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.*

#### **About Junior Achievement USA® (JA)**

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and economic choices. JA learning experiences are delivered by corporate and community volunteers and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give students from kindergarten through high school knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, Junior Achievement is expanding its reach to 18-to-25-year-olds to provide young adults with critical life skills, as well as to pre-K youth to ensure children get a solid head start. Today, JA reaches more than 4.6 million students per year in nearly 100 markets across the United States as part of 12.5 million students served by operations in more than 100 other countries worldwide. Junior Achievement USA is a member of JA Worldwide. For more information, visit [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org).

#### **About MissionSquare Foundation**

The MissionSquare Foundation, launched in 2022 through an initial \$20 million grant from MissionSquare Retirement, seeks to make a meaningful impact in our communities by focusing on the long-term well-being of youth. Our core initiatives focus on civic mindedness, financial capabilities, critical thinking and leadership development skills. We believe that cultivating these lifelong skills in our next generation support strong, sustainable and thriving communities. For more information, visit [www.missionsq.org](http://www.missionsq.org).