

Personal Finance Curriculum Guide

March 2026

California Department of Education



How to Use This Guide

This *Personal Finance Curriculum Guide* was developed to support educators, administrators, curriculum specialists, and district leaders as they implement California's new high school graduation requirement: a standalone, one-semester course in personal finance, as established by [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2927 \(2024\)](#) (CA Legislative Info).

Whether launching a new course, improving an existing program, or planning for districtwide rollout, this guide provides a structured, yet flexible roadmap aligned with [California Education Code \(EC\) Section 51284.5](#). It combines guidance with practical tools, instructional strategies, and curated resources, empowering local educational agencies (LEAs) to design high-quality, inclusive financial literacy experiences that meet the needs of California's diverse student population.

Who Should Use This Guide

- Classroom teachers designing or delivering personal finance instruction for the first time or refining existing practice
- Site and district administrators leading implementation, staffing, and scheduling
- District curriculum teams creating or evaluating course outlines for local board and/or University of California (UC) A–G approval
- Counselors and college/career advisors supporting course enrollment, postsecondary planning, and workforce pathways
- Instructional coaches and professional learning community (PLC) leads building teacher capacity and supporting effective instructional practices

Chapter Overview

<i>Section</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
Chapter 1: History and Context	Outlines the rationale for financial literacy, the legislative foundation of AB 2927 (CA Legislative Info), and California's vision for equitable, student-centered implementation.

Section	Purpose
Chapter 2: California's 13 Personal Finance Topics	Presents each of the 13 required topics outlined in EC 51284.5 (CA Legislative Info), along with aligned standards and clearly defined student learning outcomes.
Chapter 3: Implementation at the District and Site Levels	Provides LEAs with tools for planning, staffing, A–G course submission, phased rollout, and local adaptation. Includes decision guides, vignettes, and sample structures.
Chapter 4: High-Quality Curriculum, Resources, and Instructional Design	Offers guidance on selecting and customizing instructional materials. Includes vetted providers, sample pacing tools, and strategies for continuous improvement.
Chapter 5: Professional Learning for Personal Finance Educators	Outlines professional learning opportunities, from foundational onboarding to advanced content certification. Includes provider-specific PL and recommendations for building internal capacity.
Chapter 6: Instructional Design and Pedagogy	Supports effective teaching through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), culturally responsive pedagogy, inquiry-based learning, Project-based Learning (PBL), and embedded assessment practices.
Chapter 7: Outside Enrichment and Community Engagement	Offers suggestions for sites and educators on connecting course content to the real world through partnerships with families, financial institutions, nonprofits, and community-based organizations.

Notes on Flexibility and Local Control

This guide is designed to support and encourage statewide consistency while honoring California's tradition of local educational control. Districts and schools may adapt, supplement, or build upon this framework to reflect their community context, cultural diversity, and student needs. The emphasis throughout is on coherence, equity, and student empowerment.

Chapter 1

History and Context: The Case for Financial Literacy in California High Schools

The Importance of Financial Literacy Education

In today's complex and rapidly evolving economy, financial literacy is not a luxury—it is a foundational life skill. As students transition from high school into adulthood, they face a wide array of financial decisions with long-term consequences, including evaluating student loan offers, understanding credit terms, building emergency savings, and making informed investment choices. Navigating these challenges requires not just knowledge, but confidence.¹

Unfortunately, many young adults lack the financial literacy needed to make informed decisions, often leading to high-interest debt, under-saving, and long-term financial insecurity. These trends contribute to broader economic issues such as wealth inequality and instability. National studies consistently show that individuals with stronger financial literacy are more likely to budget effectively, avoid high-cost financial products like payday loans, and save for future goals like retirement.²

High school financial education has been shown to produce meaningful outcomes. Students who receive personal finance instruction are more likely to complete financial aid applications, opt for low-cost federal student loans, and reduce reliance on high-interest credit.

Financial literacy also plays a critical role in long-term planning. As retirement systems shift from defined benefits to defined contributions, individuals are expected to make complex investment and savings decisions. Yet international assessments, such as data from the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*³, shows that US students perform below average in financial literacy, despite growing personal

¹ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (2019). A Review of Youth Financial Education: Effects and Evidence

² Kaiser, Tim, and Lukas Menkhoff. Does Financial Education Impact Financial Literacy and Financial Behavior? World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 8161, 2017.

³ OECD (2014), PISA 2012 Results: Students and Money – Financial Literacy Skills for the 21st Century (Volume VI), PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris.

responsibility for retirement planning.⁴ This mismatch makes a strong case for early and sustained personal finance instruction.

Empowering Students and Strengthening Communities

Financial education has ripple effects beyond the individual student. Those who complete coursework in personal finance are more likely to build savings, avoid delinquency, and model responsible credit behavior.⁵ They also bring financial knowledge home shaping household conversations around budgeting and long-term planning. In this way, financial literacy strengthens not just individual outcomes, but entire communities.⁶

In addition to providing students with essential knowledge and skills, personal finance education empowers them to recognize and respond to economic inequities, both those they may experience personally and those that affect their communities. By fostering financial capability, the course promotes critical awareness and supports informed decision making that contributes to long-term individual and collective well-being.

While financial education is not a cure-all for systemic challenges like income inequality or housing instability, it remains one of the most accessible levers schools can use to promote economic empowerment.⁷ At the societal level, widespread financial literacy contributes to stronger local economies, reduced reliance on public assistance, and greater resilience during financial shocks. As today's students enter an increasingly digital and complex financial world, high school personal finance education is more essential than ever.

A National Movement Toward Personal Finance Education

Across the nation, there is growing momentum for financial education in schools. Since the early 2000s, organizations such as the Jump\$tart Coalition and the Council for Economic Education have championed national standards for K–12 personal finance

⁴ Lusardi, Annamaria, and Carlo de Bassa Scheresberg. Enhancing Retirement Savings with School-Based Financial Education. Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center, 2016.

⁵ Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. A Review of Youth Financial Education: Effects and Evidence, 2019.

⁶ Lusardi, Annamaria, and Carlo de Bassa Scheresberg. Enhancing Retirement Savings with School-Based Financial Education. 2016.

⁷ Lusardi, Annamaria, Michaud, Pierre-Carl, and Mitchell, Olivia S. Optimal Financial Knowledge and Wealth Inequality. NBER Working Paper No. 18669, 2017.

instruction. The 2008 financial crisis further intensified calls for reform, leading to the creation of the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau \(CFPB\)](#), which now plays a central role in promoting financial transparency and consumer education.

Between 2015 and 2020, many states implemented personal finance graduation requirements. States including Tennessee and Utah initially led the charge in mandating standalone personal finance courses, with others like Florida, Georgia, and Michigan following suit. These efforts are backed by a growing body of evidence showing that early and dedicated instruction leads to measurable positive outcomes. For example, a 2020 study by Urban, Schmeiser, Collins, and Brown found that students who received mandated financial education had higher credit scores and lower delinquency rates later in life. Research from Montana State University also showed that financial education requirements increase savings rates among young adults.⁸ Additionally, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation's National Financial Capability Study (2018) reported that individuals exposed to financial education exhibit greater financial confidence and decision-making skills.⁹

Public support for personal finance education is also widespread. According to a 2022 national poll conducted by the [National Endowment for Financial Education \(NEFE\)](#), 88 percent of US adults believe their state should require a semester, or year-long personal finance course for high school graduation, and 80 percent said they wished they had been required to take such a course themselves.¹⁰ Support for financial literacy instruction spans across gender, income levels, and age groups, with particularly strong backing from older adults and those with postsecondary education. These findings echo the national appetite for formal financial education in high schools.

Alongside growing public support, a robust research base underscores the value of personal finance education. Early studies consistently demonstrated that students who complete dedicated personal finance courses experience measurable benefits, including improved financial knowledge, stronger financial behaviors, and better credit and borrowing outcomes. More recent research has expanded beyond outcomes alone to examine instructional practice, policy design, and issues of equity and access.

⁸ Urban, Carly, Maximilian Schmeiser, J. Michael Collins, and Alexandra Brown. "The Effects of High School Personal Financial Education Policies on Financial Behavior." *Economics of Education Review*, vol. 78, 2020, Article 101920.

⁹ FINRA Investor Education Foundation. [The State of U.S. Financial Capability: The 2018 National Financial Capability Study](#). Washington, DC: FINRA Investor Education Foundation, 2019.

¹⁰ National Endowment for Financial Education. "Poll: Most Adults Support Financial Education Mandates," April 2022.

Influential scholars such as Carly Urban have played a key role in advancing this work by rigorously examining the causal effects of financial education while translating findings for educators and policymakers. Organizations such as the National Endowment for Financial Education further strengthen the field by supporting and disseminating research on effective financial education, systemic barriers, and culturally responsive approaches. Interdisciplinary initiatives, including Stanford University's [Initiative for Financial Decision Making \(IFDM\)](#), bring together research, data, and practice to improve instructional quality and ensure that financial education is accessible, relevant, and empowering for all students. As part of this work, IFDM is currently developing a research-informed summer institute, anticipated to launch in 2026, designed to support educators and leaders in applying evidence-based approaches to financial education.

Digital technology has also expanded access to financial literacy information. Students now engage with financial topics through budgeting apps, interactive simulations, and social media content—tools that reinforce classroom instruction and offer real-time opportunities to apply financial knowledge.

In California, however, access to formal personal finance instruction varied widely prior to 2024. Some districts offered standalone electives, while others embedded financial concepts within economics courses or social science classes. This patchwork system often left students, particularly those in under-resourced schools, without consistent or comprehensive preparation in key financial skills.

Recognizing these gaps, California took decisive action.

California's Legislative Commitment: Assembly Bill 2927

In 2024, California cemented its commitment to financial education with the passage of [Assembly Bill \(AB\) 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info). This legislation established a high school graduation requirement mandating that all students, beginning with the Class of 2030–31, complete a one-semester, standalone course in personal finance.¹¹

[AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) represents a historic milestone in California's educational landscape. Signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom on June 29, 2024, the bill formally amended [EC Section 51225.3](#) (CA Legislative Info) and fundamentally reshaped how personal finance is taught statewide. Prior to its passage, financial literacy was typically integrated into broader subjects, often without sufficient time or emphasis to build meaningful, lasting skills. By establishing personal finance as a

¹¹ California State Legislature. [AB 2927](#) (Chapter 172, Statutes of 2024) (CA Legislative Info).

standalone course, California ensures that every student, regardless of ZIP code, background, or future plans, has equitable access to this essential knowledge.

In addition to creating a new graduation requirement, the *Education Code* provides critical flexibility for local implementation: an amendment following the bill's enactment grants the authority to waive the one-semester economics requirement to LEAs, beginning with the graduating class of 2030-31. This shift empowers LEAs to structure course offerings that reflect the needs and priorities of their communities, while maintaining a strong foundation in economic reasoning through the personal finance course.

At the same time, LEAs are strongly encouraged to carefully consider what students may lose when forgoing a dedicated economics course. While personal finance instruction can be enhanced by utilizing economic reasoning skills such as opportunity costs and cost-benefit analysis, there are broader economic and policy topics such as monetary and fiscal policy, global trade, and economic systems that will not be addressed.

As districts design local graduation pathways, this flexibility should be exercised with thoughtful attention to content coverage, instructional goals, and student readiness. Where feasible, some LEAs may opt to maintain both courses, integrate economic content into other disciplines, or offer expanded electives to ensure students have access to a well-rounded education in both personal and public finance.

In January of 2025 the State Board of Education approved a set of [foundational principles](#) to guide the development of this document and ensure that it aligns with relevant state and national content standards and statutes called for in [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info). To support this, the Legislature appropriated \$300,000 from the General Fund to develop a comprehensive Personal Finance Curriculum Guide. Developed collaboratively with educators and subject matter experts, a final draft of this guide is intended to be adopted by the State Board of Education on or before May 31, 2026.

Guiding the Work: The Role of CDE and the IQC

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) are jointly responsible for developing the Personal Finance Curriculum Guide. As the advisory body to the State Board of Education, the IQC is tasked with ensuring that the guide reflects the intent of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) and aligns with [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info), which outlines 13 personal finance topics.

The curriculum guide, where appropriate, aligns with California’s [Common Core State Standards](#), the [Model School Library Standards](#), and the [National Standards for Personal Financial Education](#). The IQC has conducted public comment sessions, incorporated stakeholder feedback, and recommended a final draft to the State Board of Education for adoption.

To lead this work, CDE contracted with Fresno Unified School District (FUSD), recognized for its innovative leadership in advancing financial literacy and its commitment to inclusive, evidence-based instructional practices.¹² Fresno Unified’s experience offers a compelling model for rapid and scalable implementation: within a single year, the district expanded from offering personal finance at just one high school through an entrepreneurial pathway to offering the course at 10 high schools across the district. What had been a single teacher serving fewer than 60 students grew into a team of 16 personal finance educators delivering 35 sections of instruction to nearly 1,000 students. Most notably, student demand for the course exceeded expectations. In its first offering as a districtwide elective, personal finance quickly became one of the most highly ranked student course requests. In fact, had Fresno Unified attempted to enroll every student who selected personal finance as their top choice, even more sections would have been needed to meet demand. This groundswell of interest underscores both the critical need for high-quality personal finance education and the strong student appetite for it when it is made accessible.

Purpose and Vision of the Curriculum Guide

The *Personal Finance Curriculum Guide* supports educators, administrators, and districts in implementing California’s new graduation requirement by offering a consistent, standards-aligned foundation for high-quality instruction, while allowing for local adaptation. Developed in alignment with principles approved by the State Board of Education in January 2025, the guide reflects [Assembly Bill 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) and [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info), and incorporates broad public input gathered by the California Department of Education.

¹² California Department of Education. [Personal Finance Education](#).

Emphasis Areas Supporting Implementation

To facilitate implementation, this curriculum guide emphasizes five interrelated areas of focus designed to support high-quality instruction, equitable access, and effective rollout across the state.

Consistency and Rigor

The curriculum guide is designed to provide clear explanations of the 13 personal finance topics outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info), including the rationale for their inclusion as essential knowledge for high school graduates. By offering guidance on how each topic connects to real-life financial responsibilities, the guide supports educators in addressing both the letter and the spirit of the legislation. This clarity ensures that all students, regardless of district, region, or local implementation model, receive a consistent, rigorous, and relevant personal finance education that prepares them for lifelong financial well-being.

Support for Teachers

Recognizing that many educators may be teaching personal finance for the first time, the guide offers an array of resources to support instructional planning and professional growth. It includes access to model course outlines, instructional strategies, and culturally responsive pedagogy. To support content delivery, the guide highlights free, high-quality, and standards-aligned curriculum sources that districts may choose to adopt or adapt. Additionally, the guide provides information on available professional learning opportunities for teachers—both those new to personal finance and those seeking to deepen their content expertise. The guide also provides guidance on educator qualifications in alignment with [EC Section 44257](#) (CA Legislative Info), ensuring that teachers delivering personal finance instruction are appropriately credentialed and supported.

District Implementation and Planning

To assist with implementation, the guide provides optional strategies for LEAs, including approaches to development, integration into master schedules, staffing considerations, and partnerships with community-based organizations. These tools are intended to help districts plan for effective rollout while meeting both legal requirements and the specific needs of their student populations.

Equity and Accessibility

California is home to one of the most diverse student populations in the nation. This guide reflects a strong commitment to equity by ensuring instructional resources are inclusive, culturally relevant, and linguistically accessible. Special attention is given to ensuring that all students, including English Learners (with particular attention to Long-Term English Learners), students with disabilities, and students from historically underserved communities. The goal is to ensure that all students can access, engage with, and apply personal finance concepts in meaningful ways. This approach aligns with the state's vision for educational equity and emphasizes connections to relevant academic standards.¹³

Alignment with State and National Standards

This guide demonstrates how the personal finance topics outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info) align with the [California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#). Where appropriate, it also highlights connections to media literacy content in the [Model School Library Standards](#), developed pursuant to [EC Section 18101](#) (CA Legislative Info) and incorporated into content area frameworks under [EC Section 33548](#) (CA Legislative Info), as well as to the [National Standards for Personal Financial Education](#). These alignments strengthen interdisciplinary learning and ensure that personal finance instruction is integrated into California's broader educational goals. Together, they promote coherence, instructional depth, and a shared vision for preparing students for college, career, and civic life.

Financial literacy also supports civic readiness. When students understand concepts like taxes, public budgets, and economic systems, they are better equipped to engage in policy discussions and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

¹³ California Department of Education. [Personal Finance Education](#).

Chapter 2

California's 13 Personal Finance Topics

Purpose of This Chapter

This chapter offers a thorough overview and rationale for the 13 essential content areas required in every California high school personal finance course, as outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info). Referred to throughout this guide as *California's 13 topics*, these content areas form the foundation of the state's new standalone graduation requirement. They reflect California's commitment to ensuring all students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate real-world financial decisions.

To support educators and curriculum developers, this chapter is organized into five key sections:

- A snapshot of the *EC* Section 51284.5(a)(1–13) which codified California's 13 personal finance topics
- A rationale explaining how topic 13 (*Other Topics*) was handled for the purpose of this guide
- A closer look at each topic focusing on:
 - Why It Matters
 - Student Learning Outcomes
 - Community Impact
- A graphic organizer intended to provide a quick-reference tool linking each topic to its real-world purpose and learning goals
- Standards alignment crosswalks that align each of the 13 personal finance topics and their associated learning outcomes to the following standards, which were incorporated into the SBE-adopted [foundational principles](#):
 - The [California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#) (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy), as appropriate—specifically, the *Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12* (pp. 81–82) and *Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12* (pp. 86–89)
 - The media literacy content in the [Model School Library Standards](#) (MSLS), when relevant

- The 2021 [National Standards for Personal Financial Education](#) (NSPFE), developed by the Council for Economic Education and Jump\$tart Coalition
- In order to ensure all students have access to personal finance, it is essential that educators also incorporate the [2012 California English Language Development Standards](#) throughout their instruction. (See chapter 6 for a more in-depth discussion on supporting English learners, including a vignette showing how one of the tasks discussed below can be scaffolded to support students whose proficiency levels are emerging, expanding, and bridging)

Snapshot: [EC Section 51284.5\(a\)\(1–13\)](#) (CA Legislative Info)

The full language of *EC* Section 51284.5(a)(1–13) is listed below for reference. These topics form the core content for California’s standalone personal finance course.

- (1) Fundamentals of banking for personal use, including, but not limited to, savings and checking and managing to minimize fees.
- (2) Principles of budgeting for independent living.
- (3) Employment and understanding factors that affect net income, including the topics described in subdivision (a) of [EC Section 49110.5](#) (CA Legislative Info).
- (4) Uses and effects of credit, including managing credit scores and the relation of debt and interest to credit.
- (5) Uses and costs of loans, including student loans, as well as policies that provide student loan forgiveness.
- (6) Types and costs of insurance, including home, auto, health, and life insurance.
- (7) Impacts of the tax system, including its impact on personal income, the process to file taxes, and how to read tax forms and pay stubs.
- (8) Principles of investing and building wealth, including investment alternatives to build financial security, including tax-advantaged investments such as pensions and 401(k) plans, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and index funds.
- (9) Enhancing consumer protection skills by raising awareness of common scams and frauds and preventing identity theft.
- (10) Identifying means to finance college, workforce education, low-cost community college options, and other career technical educational pathways or apprenticeships. Financing options covered may include scholarships, merit aid, and student loans.
- (11) Understanding how psychology can impact one’s financial well-being.
- (12) Charitable giving.
- (13) Other topics that are directly and specifically relevant to personal finance.

Addressing Topic 13: Incorporating Public Feedback

Since the passage of [AB 2927](#) (2024) (CA Legislative Info), the California Department of Education held two public comment periods to collect ideas and feedback from educators, families, and community members. Many participants suggested adding important real-world topics, like renting an apartment, using digital banking tools, and accessing California-based financial aid programs.

Although these topics weren't specifically listed in the original 12 content areas required by law, [EC Section 51284.5\(a\)\(13\)](#) (CA Legislative Info) allows flexibility to include "other topics that are directly and specifically relevant to personal finance." To reflect that, each of the additional topics has been thoughtfully embedded into one or more of the original 12 content areas based on thematic fit and instructional flow.

This approach ensures that the course remains cohesive and accessible, while also honoring community input. Each integrated topic is clearly marked in the chapter and shown in a summary chart below to support transparency, planning, and equitable implementation across schools.

Supporting Local Adaptation

In addition to integrating these new topics stemming from public comment, this approach offers a framework for LEAs to do the same. Under Topic 13, LEAs may choose to incorporate additional topics that are directly and specifically relevant to the personal finance needs of their students and communities. These might reflect emerging trends, evolving financial technologies, regional economic factors, or pressing local concerns.

By embedding such additions into the most relevant existing content areas, rather than treating them as separate standalone topics, LEAs can maintain instructional coherence while ensuring the course remains timely, relevant, and responsive to the lived experiences of their students. The guidance provided in this section is intended to help districts and educators make thoughtful, locally grounded decisions about how to use this built-in flexibility.

Public Comment Topics and Their Integrated Placement

<i>Additional “Other” Topics</i>	<i>Integrated Placement</i>
Digital finance (online banking & digital wallets)	1. Banking Basics
Cryptocurrency	1. Banking Basics 8. Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies
Renting an apartment	2. Budgeting for Independent Living
California-specific salary information	3. Employment and Net Income
Purchasing versus leasing a vehicle	4. Credit Management and Debt
Predatory lending	4. Credit Management and Debt 5. Understanding Loans 9. Consumer Protection & Fraud Prevention
Buying a home	5. Understanding Loans 8. Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies
California-specific financial information (e.g., California Dream Act , Cal Grant Programs, California Kids Investment and Development Savings [CalKIDS] Program)	10. College and Career Financing



Teacher Tip: Considerations When Addressing Cryptocurrency

Teacher Guidance on Crypto in Topic 1: Banking Basics

When introducing cryptocurrency in Banking Basics, emphasize its role as a *digital payment tool* rather than as an investment vehicle. Compare it with digital wallets and other fintech platforms that allow electronic transactions. Highlight accessibility, convenience, and consumer risks such as fraud, lack of regulation, and the difficulty of recovering lost or stolen funds. The goal is for students to understand how crypto functions in personal banking and payments, while critically evaluating whether and when it is practical or safe to use.

Teacher Guidance on Crypto in Topic 8: Investing and Building-Wealth Strategies

When revisiting cryptocurrency in the investing context, frame it as an *example of speculative assets* rather than a recommended wealth-building strategy. Encourage students to compare the risks, volatility, and lack of historical performance data with traditional, long-term investing tools such as retirement accounts, mutual funds, or diversified portfolios. Stress that while students may encounter crypto as an “investment” in the media or among peers, sound financial planning emphasizes time-tested strategies built on diversification, compounding, and consistent contributions.

A Closer Look at California’s 13 Personal Finance Topics

Each topic identified in [EC Section 51284.5\(a\)](#) (CA Legislative Info) is explored in greater detail in the sections that follow. For each, educators will find an overview of relevance, a set of clear student learning outcomes, a description of potential community impact, and alignment to national and state standards.

The following section takes a deeper dive into each of California’s 13 required personal finance topics. While the statutory language in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info) provides the legal foundation, this portion of the guide translates those requirements into practical instructional guidance.

For each topic, educators will find:

- *Why It Matters*: A concise rationale for the inclusion of this topic
- *Student Learning Outcomes*: Clearly defined, standards-aligned goals for what students should know and be able to do
- *Community Impact*: A reflection on how increased financial literacy in this area can benefit the broader community
- *Relevant Additions*: Where applicable, public-comment-based enhancements from Topic 13 have been integrated directly into one of the core content areas
- *Standards Alignment*: A topic-by-topic list of standard alignment to the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, MSLS, and NSPFE
- *Possible Student Activity/Tasks*: These examples are provided for illustrative purposes and are intended to help educators envision the types of real-world concepts and applications that align with each topic and its learning outcomes



Teacher Tip: A Closer Look at the Purpose of the “*Possible Student Task/Activity*”

Each topic overview includes a “Possible Student Task/Activity.” These examples are intended to provide a brief snapshot of what instruction for a given topic might look like in practice, helping readers build context and visualize how statutory content can be translated into classroom learning experiences.

These examples are not intended to serve as complete lessons, required activities, or model instructional sequences. Instead, they are illustrative and designed to support planning, reflection, and discussion among educators and instructional leaders.

Teachers and districts seeking fully developed lessons, assessments, and instructional resources aligned to California’s personal finance requirements should refer to chapter 4, which introduces a range of curriculum providers and instructional tools, including guidance on how those resources align to specific personal finance topics.

Topic 1: Banking Basics

“Fundamentals of banking for personal use, including, but not limited to, savings and checking and managing to minimize fees.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: *“Other Topics”*

- Digital Finance (online banking & digital wallets)
- Cryptocurrency (also covered in Topic 8: Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies)

Why it Matters

Basic banking knowledge is essential for navigating today’s increasingly cashless economy. In California, a significant number of young adults remain unbanked, limiting their access to secure financial services and exposing them to high-cost alternatives like payday lenders and check-cashing businesses. A lack of banking access and understanding can delay financial independence, hinder credit-building, and perpetuate cycles of economic instability. By building students’ confidence in using both traditional and digital banking tools, schools can help bridge equity gaps and lay the foundation for lifelong financial security.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Compare features of checking, savings, and online-only bank accounts, and explain key differences between banks and credit unions, including interest rates, fees, accessibility, and digital tools such as mobile banking and peer-to-peer payment platforms
- Demonstrate how to open a bank account, set up direct deposit, and responsibly use digital financial tools such as budgeting apps, payment apps, and digital wallets
- Explain how being unbanked (living without a savings or checking account) affects access to credit and long-term financial security
- Describe how emerging digital financial products, including cryptocurrency, function in personal banking and payments, and evaluate their benefits, limitations, and consumer risks

Community Impact

Improved banking literacy reduces reliance on high-cost financial services (e.g., check cashing, payday loans) that disproportionately target low-income communities. When students gain confidence using traditional and digital banking tools, they can help family members avoid financial traps, access secure payment systems, and build long-term trust with financial institutions.

<i>Standards Alignment:</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10, 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, 9, WHST.9–10, 11–12.1, 2, 4, 6, 7 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 11, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Saving (III): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3 Managing Credit (V): 12-7, 12-8	Students create a comparison chart of checking, savings, and online bank accounts. They simulate opening an account, set up direct deposit, and demonstrate use of digital payment tools. As part of the simulation, students also learn how to write a personal check and understand when it might be used. Students then reflect on how being unbanked affects long-term financial outcomes.

Topic 2: Budgeting for Independent Living

“Principles of budgeting for independent living.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: “Other Topics”

- Renting an Apartment

Why it Matters

Budgeting is a foundational skill that supports long-term financial health and day-to-day stability. Without it, young people are more likely to experience cycles of debt, housing insecurity, or delayed financial milestones. For students preparing to live independently, whether in college, the workforce, or their own households, knowing how to plan, track, and adjust a personal budget is essential. In today’s complex economy, where gig income, rent inflation, and subscription-based spending are common, budgeting also fosters resilience and decision-making power, especially for students navigating limited financial resources or preparing to take on fixed obligations such as rent.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Create and revise a monthly budget that includes fixed, variable, and periodic expenses—such as rent, utilities, and groceries
- Analyze personal or sample spending patterns using digital tools or case studies (e.g., preparing to rent an apartment)
- Identify needs vs. wants and apply strategies to reduce overspending or adjust for large fixed costs
- Plan for irregular income, security deposits, and move-in expenses
- Use budgeting apps or templates to track progress over time and stay within rental affordability guidelines

Community Impact

By developing strong budgeting skills, students are better prepared to manage real-world costs such as rent, groceries, utilities, and transportation. This preparation is especially important for youth aging out of foster care, first-generation college students, or those contributing to family income. Beyond meeting immediate needs, budgeting empowers students to set and achieve future financial goals, such as saving for college, building an emergency fund, or planning for a major purchase. When more individuals in a community are able to live within their means, avoid financial crises, and make intentional financial decisions, the result is greater household stability and long-term economic resilience for entire communities.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10 and 11–12.2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 4, 6 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 11, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 NSPFE: Spending (II): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5, 12-6	Students create and revise a detailed monthly budget for independent living using real housing and utility costs. They analyze spending patterns, distinguish between needs and wants, plan for irregular income, and ensure rent stays within affordability guidelines. Using a budgeting app or spreadsheet, students track and adjust their plan over time, justifying their financial decisions based on practical constraints and personal goals.

Topic 3: Employment and Net Income

“Employment and understanding factors that affect net income, including the topics described in subdivision (a) of Section 49110.5.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: “Other Topics”

- State-specific salary information

Why it Matters

Understanding the relationship between employment, compensation, and net income is critical to financial well-being. Many young people enter the workforce without a clear picture of how gross pay is reduced through taxes, benefits, and deductions, or how to evaluate total compensation when comparing jobs. Incorporating California-specific salary data and labor trends helps students better evaluate local opportunities and set realistic expectations. By learning to interpret pay stubs, understand benefits packages, and assess job offers holistically, students are better equipped to make informed career decisions and avoid financial missteps early in life. This knowledge also supports broader workforce readiness, career planning, and income stability over time.

Spotlight: Section 49110.5(a) – Employment Preparation Topics

To support informed career decision-making, [EC Section 49110.5\(a\)](#) (CA Legislative Info) outlines key topics that California schools are encouraged to teach as part of workforce preparation. These include:

- Career exploration and interest assessments
- Wages, benefits, and compensation
- Labor market trends
- Workplace rights and responsibilities
- Resume writing and interview skills
- Job retention and advancement strategies

Incorporating these topics into personal finance instruction enhances students’ understanding of how employment connects to financial planning, goal setting, and long-term economic security.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Interpret pay stubs and calculate net income from gross wages
- Analyze how deductions (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, union dues, health insurance premiums, retirement plan contributions) impact take-home pay

- Compare various forms of employment (e.g., hourly, salaried, freelance, gig work) and compensation structures
- Understand the role of education, job training, and credentials in shaping long-term earning potential
- Identify employee rights related to wages, hours, and working conditions
- Practice job readiness skills such as resume development and interview preparation

Community Impact

When students understand how work translates into income, and how that income is shaped by benefits, taxes, and legal protections, they are more likely to advocate for themselves in the workplace, seek out fair compensation, and plan for their financial future. State-specific data further equips students to make informed choices based on local labor markets and cost-of-living realities. This is particularly powerful for first-generation Americans, English learners, and students entering nontraditional career paths. Communities benefit when workers are financially literate, aware of their rights, and prepared to advance in sustainable careers. Over time, this reduces economic vulnerability, increases upward mobility, and contributes to a more informed and equitable workforce.

<i>Standards Alignment:</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 4, 6 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 3, 4, 5, 6 MSLS: 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 NSPFE: Earning Income (I): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5, 12-6, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9	Students select a target job and calculate net monthly income by analyzing a sample pay stub and evaluating deductions and benefits. They compare different employment types (e.g., freelance vs. salaried), explore how education and training influence earning potential, and research relevant wage rights and workplace protections. To demonstrate job readiness, students create a tailored resume and participate in a mock interview aligned to their chosen position.

Topic 4: Credit Management and Debt

“Uses and effects of credit, including managing credit scores and the relation of debt and interest to credit.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: “Other Topics”

- Purchasing vs. Leasing a Vehicle
- Predatory Lending (also covered in Topics 5: Understanding Loans, and Topic 9: Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention)

Why it Matters

Responsible credit use is one of the most influential factors in achieving long-term financial stability. In a state where many individuals carry high levels of consumer debt, students must understand how credit works, how interest compounds over time, and how to avoid the financial traps that disproportionately affect young and low-income borrowers. Without this knowledge, students are vulnerable to predatory lending, credit score damage, and cycles of unmanageable debt.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Explain how credit scores are calculated, how they can be maintained or improved, and how they impact access to credit
- Compare various types of credit and lending options, including credit cards, loans, “buy now, pay later” services, and vehicle financing, and describe the fundamental aspects of credit cards, including interest, minimum payment structures, credit limits, and associated fees.
- Analyze how interest rates, repayment terms, and borrowing behavior affect the total cost of credit and long-term financial health
- Identify predatory lending practices and develop strategies for avoiding high-risk credit products
- Evaluate how credit and debt decisions influence future opportunities, such as housing, employment, and access to additional credit

Community Impact

Credit literacy empowers students to make informed decisions, avoid predatory lending, and build strong financial reputations. Early exposure to these concepts helps young people secure affordable financing, steer clear of debt traps, and establish lasting

financial stability. Communities benefit when more residents can access fair credit, build assets like homes or vehicles, and contribute to local economic growth. Over time, this foundational knowledge helps break cycles of debt and expands opportunities for upward mobility across generations.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 4, 6 CA ELD: PI. 9-10 and 11-12.3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11; PII. 9-10 and 11-12. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Managing Credit (V): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5, 12-6, 12-7, 12-8	Students assess a hypothetical credit profile and evaluate multiple credit and debt products, such as credit cards and loans. They calculate interest over time, identify signs of predatory lending, analyze how each option impacts credit scores, and develop a written plan for building and maintaining strong credit—justifying their product choices with evidence and financial reasoning.

Topic 5: Understanding Loans

“Uses and costs of loans, including student loans, as well as policies that provide student loan forgiveness.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: *“Other Topics”*

- Buying a home (also covered in Topic 8: Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies)
- Predatory Lending (also covered in Topics 4: Credit Management and Debt and Topic 9: Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention)

Why it Matters

A loan, including a student loan, is money that is borrowed and that must be paid back with interest. While loans make it possible for people to make large purchases or to cover significant expenses, misunderstanding loan terms, interest rates, and repayment structures can lead to decades of financial strain. Many borrowers take on debt without fully understanding the long-term implications, leading to default, credit score damage, or limited career flexibility. In California, where housing and cost of living expenses are high, students need a clear, practical understanding of how borrowing works. For high school students, it is critical to understand the differences between federal and private

student loans, repayment options, and loan forgiveness programs. Financial literacy in this area is critical for students not just for college-bound students, but for anyone considering workforce training or career advancement supported by loans.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to):

- Identify common types of loans, including home loans, auto loans, student loans, and personal loans, and explain their typical terms and uses
- Compare interest rates, repayment terms, and total borrowing costs across different loan products and identify signs of predatory lending practices
- Analyze how credit history, loan type, and lender practices affect loan approval and pricing
- Understand repayment strategies, including early repayment, refinancing, and income-driven repayment plans (for student loans)
- Evaluate long-term financial impacts of taking on debt and determine when borrowing is or is not appropriate

Community Impact

Understanding the types and costs of loans leads to more informed borrowing decisions, which in turn reduces long-term financial hardship. While student loans may improve access to higher education, students who are financially literate are more likely to complete their education having sought out less costly, lower-risk loan options and repayment plans that align with their goals and circumstances. This reduces the chances of default and empowers students to achieve career goals without being burdened by unmanageable debt. At the community level, responsible borrowing supports greater economic mobility, reduces reliance on public assistance, and increases civic participation. As students share this knowledge with peers and family members, the benefits ripple outward creating more financially resilient households and promoting intergenerational economic opportunity.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, RI.9–10 and 11–12.2, W.9–10 and 11–12.2, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2 CA ELD: PI. 9-10 and 11-12.3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11; PII. 9-10 and 11-12. 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2 NSPFE: Managing Credit (V): 12-4, 12-6, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9	Students use loan simulation tools to evaluate three types of loans (e.g., student, auto, personal), analyzing interest rates, repayment terms, total costs, and available forgiveness or refinancing options. They create a borrowing decision tree outlining the pros and cons of each option and write a recommendation identifying the most financially sound choice based on a given scenario.

Topic 6: Insurance Types and Costs:

“Types and costs of insurance, including home, auto, health, and life insurance.”

Why it Matters

Insurance is a powerful tool for managing financial risk, yet many young adults lack a clear understanding of how it works or why it matters. Without adequate coverage, individuals and families can face severe financial consequences from unexpected events such as car accidents, medical emergencies, property damage, or natural disasters. Learning about insurance empowers students to make informed decisions that protect their health, belongings, and income. In a state like California, where healthcare costs, wildfire exposure, and housing instability are common concerns, insurance literacy is not just a personal skill, but a critical part of long-term financial security and resilience.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Identify and describe major types of insurance: health, auto, life, disability, and renters/homeowners
- Evaluate policy terms including premiums, deductibles, copays, coverage limits, and exclusions
- Compare different insurance products and providers based on cost, coverage, and personal needs

- Understand California-specific insurance laws and programs (e.g., minimum auto coverage, Medi-Cal eligibility, earthquake insurance)
- Analyze how insurance fits into a broader personal budget and long-term financial planning

Community Impact

Communities build greater economic resilience when there is a clear understanding of insurance options and costs. Students who can anticipate and manage financial risks are less likely to face devastating losses from unexpected events, helping to reduce reliance on emergency aid and public assistance. Over time, widespread insurance literacy contributes to stronger, more financially secure families, neighborhoods, and local economies.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.1, SL.9–10 and 11–12.4, RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 3, 4, 5, 6 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3,2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2 NSPFE: Managing Risk (VI): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5	In small groups, students research one type of insurance (e.g., auto, health, renters, or life), evaluating key terms such as premiums, deductibles, coverage limits, and relevant California-specific laws. Each group designs a personalized insurance package based on a fictional life scenario and integrates projected costs into a sample monthly budget. Afterward, groups present their findings to the class, allowing all students to compare insurance types and discuss how different forms of coverage work together to support long-term financial security.

Topic 7: Tax System Overview

“Impacts of the tax system, including its impact on personal income, the process to file taxes, and how to read tax forms and pay stubs.”

Why it Matters

Understanding how the tax system works is essential to managing personal income and meeting financial responsibilities. Taxes influence take-home pay, affect financial decisions throughout life, and play a critical role in funding public goods and services. By learning how to read a pay stub, complete tax forms, and identify deductions and credits, students gain the skills needed to plan ahead, avoid costly mistakes, and take advantage of tools that support long-term financial security. Tax literacy also helps foster civic awareness by showing how individual contributions support schools, roads, healthcare, and other essential infrastructure.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to):

- Explain how income taxes are calculated, withheld, and used to fund public services
- Identify the purpose of key tax documents such as W-2, 1099, and 1040 forms
- Complete a basic individual tax return using sample materials (evaluate the differences between filing as a dependent vs. independent)
- Recognize common deductions, credits, and filing requirements
- Evaluate the benefits of tax-advantaged savings accounts such as IRAs and 401(k)s

Community Impact

Tax literacy empowers students to take ownership of their earnings and avoid costly mistakes that can derail financial progress. When young people understand how to file taxes correctly, claim eligible benefits, and contribute responsibly to society, they become more financially self-sufficient and civically engaged. This is especially impactful for first-generation earners, immigrants, and English learners, groups often targeted by misinformation or predatory tax services. On a broader scale, improved tax literacy strengthens communities by increasing economic participation, boosting access to refundable tax credits, and supporting public trust in financial and government systems.



Teacher Tip

Consider explicitly discussing refundable tax credits with students, emphasizing that these benefits can make filing a tax return worthwhile even when a young person's income is too low to require one. Highlight credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC), and the Foster Youth Tax Credit (FYTC), along with other refundable credits that support low- and moderate-income workers. Understanding these programs helps students recognize when they may be eligible for significant financial support and reduces the likelihood that they will miss out on money owed to them. For more information, visit the [California Franchise Tax Board](#).

Teachers may note that enrolled members of federally recognized California Native American tribes may qualify for exemptions from certain California state taxes. Teachers can build awareness regarding such exemptions. More information regarding such exemptions is available on the [California Franchise Tax Board](#) website.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.4, RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 9 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 10, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2 NSPFE: Saving (III): 12-6, Earning Income (I): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4	Using technology simulations, students complete a full mock tax return with W-2/1099 data and write a short reflection on how taxes fund public services and affect take-home pay.

Topic 8: Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies

“Principles of investing and building wealth, including investment alternatives to build financial security, including tax-advantaged investments such as pensions and 401(k) plans, individual retirement accounts (IRAs), and stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and index funds.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: “Other Topics”

- Cryptocurrency (also covered in Topic 1: Banking Basics)
- Buying a Home (also covered in Topic 5: Understanding Loans)

Why it Matters

Investing is a key pathway to long-term financial security, but too often, young people lack access to clear, practical instruction on how to build wealth. Early, consistent investing, even in small amounts, can harness the power of compound interest to generate significant future gains. In addition to stocks, bonds, and retirement accounts, home ownership remains one of the most accessible and culturally significant forms of long-term asset building in the United States. Understanding both market-based and real estate investment strategies prepares students to make informed choices about how to grow their resources, protect against inflation, and achieve financial goals such as retirement, education funding, or buying a home. This knowledge empowers students to make decisions that can positively shape their financial futures and contribute to long-term generational stability.



Teacher Tip

This topic provides a natural opportunity to introduce wills and trusts as a means of protecting wealth. In so doing, teachers help students understand that wealth-building includes safeguarding what they gain as well as supporting families by providing instructions regarding assets, liabilities, and account information in the event a loss.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Compare investment options including stocks, bonds, index funds, mutual funds, and real estate (e.g., homeownership)
- Explain how compound interest, time, and risk tolerance affect investment returns
- Evaluate the features and benefits of tax-advantaged accounts such as IRAs, Roth IRAs, pensions, and 401(k)s
- Understand the financial considerations and long-term implications of homeownership, including down payments, mortgages, and property value appreciation
- Apply decision-making strategies to set personal investment goals based on timeline, income, risk tolerance, and the principles of diversification to help manage risk and optimize returns
- Evaluate emerging speculative assets such as cryptocurrency, comparing their volatility and risks with traditional long-term wealth-building strategies

Community Impact

A community thrives when more of its members are empowered to build assets, grow wealth, and plan confidently for the future. By demystifying investing and offering tools for real-world application, including pathways to homeownership, students gain the agency to make informed, values-based financial decisions. Investment education also helps students recognize barriers that contribute to unequal access. In doing so, it fosters critical thinking and self-advocacy skills needed to navigate and address those inequities.

Widespread investment literacy reduces wealth gaps, enhances financial resilience, and prepares individuals to navigate economic uncertainty. Over time, these efforts increase upward mobility, promote intergenerational financial security, and contribute to stronger, more equitable communities.

<i>Standards Alignment:</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.3, W.9–10 and 11–12.7, RH.9–10 and 11–12.2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10, 11–12.1, 2 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2 NSPFE: Investing (IV): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3, 12-4, 12-5, 12-6, 12-8, 12-10, 12-12	Students build a diversified investment portfolio aligned to a personal financial goal (e.g., retirement, homeownership, education). They compare various investment types, apply principles of risk, return, and diversification, calculate compound interest, and incorporate real estate as a potential long-term asset-building strategy.

Topic 9: Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention

“Enhancing consumer protection skills by raising awareness of common scams and frauds and preventing identity theft.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: *“Other Topics”*

- Predatory Lending (also covered in Topic 4: Credit Management and Debt)

Why it Matters

In today’s increasingly digital and data-driven economy, consumers face a growing array of financial threats, from phishing scams and identity theft to predatory lending and deceptive marketing. These risks can derail financial progress and disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, including seniors, recent immigrants, individuals who are not fluent in English, those with disabilities, and individuals with limited access to financial education. Helping students understand their rights, recognize red flags, and take preventative action not only protects their own finances, but also builds the critical thinking and digital literacy skills needed for long-term financial security.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Identify common forms of financial fraud, including phishing, identity theft, and online scams

- Recognize predatory financial products and lending practices
- Develop strategies for protecting personal information, digital assets, and financial records
- Understand basic consumer rights and how to take action when those rights are violated (e.g., filing complaints, freezing credit, seeking legal aid)
- Evaluate the credibility of financial offers, advertisements, and solicitations

Community Impact

Financially informed consumers are a powerful force in any community. By learning to recognize fraud, reject exploitative offers, and advocate for their rights, students help reduce the spread of scams and misinformation. These skills are particularly important for students who may act as translators or decision-makers for their families. Over time, widespread consumer protection literacy strengthens local economies, reduces financial losses, and fosters a culture of transparency, caution, and self-advocacy.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.1, 6, RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 4, 6, 9 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12; P29-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 7 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Managing Credit (V): 12-7, Managing Risk (VI): 12-6, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9	Students design a public service campaign, such as an educational infographic or public service announcement, to raise awareness about common scams, fraud, and identity theft targeting a specific age group or community. The campaign outlines protection strategies, includes analysis of predatory lending examples, and demonstrates how to evaluate financial offers and initiate a credit freeze.

Topic 10: College and Career Financing

“Identifying means to finance college, workforce education, low-cost community college options, and other career technical educational pathways or apprenticeships. Financing options covered may include scholarships, merit aid, and student loans.”

Relevant additions from Topic 13: “Other Topics”

- California-specific financial information (e.g., [Cal Grant](#), [CA Dream Act](#), [CalKIDS](#))

Why it Matters

Navigating the cost of postsecondary education is one of the most consequential financial decisions students will face. Whether pursuing college, vocational training, or apprenticeships, students must understand the full range of financial options available to them, including federal, state, and private aid. In California, unique programs such as the [Cal Grant](#), [CA Dream Act](#), CalKIDS, and [ScholarShare](#) expand access for eligible students but are often underutilized due to lack of awareness or application barriers. Equipping students with the knowledge to compare costs, access financial aid, and weigh return on investment (ROI) helps them make informed decisions that align with their goals, while minimizing debt and maximizing opportunity.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Compare financial aid sources, including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), [Cal Grant](#), [California Dream Act](#), scholarships, and merit-based aid
- Evaluate the cost and ROI of various postsecondary options, including community colleges, four-year universities, and career technical education
- Understand eligibility and application processes for California-specific programs such as CalKIDS and [Cal Grant](#), and the [California Dream Act](#)
- Interpret award letters and assess the long-term implications of different aid packages
- Develop a personalized postsecondary financing plan that balances educational aspirations with financial sustainability

Community Impact

When students understand how to fund their postsecondary goals, they are more likely to access and complete education or training programs that improve long-term earning potential. This is especially transformative for first-generation students, undocumented youth eligible for the CA Dream Act, and families with limited college planning experience. By sharing this knowledge with peers and relatives, students become catalysts for broader educational access and intergenerational mobility. Over time, communities benefit from a more educated workforce, reduced student loan burdens, and increased economic resilience.



Teacher Tip

Teachers can take opportunities to work with their school's counselors to provide students with grade appropriate information about financial aid, including guidance on completing the FAFSA and CA Dream Act Application for twelfth grade students. Additionally, they can build awareness of how the process differs for special populations, particularly youth with experience in foster care or homelessness and enrolled members of federally recognized Native American tribes. Likewise, teachers can raise awareness among students about funding opportunities such as the California Chafee Grant for Foster Youth which can provide up to an additional \$5,000 per year for college or career and technical training.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.3, 4, RH.9–10 and 11–12.8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 4, 6, 7, 9 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 11, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 2.1, 2.2,3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Earning Income (I): 12-5, 12-6, 12-7, 12-8, 12-9, Saving (III): 12-6	Students compare two postsecondary pathways using cost, financial aid, and ROI. They create a personalized financing plan that includes scholarships, grants, and loans, and reflect on long-term implications of different aid packages.

Topic 11: Behavioral Finance and Psychology

“Understanding how psychology can impact one’s financial well-being.”

Why it Matters

Financial decisions are rarely made with pure logic. Emotions, social pressure, cognitive bias, and marketing tactics can significantly shape how people spend, save, borrow, or invest. In a world of constant social media exposure and digital advertising, students often experience the fear of missing out (FOMO) which can drive impulsive purchases, overspending, and short-term decision-making. Understanding the psychological factors behind financial behavior helps students recognize these patterns in themselves and others. By developing strategies to pause, reflect, and align choices with their personal goals and values, students build the habits and mindset needed for long-term financial well-being.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Identify and explain common behavioral biases (e.g., loss aversion, present bias, overconfidence) and how they affect money decisions
- Analyze how advertising, peer influence, and emotional triggers can impact financial choices
- Apply strategies (such as setting default savings options or using visual goal setting) to build healthy financial habits
- Reflect on the connection between financial behavior and mental health, including stress, avoidance, or guilt
- Develop personal financial goals that align with long-term well-being rather than short-term gratification

Community Impact

When students understand how psychological forces influence financial decisions, they are more likely to make thoughtful, values-aligned choices, and help others do the same. This self-awareness reduces financial stress, fosters resilience, and empowers individuals to model positive habits in their homes and communities. Over time, greater behavioral literacy leads to smarter consumer choices, stronger financial confidence, and healthier economic norms across peer groups and families.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.1, SL.9–10 and 11–12.4, RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 7, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.2, 4, 6, 9 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 10, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Spending (II): 12-7, 12-8, 12-10, 12-11, Saving (III)	Students track their personal spending for a week and identify behavioral patterns. They connect those patterns to common biases, reflect on emotional influences, and propose behavior-based strategies to improve financial decisions.

Topic 12: Charitable Giving

“Charitable giving.”

Why it Matters

Financial literacy is not just about accumulating wealth; it’s also about understanding how money can be used as a tool for impact. Charitable giving introduces students to the idea that financial success includes the ability to support causes they care about. Whether donating to disaster relief, funding local nonprofits, or contributing to scholarship funds, students who learn to give financially and wisely develop habits that reflect empathy, intentionality, and social responsibility. These practices help students align their budgets with their values, evaluate the effectiveness of their giving, and understand how philanthropy contributes to both personal fulfillment and broader community improvement.

Learning Outcomes (Students will be able to)

- Differentiate between types of financial charitable giving, including one-time gifts, recurring donations, and legacy contributions
- Evaluate nonprofit organizations for transparency, mission alignment, and community impact
- Understand the tax implications and financial benefits of charitable donations, including documentation and deduction eligibility

- Develop a personal giving plan that incorporates charitable goals within a realistic budget

Community Impact

When students are taught to incorporate giving into their financial planning, they grow into adults who view generosity as part of a balanced, values-driven life. Financial giving, when done thoughtfully and consistently, supports a wide range of community needs, from education and healthcare to housing and social services. Over time, increased philanthropic participation strengthens nonprofit capacity, deepens civic engagement, and cultivates communities where resources are shared and everyone can thrive.

<i>Standards Alignment</i>	<i>Possible Student Task/Activity</i>
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.3, 4, RH.9–10 and 11–12.8, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.1, 2, 4, 6 CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 11, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5 MSLS: 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 NSPFE: Spending (II): 12-12, 12-13, 12-14, 12-15	Students research and vet a nonprofit organization, assess its mission, transparency, and community impact, and develop a giving plan that aligns with their personal values and fits within a sample budget. They explain the potential tax implications of their donation and present a short written or oral proposal justifying their philanthropic choice.

Topic 13: Other Topics

“Other topics that are directly and specifically relevant to personal finance.”

Refer to the table entitled *Public Comment Topics and Their Integrated Placement*.

Connecting Content to Life: Real-world Application of California's Personal Finance Topics

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Real-World Application</i>	<i>Learning & Community Outcomes at a Glance</i>
Topic 1: Banking Basics	Build foundational understanding of checking, savings, and digital banking tools.	Students compare account types, open a checking account, and learn to use direct deposit and peer-to-peer apps.	Students build secure banking habits and reduce reliance on high-cost alternatives. Communities benefit from broader financial inclusion and stability.
Topic 2: Budgeting for Independent Living	Prepare students to track income, expenses, and make financial trade-offs.	Students build a realistic monthly budget to plan for independent living, including rent and bills.	Students gain financial control and reduce the risk of housing instability. Communities experience fewer financial emergencies and stronger household resilience.
Topic 3: Employment and Net Income	Clarify how gross pay becomes net income and how job benefits and deductions affect earnings.	Students analyze pay stubs and evaluate the value of a job offer using local salary data.	Students make informed employment decisions. Communities benefit from a financially literate workforce with long-term earning power.
Topic 4: Credit & Debt Management	Teach students how credit works, how it affects borrowing, and how to avoid pitfalls.	Students compare credit products, assess cost of borrowing, and identify red flags.	Students avoid predatory lending and build strong credit. Communities reduce cycles of debt and increase household stability.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Real-World Application</i>	<i>Learning & Community Outcomes at a Glance</i>
Topic 5: Loans & Student Debt	Explain borrowing costs, terms, and repayment strategies—especially for student loans.	Students compare loan products and plan for repayment using calculators and examples.	Students make smarter borrowing decisions and reduce financial hardship. Communities see more college completion and financial mobility.
Topic 6: Insurance	Introduce students to common insurance types and how they manage risk.	Students evaluate policy features and select appropriate coverage for scenarios.	Students protect their income and assets. Communities experience less financial fallout from emergencies.
Topic 7: Taxes	Help students understand tax withholding, forms, and benefits of tax compliance.	Students complete mock tax forms and identify deductions/credits.	Students avoid errors and maximize refunds. Communities benefit from greater civic participation and financial confidence.
Topic 8: Investing & Building Wealth	Empower students to grow assets through diversified investment and homeownership.	Students evaluate investment vehicles and simulate long-term gains.	Students build financial security and generational wealth. Communities gain economic participation and reduce wealth gaps.
Topic 9: Consumer Protection & Fraud Prevention	Raise awareness of scams, identity theft, and deceptive practices.	Students identify red flags in online solicitations and learn how to file complaints.	Students avoid exploitation and protect assets. Communities experience reduced fraud and greater consumer confidence.

Topic	Purpose	Real-World Application	Learning & Community Outcomes at a Glance
Topic 10: College & Career Financing Options	Support informed postsecondary decisions through financial aid literacy.	Students compare aid offers and build a college or career training financing plan.	Students minimize debt and increase educational attainment. Communities benefit from workforce readiness and economic mobility.
Topic 11: Behavioral Finance & Psychology of Money	Help students recognize emotional, social, and cognitive influences on financial choices.	Students reflect on habits and develop strategies to reduce impulse spending.	Students align spending with values. Communities see healthier financial behaviors and increased well-being.
Topic 12: Charitable Giving	Teach intentional giving and nonprofit evaluation.	Students research a nonprofit and build a giving plan within a budget.	Students give with purpose and build civic identity. Communities benefit from greater generosity and engagement.

Standards Alignment by Topic and Learning Outcome

By aligning with the [California Common Core State Standards](#) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, including the Reading and Writing Standards for Grades 6–12, this course promotes interdisciplinary literacy while addressing urgent, real-world financial challenges. Where appropriate, it also integrates media literacy content from the California [Model School Library Standards](#), as referenced in [EC Section 33548](#) (CA Legislative Info), and the [National Standards for Personal Finance Education](#).

The alignment charts below illustrate how the learning outcomes for each required topic align with these academic standards.

Topic 1: Banking Basics

<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Compare features of checking, savings, and online-only bank accounts, and explain key differences between banks and credit unions, including interest rates, fees, accessibility, and digital tools such as mobile banking and peer-to-peer payment platforms.	RH.9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Saving (III): 12-1, 12-2, 12-3
Demonstrate how to open a bank account, set up direct deposit, and responsibly use digital financial tools such as budgeting apps, payment apps, and digital wallets.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	1.4, 3.3	Saving (III): 12-1, 12-3
Explain how being unbanked (living without a savings or checking account) affects access to credit and long-term financial security.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Saving (III): 12-3, Managing Credit (V): 12-7, 12-8
Describe how emerging digital financial products, including cryptocurrency, function in personal banking and payments, and evaluate their benefits, limitations, and consumer risks.	RH.9–10 and 11–12.1, RH.9–10 and 11–12.9, WHST.9–10 and 11–12.7	1.2, 2.4, 3.2, 4.3	Saving (III): 12-3; Managing Credit (V): 12-7

Topic 2: Budgeting for Independent Living

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Create and revise a monthly budget that includes fixed, variable, and periodic expenses—such as rent, utilities, and groceries.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Spending (II): 12-1, 12-3
Analyze personal or sample spending patterns using digital tools or case studies (e.g., preparing to rent an apartment).	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	1.3, 3.3	Spending (II): 12-2, 12-5 Investing (IV) 12-4
Identify needs vs. wants and apply strategies to reduce overspending or adjust for large, fixed costs.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 3.2	Spending (II): 12-2, 12-4
Plan for irregular income, security deposits, and move-in expenses.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4	3.1, 4.1	Spending (II): 12-1, 12-6
Use budgeting apps or templates to track progress over time and stay within rental affordability guidelines.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	3.3, 4.2	Spending (II): 12-5 Investing (IV): 12-10

Topic 3: Employment and Net Income

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Interpret pay stubs and calculate net income from gross wages.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	2.1, 3.2	Earning Income (I): 12-1, 12-2
Analyze how deductions (e.g., Social Security, Medicare, union dues, health insurance premiums, retirement plan contributions) impact take-home pay.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7	1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Earning Income (I): 12-3, 12-10
Compare various forms of employment (e.g., hourly, salaried, freelance, gig work) and compensation structures.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Earning Income (I): 12-1, 12-2, 12-4, 12-5, 12-11
Understand the role of education, job training, and credentials in shaping long-term earning potential.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	3.1, 4.1	Earning Income (I): 12-4, 12-6, 12-7
Identify employee rights related to wages, hours, and working conditions.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4	1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Earning Income (I): 12-8

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Practice job readiness skills such as resume development and interview preparation.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	3.3, 4.2	Earning Income (I): 12-9

Topic 4: Credit Management and Debt

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Explain how credit scores are calculated, how they can be maintained or improved, and how they impact access to credit.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-8
Compare various types of credit and lending options, including credit cards, loans, “buy now, pay later” services, and vehicle financing, and describe the fundamental aspects of credit cards, including interest, minimum payment structures, credit limits, and associated fees.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-4, 12-5

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Analyze how interest rates, repayment terms, and borrowing behavior affect the total cost of credit and long-term financial health.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-6
Identify predatory lending practices and develop strategies for avoiding high-risk credit products.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1, 4.3	Managing Credit (V): 12-7
Evaluate how credit and debt decisions influence future opportunities, such as housing, employment, and access to additional credit.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-8

Topic 5: Understanding Loans

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Identify common types of loans, including home loans, auto loans, student loans, and personal loans, and explain their typical terms and uses.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.3	Managing Credit (V): 12-4
Compare interest rates, repayment terms, and total borrowing costs across different loan products and identify signs of predatory lending practices.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-6, 12-7
Analyze how credit history, loan type, and lender practices affect loan approval and pricing.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-6
Understand repayment strategies, including early repayment, refinancing, and income-driven repayment plans (for student loans).	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.2 W. 9-10 and 11-12.2 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.2	3.1, 4.1	Managing Credit (V): 12-9

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Evaluate long-term financial impacts of taking on debt and determine when borrowing is or is not appropriate.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-8

Topic 6: Insurance Types and Costs

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Identify and describe major types of insurance: health, auto, life, disability, and renters/homeowners.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Managing Risk (VI): 12-1
Evaluate policy terms including premiums, deductibles, copays, coverage limits, and exclusions.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Risk (VI): 12-2
Compare different insurance products and providers based on cost, coverage, and personal needs.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Risk (VI): 12-2, 12-3

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Understand California-specific insurance laws and programs (e.g., minimum auto coverage, Medi-Cal eligibility, earthquake insurance).	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.1 SL. 9-10 and 11-12.4 WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	3.1, 4.1	Managing Risk (VI): 12-4
Analyze how insurance fits into a broader personal budget and long-term financial planning.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Managing Risk (VI): 12-5

Topic 7: Tax System Overview

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Explain how income taxes are calculated, withheld, and used to fund public services.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.1, 3.3	Earning Income (I): 12-1
Identify the purpose of key tax documents such as W-2, 1099, and 1040 forms.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Earning Income (I): 12-2
Complete a basic individual tax return using sample materials (evaluate the differences between filing as a dependent vs. independent).	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Earning Income (I): 12-3
Recognize common deductions, credits, and filing requirements.	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.4 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.9	3.1	Earning Income (I)
Evaluate the benefits of tax-advantaged savings accounts such as IRAs and 401(k)s.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Saving (III): 12-6

Topic 8: Investing and Wealth-Building

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Compare investment options including stocks, bonds, index funds, mutual funds, and real estate (e.g., homeownership).	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Investing (IV): 12-2, 12-3, 12-7, 12-13
Explain how compound interest, time, and risk tolerance affect investment returns.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Investing (IV): 12-1, 12-3, 12-4
Evaluate the features and benefits of tax-advantaged accounts such as IRAs, Roth IRAs, pensions, and 401(k)s.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Investing (IV): 12-8
Understand the financial considerations and long-term implications of homeownership, including down payments, mortgages, and property value appreciation.	HST. 9-10 and 11–12.2 RI. 9-10 and 11-12.3 W. 9-10 and 11-12.7	3.1, 4.1	Investing (IV): 12-4, 12-5

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Apply decision-making strategies to set personal investment goals based on timeline, income, risk tolerance, and the principles of diversification to help manage risk and optimize returns.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.2	2.4	Investing (IV) 12-1, 12-3, 12-6, 12-7
Evaluate emerging speculative assets such as cryptocurrency, comparing their volatility and risks with traditional long-term wealth-building strategies.	RH.9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST.9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Investing (IV): 12-1, 12-3, 12-5, 12-10, 12-12

Topic 9: Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Identify common forms of financial fraud, including phishing, identity theft, and online scams.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Managing Risk (VI): 12-6

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Recognize predatory financial products and lending practices.	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.6 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.1	3.2	Managing Credit (V): 12-7
Develop strategies for protecting personal information, digital assets, and financial records.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	4.3	Managing Risk (VI): 12-7
Understand basic consumer rights and how to take action when those rights are violated (e.g., filing complaints, freezing credit, seeking legal aid).	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.1 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.9	3.1, 4.1	Managing Risk (VI): 12-8
Evaluate the credibility of financial offers, advertisements, and solicitations.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Managing Risk (VI): 12-9

Topic 10: College and Career Financing

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History–Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Compare financial aid sources, including FAFSA, Cal Grant , CA Dream Act, scholarships, and merit-based aid.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Earning Income (I): 12-5, Saving (III): 12-6
Evaluate the cost and ROI of various postsecondary options, including community colleges, four-year universities, and career technical education.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Earning Income (I): 12-6
Understand eligibility and application processes for California-specific programs such as CalKIDS and Cal Grant , and the California Dream Act .	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.9 RI. 9-10 and 11-12.3	3.1, 4.1	Earning Income (I): 12-7
Interpret award letters and assess the long-term implications of different aid packages.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.7 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.9 RI. 9-10 and 11-12.4	4.1	Earning Income (I): 12-8
Develop a personalized postsecondary financing plan that balances educational aspirations with financial sustainability.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	4.1, 4.3	Earning Income (I): 12-9

Topic 11: Behavioral Finance and Psychology

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Identify and explain common behavioral biases (e.g., loss aversion, present bias, overconfidence) and how they affect money decisions.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.1, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1	Spending (II): 12-7
Analyze how advertising, peer influence, and emotional triggers can impact financial choices.	RH 9-10 and 11–12.2, RH. 9-10 and 11–12.7, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.2	2.1, 2.2, 3.2	Spending (II): 12-8
Apply strategies (such as setting default savings options or using visual goal setting) to build healthy financial habits.	SL. 9-10 and 11-12.4 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.9	4.2	Spending (II), Saving (III)
Reflect on the connection between financial behavior and mental health, including stress, avoidance, or guilt.	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.1 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.6	4.2	Spending (II): 12-10

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Develop personal financial goals that align with long-term well-being rather than short-term gratification.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	4.3	Spending (II): 12-11

Topic 12: Charitable Giving

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Differentiate between types of financial charitable giving, including one-time gifts, recurring donations, and legacy contributions.	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.4 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.2	4.3	Spending (II): 12-12
Evaluate nonprofit organizations for transparency, mission alignment, and community impact.	RH. 9-10 and 11–12.8, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.1	2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2	Spending (II): 12-13

<i>Learning Outcome</i>	<i>CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy in History– Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects</i>	<i>MSLS</i>	<i>NSPFE</i>
Understand the tax implications and financial benefits of charitable donations, including documentation and deduction eligibility.	RI. 9-10 and 11-12.3 WHST. 9-10 and 11-12.2	3.1, 4.1	Spending (II): 12-14
Develop a personal giving plan that incorporates charitable goals within a realistic budget.	WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.4, WHST. 9-10 and 11–12.6	4.3	Spending (II): 12-15

Conclusion

California’s 13 personal finance topics provide a clear, rigorous foundation for every high school personal finance course. This chapter supports local implementation by breaking down each topic into instructional guidance, relevant standards, and real-world context. By including additional topics raised through public feedback and aligning content with national and state standards, this guidance aims to promote equity, consistency, and practical application across diverse learning environments. District and site leaders are encouraged to use this chapter as a reference when developing course outlines, selecting instructional materials, and designing professional learning to ensure students receive high-quality, future-ready financial education.

Chapter 3 Implementation at the District and Site Level

Introduction

This chapter provides practical guidance for LEAs as they prepare to implement a standalone, one-semester personal finance course as a high school graduation requirement.

The intended audience for this chapter are district and site leaders, including curriculum directors, administrators, counselors, and department chairs who are tasked with planning, approving, and implementing this new requirement. This chapter outlines potential timelines, opportunities, key considerations, and process steps to help districts and sites plan for implementation, develop, and launch their personal finance course.

Which students will need to take personal finance to graduate?

Personal finance will become a statewide graduation requirement beginning in the 2030-31 school year. The table below maps the current grade level of students who will in the first graduating class (Class of 2031) for whom personal finance is a state graduation requirement:

<i>Academic Year</i>	<i>Student Grade Level</i>	<i>Class Of</i>
2025–26	Grade Seven	2031
2026–27	Grade Eight	2031
2027–28	Grade Nine	2031
2028–29	Grade Ten	2031
2029–30	Grade Eleven	2031
2030–31	Grade Twelve	2031

Schools are to offer at least one section of personal finance by 2027–28, which is the year that the Class of 2031 enters high school. Schools will need to scale up their section offerings over the following years to ensure that all students in the Class of 2031, and each subsequent class, are able to have access to and complete personal finance as a high school graduation requirement.

Implementation: An Overview Timeline

The table below offers an overview of key action steps, by academic year, that align to implementation of personal finance coursework based on the timelines outlined in [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info).

Many districts already offer personal finance courses in advance of the 2027-28 requirement to provide at least one section at every high school site. As such, the table identifies steps that apply to “All Districts,” along with additional actions specific to those who are “Early Implementing Districts.”

<i>Academic Year:</i>	<i>Applies to:</i>	<i>District Action Steps:</i>
2025–26: Laying the Groundwork	All Districts	• Review AB 2927 (CA Legislative Info) and related changes to California EC 51284.5 (CA Legislative Info) • Review Personal Finance Curriculum Guide ○ Public draft: October 2025 ○ Final guide: March 2026 • Raise internal and external awareness about statewide personal finance graduation requirement, beginning with the Class of 2031 • Identify who will lead personal finance course development and implementation for your district and/or school(s)

Academic Year:	Applies to:	District Action Steps:
2025–26: Laying the Groundwork	Early Implementing Districts	In addition to the actions above: • Apply for early implementation grants and free teacher professional learning opportunities • Assess for alignment and differences between existing personal finance course offerings and upcoming requirements • Pilot instructional resources and gather feedback • Ensure that any course offered prior to the 2027-28 school year has moved through the local district course approval channels and is submitted/approved for A–G, as applicable • Make plans to expand section offerings in the upcoming school year, as applicable
2026–27: Course Development and Implementation Planning	All Districts	• Apply for early implementation grants and free teacher professional learning opportunities. • Communicate to grade eight students and parents that personal finance will be a high school graduation requirement • Review current district personal finance courses, curriculum, lessons, etc. • Plan for implementation in the upcoming school year: ○ Make decisions about course length (semester or full year) and whether/which course it will be paired with ○ Determine required staffing adjustments, based on model selected and if needed ○ Develop the personal finance course content, gain local approval and submit for A–G approval • Identify teachers and provide professional learning

<i>Academic Year:</i>	<i>Applies to:</i>	<i>District Action Steps:</i>
2026–27: Course Development and Implementation Planning	Early Implementing Districts	• Pilot instructional resources, gather feedback and make adjustments, as needed
2027–28: Initial Implementation	All Districts	• Offer at least one section of the course at every high school • Gather feedback from teachers, students, parents, community members
2028–29, 2029–30: Scale Up	All Districts	• Expand section offerings • Expand teacher professional learning • Make revisions and/or updates to your personal finance course and implementation plans, as needed
2030–31: Full Implementation	All Districts	• Implement personal finance as a graduation requirement for the graduating class of 2031

Identifying District and Site Leaders

Successful implementation begins with identifying clear leadership at both the district and school-site level. Leadership can take multiple forms and will often reflect the local context, including size, structure, and staffing.

In a district-led model, a central office leader, such as a Teacher on Special Assignment, Curriculum Specialist, or Director, is tasked with overseeing implementation across all high schools. This individual or team can support alignment of instructional materials, pacing guides, and professional learning, while facilitating collaboration through districtwide professional learning communities (PLCs).

For example, a district might designate a Teacher on Special Assignment to lead a districtwide personal finance working group, tasked with developing a common scope and sequence, organizing monthly professional learning sessions, and maintaining a shared resource drive for all teachers.

In a site-led model, schools may assign leadership responsibilities to an administrator, counselor, or department chair. These individuals may coordinate course offerings, lead outreach to eligible teachers, and provide on-site support during the rollout. Communication often flows through counseling teams or academic departments and may be especially effective in smaller schools or autonomous sites.

For instance, the site principal may work directly with the head of an impacted department, such as Social Science or Mathematics department, to integrate a standalone personal finance course into next year's master schedule and organize a local teacher-led PLC.

Regardless of the model, it is critical that LEAs establish a structure that promotes shared leadership, timely communication, and regular opportunities for collaborative planning.

Implementation Role Snapshot

<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
District-assigned Personal Finance Lead	Coordinate implementation across sites, lead PL, manage resource sharing
Site Administration	Build schedule, identify teachers, promote course with families, support cross-department collaboration
School Counselors	Promote the course with students and families, communicate about graduation requirements, enroll students in courses
Site Instructional Lead Teacher(s)	Align instruction, build capacity and support, pilot units and collect feedback
Teacher(s)	Participate in PLCs, plan lessons, deliver instruction

Early Implementation

Launching California’s standalone Personal Finance course ahead of the 2027–28 mandate offers districts a valuable opportunity to build capacity, refine instructional practices, and ensure long-term program quality. Phasing in the course early allows for more intentional planning, the development of aligned professional learning, and greater instructional coherence across schools and districts. Districts who are developing and implementing personal finance courses in advance of required timelines are encouraged to design the structure of their course(s) with California’s graduation requirements in mind.

Districts that begin offering the course in 2025–26 or 2026–27 can pilot instructional resources, collect feedback from teachers and students, and make iterative improvements based on real classroom experiences. Early adopters may also unlock external funding opportunities and benefit from staggered professional learning that eases scheduling and staffing pressures.

In addition to instructional and funding advantages, early implementation creates natural opportunities to grow teacher leadership. Districts can identify early adopters as future trainers or mentors, building internal expertise ahead of the 2030–31 graduation requirement.

One early-adopting district, for example, launched the course with two pilot teachers in 2024–25, used student feedback surveys to revise lesson pacing, and deepened their content knowledge and confidence through the completion of over 20 hours each of NGPF’s PL asynchronous modules, earning them each a \$500 stipend in recognition of their training commitment¹⁴.

To support potentially isolated early implementers, especially at sites where only one teacher may be piloting the course, districts should consider establishing a centralized Personal Finance Professional Learning Community (PLC). A districtwide PLC provides a structured space for collaboration, shared planning, and cross-site support during these early years of rollout. With the widespread availability of digital meeting tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams, establishing and sustaining a district-level PLC is more accessible than ever. These platforms not only facilitate regular virtual meetings but can also be used to house shared documents, collect and analyze implementation data, and maintain ongoing communication among teachers and instructional leaders.

Districts can also begin to build internal instructional capacity by strategically supporting new Personal Finance teachers with experienced educators. For example, pairing a pilot teacher with a veteran economics or government teacher can foster co-planning and mentoring rooted in shared skills and content knowledge. Districts may also consider leveraging summer professional learning days, voluntary collaboration hours, or release time for teachers to align on course design, review sample lessons, and adapt pacing guides. These efforts not only improve instructional readiness, they also reduce isolation and build a sense of shared ownership over the course’s success.

Grant Opportunities for Early Implementers

In addition to the instructional, leadership, and planning benefits of early implementation, districts can take advantage of funding opportunities that directly support the rollout of the new Personal Finance course. Districts are encouraged to explore local partnerships with financial institutions, credit unions, foundations, and community organizations, many of which are eager to invest in financial literacy

¹⁴ Next Gen Personal Finance. [California Access to Financial Education \(CAFE\) Grant Program](#).

education and may be willing to fund ongoing professional learning classroom resources, or student-facing activities.

There are also grant opportunities available for California schools and districts to support early implementation:

1. The [NGPF California Challenge Grant](#) is a commitment of \$1 million to California schools and districts that is intended to immediately increase access to personal finance courses for California students. Districts are eligible for the following awards:
 - \$3,500 per school for each school that offers the course in the 2025–26 school year (up to \$35,000 per district)
 - \$2,500 per school for each school that offers the course in the 2026–27 school year (up to \$25,000 per district)

Grant funds must be used exclusively to support the new Personal Finance course and may cover costs such as professional learning, field trips, curriculum supplements, or technology upgrades.

2. Through a partnership with the California Department of Education and Next Gen Personal Finance, the [California Access To Financial Education \(CAFE\)](#) grant program offers a \$500 stipend to the first 1,000 California public school teachers who complete 20 hours of free professional learning with NGPF.

For a more comprehensive review of professional learning opportunities, see chapter 5.

Staffing and Scheduling Considerations

Before designing course content, it is essential to determine the scheduling structure in which personal finance courses will be offered to students. In this section, you'll find a series of questions to fully consider as you begin implementation planning. The decisions that institutions make in each will have a direct impact on school staffing and master scheduling in the years to come.

Will we offer a one-semester course or a year-long course?

This is a local decision. By 2027–28, all districts that serve high school students are required to offer at least one semester-long, standalone course in personal finance that is not combined with any other course and that is designed to include all of the 13 topics outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info). Beyond California's minimum graduation requirement, districts may choose to offer or require a year-long course in personal finance, in order to provide additional time for enrichment, local context, or project-based applications.

Determining whether your district will be offering a one-semester course, a full-year course, or both will be a critical first step to the course design and development process moving forward.

If we offer a one-semester course, what will be offered in the alternate semester?

What a district chooses to offer in the alternate semester is a local decision and will likely look very different across the state. Potential pairings are also impacted by choices such as LEAs defining personal finance as a grade specific course or allowing flexible enrollment across grades nine through twelve. The following explores some of the potential pairings being discussed by LEAs:

- Pairing personal finance with another required or planned one semester course, such as Ethnic Studies, College and Career Exploration, Health Education, or Senior Project.
- Offering personal finance alongside an economics course, such as Advanced Placement (AP) Microeconomics or Macroeconomics, allows students to engage in a deeper exploration of economic systems and policy over the year.
- Establishing dual enrollment partnerships with local community colleges providing a course or courses with college credit opportunities.
- Pairing with American Government beginning in the 2030–31 school year, when LEAs will have the option to waive the one semester Economics graduation requirement and replace it with personal finance.

Determining the structure in which personal finance will be offered in your district will allow your system to begin to determine staffing and section needs, so you have sufficient time to scale in advance of the 2030–31 graduation requirement.

Do We Have Teachers with the Right Credentials to Teach Personal Finance?

[EC Section 44257](#)(g) (CA Legislative Info) outlines the teacher credential authorizations related to personal finance. It states:

(g) (1) (A) An individual holding a single subject teaching credential in Social Science, Business, Mathematics, or Home Economics is authorized to teach the personal finance course specified in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of [EC Section 51225.3](#) (CA Legislative Info).

(B) This paragraph does not constitute a change in, but is declaratory of, existing law.

(2) The commission may establish a supplementary authorization that authorizes individuals holding single subject teaching credentials not listed in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) to teach the personal finance course specified in subparagraph (H) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of [EC Section 51225.3](#) (CA Legislative Info).

An important note related to teacher credentialing is that a single subject credential in one of the following areas is required: Social Science, Business, Mathematics, or Home Economics. A Designated Subjects Career Technical Education (CTE) Teaching Credential (CL 888) alone does not meet the qualifications to teach a course that satisfies California's personal finance graduation requirement. While the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing may develop a supplementary authorization, the Education Code specifies that it would apply only to individuals holding a single subject teaching credential.

It is possible that a district may currently offer sections of personal finance taught by teachers who do not meet the credentialing requirements of the upcoming personal finance requirement. Leaders and teachers should begin assessing now whether future changes may be needed to course assignments, course offerings and/or course pathways. Districts should be attentive to the credentialing requirements for personal finance as part of their strategic hiring and master scheduling processes.

Are both economics and personal finance required?

Economics is a California state graduation requirement. Beginning with the graduating class of 2030-31, a pupil who completes a separate, stand-alone one-semester course in personal finance, that is not combined with any other course, may be exempted by their local educational agency from the requirement to complete a one-semester course in Economics. In other words, when Personal Finance becomes a graduation

requirement for all California students in 2030–31, it will become a local decision as to whether or not an LEA will choose to exempt students from the Economic requirement.

Why this matters now

LEAs should quickly begin discussing whether or not they are likely to implement a graduation requirement waiver/exemption of Economics for the class of 2031 and beyond, as the decision has significant implications for staffing, scheduling, course offerings, and long-term planning. LEAs that plan to retain both Personal Finance and Economics as graduation requirements will need to scale up staffing in the needed credential area(s) more quickly. In contrast, LEAs that intend to exempt students from the Economics requirement, beginning with the class of 2031, should proceed with caution and intentionality when expanding their section offerings in advance of the graduation requirement year.

Planning considerations

Regardless of which path a district chooses, early planning is essential to ensure smooth implementation and avoid staffing or scheduling disruptions. LEAs should:

- Identify appropriately credentialed teachers
- Determine full-time equivalent (FTE) allocations, often by repurposing elective sections
- Select high-quality instructional materials
- Complete course approval processes, such as UC A–G submission, alignment with local graduation requirements, and integration into the school’s master schedule

The time between the 2027–28 offering requirement and the 2030–31 graduation mandate also gives districts a valuable opportunity to pilot curriculum, refine delivery models, and engage existing teachers in early professional learning. Gradual implementation supports long-term sustainability and ensures that decisions are informed by classroom-tested practices.

Key Take Away

Some districts have already indicated plans to utilize the Economics waiver beginning in 2030–31. In preparation, they are designing course sequences in which all grade twelve students are enrolled in Personal Finance paired with American Government. Because Economics is already part of many grade twelve schedules, this approach minimizes disruption to course pathways and leverages existing credentialed staff. These early-implementing districts are using the intervening years to offer initial sections of Personal Finance, evaluate curricular resources, and provide targeted training to teachers to support long-term instructional success.

Considerations Before Using the 2030–31 Economics Waiver

The option to waive the Economics graduation requirement in favor of a standalone Personal Finance course offers valuable flexibility, but it is a consequential decision that deserves thoughtful consideration.

As noted in chapter 1 of this guide, LEAs should carefully reflect on what students may lose when a dedicated Economics course is removed from the high school experience. While Personal Finance can build on core economic reasoning skills such as opportunity cost, cost benefit analysis, and decision-making frameworks, it does not cover the full range of content traditionally taught in an Economics course. Topics like monetary and fiscal policy, global trade, inflation, unemployment, and economic systems are not explored in depth within the statutory personal finance requirements outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info). These economic topics can be critical for understanding public policy, government intervention, and the broader economic environment in which individuals make financial decisions.

As LEAs design local graduation pathways, the flexibility offered by the waiver should be balanced with a clear understanding of content coverage, instructional goals, and student needs. District and school leaders are encouraged to engage teachers, counselors, curriculum specialists, and community members in collaborative discussions that weigh both the benefits and tradeoffs of using the waiver. These decisions should reflect not only compliance with graduation requirements, but a broader commitment to preparing students for success beyond high school.

Where feasible, LEAs may choose to retain both courses, either as separate graduation requirements or by expanding elective offerings to include economics. Others may explore ways to embed economic concepts into existing courses such as American Government or United States History. Some districts may also consider creating specialized electives focused on global markets, current events, or economic systems. For schools that do not currently offer Advanced Placement Macroeconomics or

Microeconomics, this transition may present an opportunity to expand access to advanced coursework in these areas.

Ultimately, the decision to use the Economics waiver should be grounded in a broader vision for both civic and financial literacy. The years leading up to the 2030 to 2031 school year provide an opportunity not only to prepare for implementation, but also to reaffirm core instructional values and design thoughtful course sequences that support both short term needs and long-term student success.

Course Development

Once the structure of the course and available options have been carefully considered, the next step is to adopt or develop the course or courses your district will offer. To meet California's personal finance graduation requirement, the course must address all topics outlined in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info).

Districts and schools do not need to start from scratch. Many already offer personal finance or similar electives that can be revised or expanded to meet the required content. Others may decide to design a new course that reflects local context, instructional priorities, and student needs.

Fortunately, a wide range of high-quality and free instructional resources are available to support course development. These resources, which are discussed in greater detail in chapter 4, include the following:

***Personal Finance Curriculum Providers and Required Topics Covered
(by number)***

<i>Personal Finance Curriculum Provider Name</i>	<i>Provider Categorization</i>	<i>Required topic included, by number</i>
<u>California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)</u>	Specialized	10
<u>California Franchise Tax Board (FTB)</u>	Specialized	7
<u>California Council on Economic Education (CCEE)</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>College Money Matters</u>	Specialized	10
<u>Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)</u>	Specialized	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10
<u>Credit Abuse Resistance Education</u>	Specialized	1, 2, 4, 5, 9
<u>Discovery Education: Econ Essentials</u>	Specialized	11
<u>Everfi</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC): Money Smart</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>Federal Reserve</u> Education (FRE)	Specialized	1–4, 8
<u>Federal Trade Commission (FTC)</u>	Specialized	1, 3, 4, 9
<u>Finance in the Classroom</u>	Specialized	1–12
<u>Financial Beginnings</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>FoolProof Academy</u>	Specialized	4, 6, 8, 9, 12
<u>Hands on Banking</u>	Specialized	2–4, 8–12

<i>Personal Finance Curriculum Provider Name</i>	<i>Provider Categorization</i>	<i>Required topic included, by number</i>
<u>Intuit for Education</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>Jump\$tart Clearinghouse</u>	Specialized	1–11
<u>Junior Achievement</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>Khan Academy</u>	Specialized	1–7, 9, 10, 11
<u>MoneySKILL</u>	Specialized	1–10
<u>MyMoney.gov</u>	Specialized	1–5, 7, 9, 10
<u>Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF)</u>	Comprehensive	1–12
<u>Practical Money Skills</u>	Specialized	1–10, 12
<u>Stock Market Game InvestQuest (SMGIQ)</u>	Specialized	8
<u>TaxEDU</u>	Specialized	7
<u>US Securities and Exchange Commission</u>	Specialized	8, 9, 10

Some curriculum providers are categorized in this guide as ‘specialized,’ indicating that they provide resources that apply to specific topics within the 13. Other curriculum providers are categorized ‘comprehensive’ to indicate that they provide resources addressing all topics.

Of the ‘comprehensive’ providers that address all topics, some have compiled those resources into fully developed semester-long courses (indicating 60+ hours of content). At the time this guide was developed, several providers had registered as a program with the University of California Course Management Portal (UC CMP) and offer approved courses on their own A–G reference list that high schools can adopt:

<i>Personal Finance Curriculum Provider</i>	<i>Provider Categorization</i>	<i>Fully Developed Semester PF Course</i>	<i>Registered A–G Program</i>
<u>California Council on Economic Education (CCEE)</u>	Comprehensive	In Development (2025)	No
<u>Everfi</u>	Comprehensive	Yes – Open Source	No
<u>Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC): Money Smart</u>	Comprehensive	Partial Course	No
<u>Financial Beginnings</u>	Comprehensive	Yes – Open Source	No
<u>Intuit for Education</u>	Comprehensive	Yes – Open Source	No
<u>Junior Achievement</u>	Comprehensive	Yes – Partnership Required	Yes
<u>Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF)</u>	Comprehensive	Yes – Open Source	Yes

Districts and/or schools can determine if they want to leverage a full course offered by one of the comprehensive providers, whether they want to revise a course they already offer or enhance a course offered by a curriculum provider or another district, or whether they want to develop their own course to meet all of California’s personal finance topics, leveraging a variety of resources that best meet their local needs.

<i>Starting Points</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Best Fit For...</i>
Use a pre-built, semester long personal finance course	Start with a fully developed course that addresses all topics. Supplement and/or strengthen with additional resources over time, based on teacher feedback and student needs.	Schools and/or districts seeking a ready-made, turnkey solution.

<i>Starting Points</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Best Fit For...</i>
Revise an existing course offering	Start with a course that is already offered by your school and review/revise it to address all topics. Leverage resources provided by one or more curriculum providers to address remaining topics, as needed.	Schools and/or districts already offering personal finance.
Enhance a course offered by a curriculum provider or another district	Start with a course already offered in another district or a partial course offered by a curriculum provider. Review the course and identify gaps in addressing all topics, then add needed content from other sources to complete the course.	Schools and/or districts wanting customization with a shortcut
Develop a new course	Design your own instructional units to address all topics. Bring together resources from multiple sources, which can include those designed in-house, from other schools, or those available from one or more curriculum providers.	Districts and schools with sufficient time and internal capacity and who desire full course customization.

When planning to offer a new course, be aware of local review and governance procedures for updating or expanding the course catalog. Each district, and often each site, has its own calendar, expectations, and documentation protocols for updating or expanding its course catalog, which may include internal curriculum review processes, deadlines for course proposal submissions, required board communications, approvals by curriculum councils or academic committees, and updates to your Student Information System (SIS). Having clarity about expected steps and timelines within your own system can help ensure a smooth approval process and avoid unnecessary delays.

Equity Considerations

It is strongly recommended that schools submit their personal finance course(s) for A–G approval and make access and support for the A–G approved course readily available to students. A–G requirements refer to the minimum sequence of courses that a student must complete as part of minimum freshman eligibility to any California State University or University of California campus. An EdSource analysis published in February of 2024¹⁵ found the majority of California’s public high school students (56.6 percent) do not meet the A–G requirements—and the percentage is much higher for foster youth, students with disabilities, English learners, Black and Latino students, socio-economically disadvantaged students, and students living in more rural areas of the state. Further, the article states

Most high schools in the state—91.4% of traditional district schools, according to PACE—do offer a full slate of A–G coursework that put them on track for college. But the degree of access students get to those courses or support, once they have enrolled, varies greatly, resulting in wide disparities between groups of students.

As this course will be a graduation requirement for all students beginning with the Class of 2030–31, course development and implementation must account for the full range of learners. Instructional strategies to allow access to the course content for all students, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students from a wide range of backgrounds and socio-economic levels are described in chapter 6.

The A–G Approval Process

All college preparatory courses must be certified by the University of California in order for students to receive college preparatory credit, known as “A–G”. Courses that are approved by UC meet both UC and CSU admission requirements. The [A–G Course List](#) is a specific list of courses that a California high school has submitted and that have been approved by the UC as fulfilling an A–G subject requirement. Each high school’s A–G course list is used by the CSU and UC applications and admissions staff to determine whether a student has met minimum eligibility requirements. Any accredited, public or private high school in California that grants diplomas may establish an A–G list.

¹⁵ Lambert, D. (2024, May 7). [Most California high school seniors shut out of even applying to the state’s universities. EdSource.](#)

Managing A–G Course Lists

The [A–G Course Management Portal \(CMP\)](#) is the online platform that serves as the centralized system through which California high schools submit their course offerings for UC review and approval. Each district and school has a designated “List Manager,” who is named in the top right area of each institution’s A–G course list. Schools and/or districts are strongly encouraged to submit new courses and course revisions for UC review as early as possible during the Primary Phase, which is open from February 1 through June 30 each year.

California high schools must maintain their lists each year to accurately reflect their course offerings so that their students can be eligible for University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) admissions and as required in [EC Section 60900\(g\)](#) (CA Legislative Info). For these reasons, it is important to ensure that high school course list(s) accurately reflect and exactly match how those same courses are denoted in your Student Information System (SIS) and on students’ high school transcripts. Schools should pay special attention to the transcript abbreviation, local course code, and A–G subject area designations for each course included on their A–G list to ensure that they are an exact match to their own SIS. Edits to these fields may be made year-round.

Key resources for managing your A–G list(s):

1. [A–G Policy Resource Guide](#): The University of California Office of the President maintains this online guide which contains the most up-to-date information on A–G subject area course criteria, A–G list registration requirements, and guidance on managing A–G course lists and submitting courses for UC approval. This site is the primary resource that schools should use to understand the requirements for writing and submitting a course for UC approval.
2. [CMP Management Playbook](#): This fillable PDF can be downloaded by LEAs and used to navigate local decisions and timelines for CMP management within each academic year. This guide is provided by the California College Guidance Initiative, which provides technical assistance to California’s K–12 public school systems to support alignment between their SIS and A–G course lists.

Updating Your A–G Course List

The CMP offers several options for adding personal finance course(s) to your A–G course list:

- Add a Program Course
- Model After Existing School Course

- Add a Brand New Course
- Self-Report Online Publisher Courses

See these [Frequently Asked Questions about Adding a Course](#), and information about how and when to [Revise a Course](#).

Add a Program Course

The CMP allows schools to add pre-approved courses to their A–G lists when a district utilizes the curriculum and course outline of a program that has registered and been approved by the UC. These are courses developed and submitted for review by recognized programs, such as the College Board (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), and have already met A–G approval criteria.

Program courses appear on UC’s A–G Program Reference List, and schools may add them directly to their own A–G course lists without having to rewrite or re-submit a full course description. This option is especially helpful for districts that plan to license or implement a full curriculum package from an approved provider.

Of the comprehensive curriculum providers noted in this guide, two are registered programs listed on the A–G Program Reference list that offer courses that districts may add for auto-approval:

1. Junior Achievement

- Schools and/or Districts must work directly with Junior Achievement to gain access to their full A–G approved course materials.

Figure 1: Junior Achievement listing on the A–G Program Reference list

A-G Course Management Reference List 2025-26

Tell us more about the program course
To begin, please select the program and course title. Back to Course Options

Add a Program Course

Program
Junior Achievement

Course Title
financial lit

Financial Literacy Continue >

Adding Program Courses
Programs (e.g. the College Board Advanced Placement Program, CSU Early Assessment Program) submit their own standardized courses to UC for review. Students are not able to directly enroll in program courses to fulfill the A-G subject requirements. These courses are A-G approved for the program to sell or license their curriculum to be taught by teacher or administrator within the local high school or district. Program A-G reference lists can be found on the A-G Reference List website.

[Long description of figure 1](#)

2. Next Gen Personal Finance

- [NGPF Semester Course \(A–G Approved\)](#)
- [NGPF Full-Year Course \(A–G Approved\)](#)

Figure 2: Next Gen listing on the A–G Program Reference list

A-G Course Management Reference List 2025-26

Tell us more about the program course
To begin, please select the program and course title. Back to Course Options

Add a Program Course

Program
Next Gen Personal Finance

Course Title
finance

Personal Finance - NGPF Full-Year Course
Personal Finance - NGPF Semester Course Continue >

Adding Program Courses
Programs (e.g. the College Board Advanced Placement Program, CSU Early Assessment Program) submit their own standardized courses to UC for review. Students are not able to directly enroll in program courses to fulfill the A-G subject requirements. These courses are A-G approved for the program to sell or license their curriculum to be taught by teacher or administrator within the local high school or district. Program A-G reference lists can be found on the A-G Reference List website.

[Long description of figure 2](#)

Adding a program course is ideal for districts with limited curriculum development bandwidth or those seeking to quickly scale a course across multiple sites using a consistent instructional model. It offers a balance of efficiency and structure, while still requiring thoughtful local alignment and planning.

Model After Existing School Course

Schools can model after courses already approved at another school using the "Model after existing school course" feature in the CMP. This option allows you to use the structure of a previously approved course as a starting point, while making edits that reflect how the course will actually be taught in your own district or site. It is strongly recommended that you choose a course from a district you can connect with, as modeling a course is far more effective if you have the ability to follow up with the original authors. This allows you to request pacing guides, supplemental resources, and context that might not be visible in the CMP submission.

Special Note

It is important to note that the many (if not most) of the A–G approved personal finance courses currently found on A–G lists were submitted and approved prior to the passage of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info). It is each school and district’s responsibility to ensure that the personal finance courses that they offer fully address the 13 required topics. Prior to submission, make edits to address any gaps and to reflect how the course will be taught at your institution.

Modeling after an existing school course may be a good fit for districts with limited curriculum development time or those that are new to course design. It allows for efficient entry into early implementation, while still maintaining the flexibility to tailor content, pacing, and instructional tools to your students’ needs.

Add a Brand-new Course

Institutions can create brand new courses to reflect their original course design. Before you start writing a course, review the A–G subject requirements to ensure the course meets the criteria and guidelines of its respective subject area. See the [Writing A–G courses](#) page for information on course description requirements, guidance, and sample courses.

Schools can propose new courses by providing detailed descriptions, including course overviews and unit content, to demonstrate alignment with A–G criteria. All new course submissions must include:

- **Course Overview:** Describe the overarching content and goals of the course.
- **Unit summaries and assignments:** Include one summary and one sample assignment for *every unit in the course*. Use these sections to show how the unit content and assignments meet A–G subject requirements.
- **A Unit Summary** (approximately 5–7 sentences) describing what students will learn. This should highlight critical thinking, progression of skills, and content depth.
- **A Unit Assignment** (approximately 5–7 sentences) explaining how students demonstrate their learning. Describe the assignment format (e.g., written report, project, group discussion), what students produce, and what they are expected to learn—especially in relation to the subject area requirements.

Adding a brand-new course may be a good fit for districts that want a high degree of customization and who have internal capacity to assess and compile resources from multiple sources and/or to design their own materials.

Self-Report Online Publisher Courses

Within the CMP, A–G course list managers may self-report online publisher courses that are offered by their institution. Online course publishers no longer submit courses to UC for review and A–G approval. Rather, self-reporting online publisher courses relies on the process of principal certification that the course is comparable to A–G courses offered at the high school.

Special Note

Just as schools are expected to closely review online publisher courses for their A–G alignment, they also would need to review content and confirm whether an online publisher course meets California’s expected content requirements for personal finance. Many personal finance courses offered by online publishers were developed in advance of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info). It is each school and district’s responsibility to ensure that the personal finance courses that they offer fully address the 13 required topics.

Among other requirements, the process of principal certification outlined by the UC includes:

- Principals must certify that online publisher courses are comparable to A–G courses offered at the high school. UC faculty expect that principal certification follows a careful review of the course by the principal, department chair, district curriculum director, or other qualified school/district personnel.
- Principals will designate their certification by granting permission for the course(s) to be listed on the student’s official high school transcript, along with credits granted and letter grades earned.
- Any institution that offers an online course and includes it on their A–G course list must certify in the A–G Course Management Portal that their institution is in compliance with [the UC’s online learning guidelines](#).

See the [UC’s Online Publisher Course Policy](#) for complete information.

Submitting Your Course

To the greatest extent possible, updates to your A–G course list should be submitted for approval to the UC during the Primary Phase window (Feb 1–June 30), when all course

types are accepted. Updating courses within this window helps to ensure that your students will see up-to-date course offering information when the UC application opens on August 1. Updating your list within this window also allows your institution the opportunity to re-submit the course if it is not approved upon initial review.

For more information, see [A–G Submission Deadlines](#) page found within the UC Policy Resource Guide.

A Note About Dual Enrollment

High school students may take college coursework to meet A–G requirements and dual enrollment opportunities have expanded significantly across the state.

Special Note

If your district is considering utilizing dual enrollment as a method by which a student can meet California’s personal finance graduation requirement, it remains the school and district’s responsibility to ensure that the course curriculum addresses the 13 required topics.

It is important for high school educators and students to know that, regardless of how dual enrollment courses are noted on the high school transcript, they are regarded as college coursework for the purpose of CSU and UC admission.

Dual enrollment courses should not be included on high school A–G lists and should not be reported in CSU or UC applications as high school coursework.

For more information about how dual enrollment courses meet A–G requirements and about why they should not be included in your high school A–G course lists, see the [UC Guidance on Dual Enrollment](#).

A Note About Middle School Course Work

Only courses in Area C (Mathematics) and Area E (Languages Other Than English) are eligible for A–G credit when taken during middle school.

However, middle schools are encouraged to use free curriculum materials to develop exploratory personal finance electives ([See Next Gen Personal Finance’s middle school course as an example](#)). These courses can give students early exposure to the concepts and skills they will build upon in high school and beyond.

In addition, students may explore original credit personal finance course opportunities offered by their local high school during the summer after grade eight, allowing them to accelerate progress toward high school graduation requirements.

Communication and Scaling

It is essential to communicate with staff, students and parents about upcoming personal finance course offerings and requirements. Communicating early and expanding section offerings over time can help build excitement and capacity within your systems as you prepare for full implementation by 2030–31.

Key steps include:

- Communicating with staff, students and families about the value of financial literacy, course options, and upcoming graduation requirement timeframes
- Adding the course to registration options for students
- Developing teacher schedules and course sections based on projected enrollment
- Prioritizing upperclassmen, if needed, to build early momentum
- Considering grade-level-specific sections where appropriate

Course enrollment and scheduling processes typically begin in Winter for the following academic year, so aligning internal planning and communication processes to these timelines is critical.

In Summary

If this curriculum guide is your first introduction to the personal finance graduation mandate that begins with the Class of 2031, the timeline outlined at the top of this chapter becomes even more urgent. To offer at least one section of a course at every high school by 2027–28, LEAs and schools must begin planning now. Key decisions about staffing, student course requests, and master schedule development are likely needed in the year prior to initial implementation (2026–27).

Given timelines associated with this work, many districts will benefit from solutions that are both instructionally sound and logistically feasible. Comprehensive curriculum providers help meet this need by offering ready-made curriculum, embedded assessments, and professional learning in all of the 13 required topics. Those who provide fully-developed, semester long courses offer a quick on-ramp for schools and districts, and those who are registered as approved A–G “program” providers offer

courses that can be quickly adopted (and auto-approved) to your school's A–G course lists should you choose to implement their curriculum.

Effective implementation of California's personal finance requirement represents a significant opportunity to equip all students, regardless of background or setting, with essential financial skills that support lifelong economic empowerment.

Chapter 4

High-Quality Curriculum, Resources, and Instructional Design

Introduction: Purpose and How to Use This Chapter

The successful rollout of California’s new personal finance course hinges on the thoughtful selection and design of instructional materials that genuinely prepare students for real-world financial decision-making. To support this work, chapter 4 serves as a practical and strategic guide for selecting resources that align not only with high-quality curriculum standards but also with California’s 13 personal finance topics.

Whether you’re a classroom teacher, instructional coach, or district curriculum lead, this chapter offers tools to help translate the course vision into engaging, standards-aligned instruction. It provides:

- A framework for identifying and developing high-quality personal finance curriculum
- Guidance on navigating local curriculum selection processes
- Overviews of vetted comprehensive (i.e. turnkey) and specialty curriculum providers
- Insights into flexible course structures and design options
- Sample pacing guides and course outlines (forthcoming)
- Spotlights on instructional tools, resources, and supplemental supports

Designing a High-Quality Curriculum: Purpose, Process, and Preconditions

Building out the curriculum for your personal finance course is an opportunity to define district values and empower all students with life-shaping knowledge. As outlined above, selecting instructional materials that satisfy the content needs of California’s 13 topics and can be aligned to Common Core literacy standards is foundational to meaningful implementation.

A high-quality curriculum bridges policy and practice. It translates state-level goals into coherent, equitable learning experiences that reflect the diverse needs of students across schools and classrooms.

As defined by the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS):

A district curriculum is the central guide for teachers and all instructional personnel about what is essential to teach and how deeply to teach it throughout the district so every child has access to rigorous academic experiences and instructional and social emotional supports in meeting academic standards.¹⁶

When developed with intention, a personal finance curriculum becomes a driver of both equity and instructional coherence. Research-informed frameworks, such as those from CGCS, identify the following preconditions for success:

- A shared districtwide vision grounded in equity and readiness
- Clearly identifies which instructional decisions are determined at the district level and where schools and teachers have autonomy
- Alignment between curriculum and professional learning
- Access to culturally responsive materials and technology
- Systems for feedback, reflection, and continuous improvement

These preconditions are especially critical when introducing a new subject like personal finance, particularly in districts where many educators are teaching it for the first time. Whenever possible, they should be explicitly discussed and revisited throughout the planning and implementation process, serving as a guide to help shape decisions and promote thoughtful, coherent course development.

Designing a Course Sequence That Reflects Local Context and Instructional Insight

Districts have wide latitude to design course sequences that reflect their students' needs and instructional realities. Since the 13 topics are not required to be taught in a particular order or as isolated units, LEAs can explore thematic or integrated approaches that promote coherence and engagement.

Case in Point: Fresno Unified School District is revising its personal finance pacing after determining that budgeting is better taught as a thread across multiple units (e.g., banking, credit, investing) rather than as a single standalone unit or lesson.

¹⁶ Council of the Great City Schools. *Supporting Excellence: A Framework for Developing, Implementing, and Sustaining a High-Quality District Curriculum (Second Edition)*. September 2023.

Another observed trend is to begin the course with Topic 11, “Understanding how psychology impacts financial well-being.” This creates an early “soft entry” into identity and values, supports SEL practices, and sets a reflective tone for the rest of the course by grounding students in the psychology behind financial choices. This student-centric entry point sparks immediate engagement and builds a foundation for more technical content that will be introduced later. Because behavioral economics emphasizes how people actually make decisions, not just how they should, it opens the door to critical self-reflection and accessible entry points for all learners.

Classroom Vignette: The Jellybean Game – Values-Based Budgeting in Action

It’s the third week of the semester, and Ms. Robison’s 12th grade Personal Finance students are sitting in small groups, each with a bag of 20 jellybeans and a colorful worksheet on the desk in front of them. The chatter in the room is immediate, with some students already negotiating housing choices with their peers, while others count jellybeans silently and try to decide between a cell phone plan and health insurance.

“Remember,” Ms. Robison says, walking between tables, “these jellybeans represent your entire monthly income. Once they’re gone, they’re gone. You must make some tough choices.”

The activity, known as The Jellybean Game, is part of a larger unit on budgeting and financial goal-setting. Students begin by allocating their jellybeans across essential categories, such as housing, food, transportation, and then move on to discretionary choices. By Round Two, Ms. Robison announces an income cut: students now have only 13 jellybeans. Groans ripple through the class.

“I’m keeping my gym membership,” one student insists.

“You can’t even afford groceries!” a classmate points out, half-laughing.

The quick back-and-forth draws a few chuckles, but soon the group shifts into a more serious conversation, rethinking what expenses really matter. Ms. Robison stops by to listen in.

“What changed for you between Round One and Round Two?”

“I thought entertainment was a need,” a student replies. “But now I’m realizing I didn’t even budget for clothes or laundry.”

In Round Three, she throws in curveballs: “You just got a 2-bean raise,” she tells one group. “Someone in your family broke their leg,” she says to another. The game shifts from strategy to empathy. Students begin to ask each other about their choices—not just what they picked, but why.

The class ends with a reflective discussion: What did your spending reveal about your values? What surprised you? How did it feel to give something up?

For Ms. Robison, this wasn't just a lesson on budgeting, it was an entry point into behavioral economics, identity, and values. "They walked away understanding that money is more than numbers. It's about decisions—and every decision has a tradeoff."

A 2024 study in the *International Journal of Science and Research Archive* reinforces this approach, noting that:

*"Incorporating behavioral economics into financial literacy education significantly improves the long-term effectiveness of financial education programs... especially among young adults encountering financial independence for the first time."*¹⁷

Activities like the Jellybean Game show how personal finance instruction can tap into students' identities, values, and emotional responses to money, which are essential elements explored in Topic 11. But understanding *why* students make certain choices is only part of the equation. To deepen learning and build stronger financial habits, students also benefit from reasoning strategies that help them *analyze* options, weigh consequences, and make more informed decisions. This is where economic reasoning comes into play.

Leveraging Economic Reasoning Skills to Deepen Instruction

As districts plan their approach to implementation, many will draw on educators with backgrounds in teaching economics. While the law clearly states that personal finance must stand alone and may not be integrated with other courses such as Economics, it is important to recognize that economic reasoning skills, when used intentionally, can strengthen, rather than dilute, the instructional goals of personal finance.

Skills such as opportunity cost analysis, cost-benefit thinking, and understanding incentives are not exclusive to economics. They are practical tools for navigating financial decisions and can help students think critically about trade-offs, priorities, and long-term consequences. These tools, when applied with intention, deepen instruction by connecting abstract concepts to students' real-world experiences and empowering them with strategies for sound financial decision-making.

¹⁷ Ilugbusi, Bamidele Segun, and Olawale Adisa. [Behavioral Economics in U.S. Financial Literacy Programs: A Comprehensive Review](#). *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2024, pp. 2384–98.

Educators should approach these tools as a way to enhance personal finance instruction not to repackage economic content. The goal is to illuminate real-life financial questions, promote personal agency, and support students as they build the knowledge and skills to manage their financial futures. When applied thoughtfully, these reasoning strategies promote both instructional rigor and personal relevance.

Importantly, economics educators should not feel limited to the reasoning tools outlined in the chart below. As with all high-quality instruction, personal finance teaching benefits from the thoughtful connections and professional judgment of experienced educators. Many veteran economics teachers will naturally identify additional conceptual frameworks, critical thinking strategies, or analytical tools that align with personal finance topics as they become more familiar with the course content and available resources. For example, because personal finance centers on the decisions individuals make as consumers, the course provides multiple opportunities to introduce or deepen student understanding of America’s market economy. Teachers can highlight how everyday financial choices reflect broader economic principles such as incentives, competition, and supply and demand.

However, what should guide these instructional decisions is the legislative intent and purpose of the course: to deliver high-quality instruction on the personal finance topics codified in [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info). The goal is not to embed personal finance content into an economics course, but rather to teach personal finance as its own distinct, standalone subject. The chart below serves as one starting point for identifying helpful connections, but it is not a ceiling. As always, professional expertise should be exercised within the scope of the course’s instructional purpose.

The chart that follows outlines several key economic reasoning skills and shows how they align with California’s 13 personal finance topics. This resource is designed to support curriculum development, classroom reflection, and instructional planning.

Economic Reasoning Skills Aligned to California’s 13 Personal Finance Topics

<i>Economic Reasoning Skill</i>	<i>Logical Alignment to Topic</i>	<i>Alignment Overview</i>
Opportunity Cost Awareness	2: Budgeting 3: Employment 8: Investing	Helps students evaluate choices and understand trade-offs when budgeting, managing income, or deciding how to invest.

<i>Economic Reasoning Skill</i>	<i>Logical Alignment to Topic</i>	<i>Alignment Overview</i>
Cost-Benefit Analysis	4: Credit 5: Loans 6: Insurance	Promotes analytical thinking in comparing financial products like loans and insurance plans to assess value and risk.
Marginal Decision-Making	2: Budgeting 8: Investing 12: Charitable Giving	Supports practical financial decision-making by encouraging students to adjust plans based on incremental benefits or needs.
Incentives Matter	4: Credit 7: Taxes 10: Financing College	Clarifies how financial incentives (like tax breaks or credit rewards) influence behavior and decision-making.
Thinking on the Margin	2: Budgeting 8: Investing	Reinforces how small, frequent decisions (like daily spending or saving) compound into major financial outcomes.
Trade-Offs & Scarcity	1: Banking 2: Budgeting 10: Financing College	Builds understanding that resources are limited, requiring students to prioritize needs over wants in budgeting or college planning.
Time Value of Money	5: Loans 8: Investing	Illustrates the financial benefit of acting early and planning ahead in borrowing, saving, or investing for long-term goals, including retirement accounts mentioned under investing principles.
Rational Consumer Behavior	2: Budgeting 11: Psychology & Financial Well-being	Strengthens self-awareness of psychological biases and emotions that affect budgeting, spending, and saving behaviors.

<i>Economic Reasoning Skill</i>	<i>Logical Alignment to Topic</i>	<i>Alignment Overview</i>
Market Function and Price Signals	6: Insurance 9: Consumer Protection	Explains how prices and availability of financial products (like insurance or housing) respond to supply and demand.
Decision-Making Under Uncertainty	6: Insurance 9: Consumer Protection	Prepares students to manage financial risk through tools like insurance and fraud protection, emphasizing resilience.
Externalities and Long-Term Consequences	12: Charitable Giving 13: Other Topics	Connects financial choices to broader social or environmental outcomes, reinforcing responsibility and ethical considerations.
Compound Growth & Exponential Thinking	8: Investing	Demonstrates the power of long-term saving and investing through compound interest and exponential growth—key to understanding wealth building and retirement planning under Topic 8.

When intentionally integrated into instruction, these economic reasoning skills can deepen students' understanding of financial concepts, strengthen critical thinking, and empower learners to make more informed, strategic, and resilient financial decisions throughout their lives.

Selecting Instructional Materials: California Department of Education Guidance and Requirements

The [Personal Finance Curriculum Guide Foundational Principles](#) adopted by the California State Board of Education states that the curriculum guide will include examples of high-quality, publicly available resources for instruction (e.g., lesson plans, curricula, and other resources) that are currently being used in schools and that are provided at no cost. Such resources are included in this chapter and are referenced throughout the guide.

These resources are included for informational purposes. Their inclusion does not constitute an endorsement, recommendation or adoption by the California State Board of Education, The Instructional Quality Commission, or the California Department of Education. Each LEA should carefully consider the instructional materials they select for use in their personal finance courses.

Before moving on to explore these free curricular resources, districts should first review the California Department of Education’s guidance around instructional materials adoption. While curriculum adoption remains a local decision, it must align with statutory requirements and content expectations.

The [Guidance for Local Instructional Materials Adoption](#) document outlines key criteria to support this process, including:

- Required teacher and community involvement ([EC Section 60002](#)) (CA Legislative Info)
- [Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content \(2013 Edition\)](#)

To support districts in navigating this process, the following best practices are recommended:

- Define course goals before choosing materials
- Review multiple options, including open-source and no-cost tools
- Evaluate how each provider supports diverse learners and instructional needs
- Consider modular or blended approaches using multiple providers

It is also important to be aware that in an effort to provide relevant, engaging, and just-in-time resources, many of the instructional resources are built from current topics. As a result, districts should do their due diligence when conducting their social content review. This process should also address [EC Section 60045](#) (CA Legislative Info) which requires that instructional materials are accurate, objective, and current and suited to the needs of pupils at their respective grade levels. In some cases, LEAs may also need to ensure that the materials comply with local policies on discussing current events and controversial issues.

Sample Course Outlines and Scope & Sequence Models

To help districts and educators visualize how a personal finance course can be structured, this section provides sample course outlines and planning documents from current California high schools. These examples reflect the design decisions of early implementers and offer practical models to support local planning efforts.

While many existing courses lay a strong foundation, most will require revision to fully meet the 13 statutory topics mandated for the 2027–28 school year. To support this transition, the following examples are included:

- Three course outlines currently in use, illustrating different sequencing strategies and identifying areas that may require revision or supplementation
- One updated semester outline that has been modified to meet the requirements of [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info) and is compliant with the 2027–28 mandate

These models are intended as adaptable planning tools to spark reflection, guide collaboration, and support locally responsive course design. Districts choosing to model their course off any of the provided examples will still need to modify the course based on available instructional minutes, academic calendars, and student needs.

It is also important to note that many districts may choose to adopt a pre-approved program offered by one of the featured curriculum providers highlighted later in this chapter. These comprehensive programs are available in both semester and full-year formats. They provide built-in compliance with statutory requirements, include onboarding support, offer content-focused professional learning, and create opportunities for external enrichment. While the sample outlines in this section can help inspire and guide local course development, districts seeking a fully developed structure may find that provider programs offer a more efficient and complete solution.

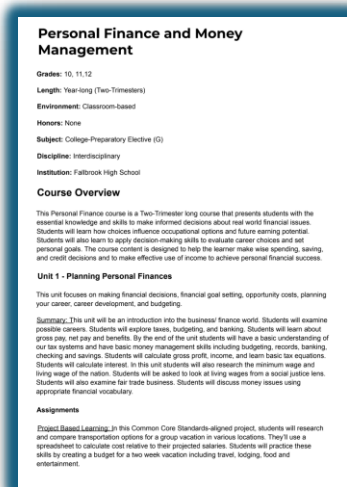
Fallbrook High School: Personal Finance and Money Management

Fallbrook High School (FHS) is a public comprehensive high school located in the rural community of Fallbrook, CA. The city of Fallbrook is located in northern San Diego County, between the Pala Indian Reservation and the US Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton/ Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station. The school serves nearly 2000 students; 23 percent of whom are English learners and 75 percent are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Fallbrook High School is committed to providing a comprehensive education that fosters academic excellence, career-ready skills, and personal growth.

Fallbrook High School operates on a trimester schedule. The pacing for their two-trimester Personal Finance course, equivalent to a full-year course in a semester system, is outlined in the NGPF recommended unit calendar provided below, followed by their course description.

NGPF Recommended Unit Calendar

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Content</i>
1: Behavioral Economics	Learn how cognitive biases and other outside influences can affect your decisions
2: Banking	Learn the essentials of bank accounts, why we save, and how to save
3: Investing	Learn about the stock market along with investment strategies and retirement
4: Types of Credit	Learn about credit, credit cards, and loans
5: Managing Credit	Learn how to manage your credit, credit score, and debts
6: Paying for College	Learn about scholarships, grants, student loans, and repaying after college
7: Career	Learn how to search and apply for jobs, create a cover letter and resume, interview effectively, and succeed in a new job
8: Insurance	Learn about what insurance is and take a deeper dive into different types of insurance
9: Taxes	Learn about the US tax system and filing a tax return
10: Budgeting	Learn how to build budgets for all of the different parts of your life
11: Consumer Skills	Learn how to be a savvy consumer, avoid scams and fraud, and avoid identity theft



For text accessible full document see [Appendix 1, Fallbrook High School Course Overview: Personal Finance and Money Management](#).

Keyes Union School District: Personal Finance for Life Readiness

Keyes Union School District is located in the Central Valley region of California. The district is deeply invested in preparing students for life beyond high school and recognizes the critical importance of equipping them with comprehensive financial literacy skills. Though it is a TK–8 district, it does include a TK–12 charter school with a personal finance class.

The course currently offered, Personal Finance for Life, organizes its units around key topics related to personal finance. The topics are then aligned with engaging learning activities and assessments. The course also makes use of a variety of high-quality instructional materials to support student learning and ensure they meet the objectives of lessons and units.

It is important to note that the course was developed prior to the signing of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) so districts wishing to take a similar approach would need to make sure that they fully align with 13 mandated topics (see chapter 2). For example, they would want to ensure that lessons on employment and net income (Topic 3) address the requirements of [EC Section 49110.5](#) (CA Legislative Info) and that there are lessons on insurance types and costs (Topic 6) charitable giving (Topic 12).

Personal Finance for Life Readiness Grade Level: 11-12 Duration: One Semester (18 weeks) Credit: 5 Units - Graduation Requirement Instructional Model: Project-Based, Standards-Aligned, Blended Learning			
Core Resources Referenced - Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF) - www.ngpf.org - JumpStart National Standards in K-12 Personal Finance Education - Council for Economic Education Financial Literacy Framework			
Course Overview and Objectives This course prepares students to manage personal finances responsibly by providing practical tools, critical thinking exercises, and real-life simulations. Students will learn to make informed financial decisions, develop short- and long-term financial goals, and understand the impact of economic factors on personal wealth.			
Course Outline and Unit Breakdown			
Unit	Title	Topics Covered	Learning Activities / Assessments
1	Introduction to Financial Literacy	Needs vs. Wants, Goal-Setting, Financial Planning	Budgeting journal, SMART goals workshop
2	Income and Careers	Net vs. Gross Income, Taxes, Benefits, Career Research	Pay stub analysis, Tax simulation
3	Budgeting	Budget creation, Fixed vs. Variable Expenses, Emergency Funds	Monthly budget project, Budget simulation app
4	Banking and Saving	Checking and Savings Accounts, Online Banking, Interest	Virtual bank tour, Deposit slip activity

For text accessible full document see [Appendix 2 Keyes Union School District Course Overview: Personal Finance for Life Readiness](#).

Foresthill High School

Foresthill High School is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and is one of four comprehensive high schools in the Placer Union High School District. The school serves approximately 200 students, nearly half of whom qualify for free and reduced lunch. The mission of the school is to ensure every graduate leaves with the skills and attributes necessary for success after high school. Their core values are perseverance, ingenuity, pride, respect, and integrity. To support the mission and values, the school offers seven pathways for students to study: Information Communication Technologies, Automotive Services, Forestry and Natural Resources, Child Development, Product Innovation and Design, Graphic Arts Technologies, and Fire Science.

Districts wishing to follow a similar scope and sequence would need to ensure their courses included units on uses and costs of loans as well as charitable giving to ensure alignment to the requirements of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info).

SCOPE & SEQUENCE		
Foresthill High School 23319 Foresthill Road Foresthill, CA 95631		
UNIT	DESCRIPTION	DAYS
Behavioral Economics	Lessons 1 – 3, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test	4
Career	- MATH: Making Sense of Percents - Lessons 1 – 5, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test	5
Taxes	- Lessons 1 – 5, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-1.1, FA-1.3, FA-1.5, FA-1.7	7
Banking	- Lessons 1 – 8, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-2.3, FA-2.4, FA-2.5 - FA-3.2, FA-3.3, FA-3.4	12
Budgeting	- Lessons 1 – 6, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-4.2, FA-4.4, FA-4.5, FA-4.8	9
Investing	- Lessons 1 – 11, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-5.2, FA-5.3, FA-5.5, FA-6.3	13
Types of Credit	- Lessons 1 – 7, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-7.2, FA-7.5, FA-7.6	9
Managing Credit	- Lessons 1 – 4, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-8.2, FA-8.4	6
Paying for College	- Lessons 1 – 7, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-9.2, FA-9.3, FA-9.8	10
Insurance	- Lessons 1 – 6, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test - FA-10.1, FA-10.2, FA-10.4, FA-10.6	9
Consumer Skills	Lessons 1 – 5, Exit Tickets, Review, Unit Test	5
Final Exam		1
	TOTAL DAYS	90



Choose Futures the Foreground Ideal

For text accessible full document see [Appendix 3 Foresthill High School PF Semester Course Scope and Sequence](#).

Fresno Unified School District

Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) is the third largest district in California. It serves nearly 70,000 students, 88 percent of whom are socioeconomically disadvantaged and 21 percent of whom are English learners. As an early implementer of personal finance instruction, FUSD piloted a one-semester course beginning in the 2024–25 school year. The initial scope and sequence reflected early design choices made prior to the passage of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) and served as the district’s foundational approach to introducing personal finance as a standalone course.

Preview: Original Scope and Sequence as Drafted for the 2024–25 Pilot Course

PERSONAL FINANCE (NEXT GEN)	
SEMESTER-AT-A-GLANCE (Semester Course)	
Course Description This semester-long personal finance course covers all of the essential personal finance topics necessary to become a financially capable student. Topics include banking, credit, budgeting, investing, career, and more.	
Learning Outcome By the end of this course, students will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of key personal finance topics and be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to make informed financial decisions, manage money responsibly, and navigate the financial challenges and opportunities they will encounter after high school.	
Course Materials: This course will utilize the materials offered by <i>Next Gen Personal Finance</i>	
Quarter 1 (39 days) or Quarter 3 (46 days)	Quarter 2 (43 days) or Quarter 4 (52 days)
Unit 1: Behavioral Economics (3.5 Days) - Your Values and Money (66) - Your Brain and Money (67) - Overcoming Cognitive Biases (34) Unit 2: Banking (10-12 Days) - Checking Accounts (61) - Savings Accounts (63) - Benefits of Banking (68) - Bank Statements (61) - Strategies to Save (70) - Challenges to Saving (61) - Online Money & App Apps (62) - Online and Mobile Banking (61) Unit 3: Investing (14-17 Days) - Why Should I Invest? (21) - What is the Stock Market? (77) - What is a Stock? (60) - What is a Bond? (44) - Managing Risk (49) - Investing Funds (60) - Open Your Own Funds (61) - Start Investing (62) - The Importance of Investing for Retirement (67) - How to Invest for Retirement (64) - Modern Investing (77) Unit 4: Types of Credit (7-9 Days) - Intro to Credit (63) - Your Profile and Credit Cards (43) - Using Credit Wisely (65) - Loan Fundamentals (43) - Auto Loans (49) - Mortgages (49) - Predatory Lending (61)	Unit 5: Managing Credit (4-6 Days) - Debt Management (48) - Your Credit Report (49) - Your Credit Score (47) - Building Credit from Scratch (47) Unit 6: Paying for College (8-10 Days) - Paying for College (51) - Assistance for FAFSA (64) - Scholarships and Grants (67) - Student Loans (69) - Financial Aid Packaging (37) - Student Loan Repayment (53) - Time for Payback (61) Unit 7: Career (8-9 Days) - Career Exploration (47) - Finding a Job (58) - Resumes and Cover Letters (58) - The Interview (67) - Starting a New Job (77) Unit 8: Insurance (6-8 Days) - Intro to Insurance (67) - Auto Insurance (45) - Health & Homeowners Insurance (44) - How Health Insurance Works (48) - How to Access Health Insurance (56) - Other Types of Insurance (68) Unit 9: Taxes (5-7 Days) - Taxes and Your Day Job (56) - The Tax Cycle and Job Paperwork (47) - Taxes and Items (45) - How to File Taxes (42) - Completing the 1040 (60) Unit 10: Budgeting (7-9 Days) - Budgeting Basics (51) - Budgeting Strategies (62) - Budgeting for Housing (60) - Budgeting for Transportation (67) - Budgeting for Food (68) - Build Your Budget (45)
Extended Learning Opportunities	Extended Learning Opportunities
Mini-Unit: Gambling and Sports Betting Mini-Unit: Racial Discrimination in Finance Mini-Unit: Buying a Car Mini-Unit: Buying a House	Mini-Unit: Alternatives to 4-Year Colleges Mini-Unit: Entrepreneurship Mini-Unit: Cryptocurrency Mini-Unit: Philanthropy

For text accessible full document see [Appendix 4 Fresno Unified School District PF Scope and Sequence as Drafted for the 2024–25 Pilot Course](#).

Following the passage of [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) and the adoption of [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info), the district initiated a comprehensive revision process to ensure full alignment with the 13 mandated personal finance topics. This process involved identifying content gaps, incorporating newly required topics, and gathering teacher feedback to inform course restructuring.

The revised scope and sequence presented here reflects the results of that work. It is structured for a traditional semester-based schedule and incorporates newly required content such as California-specific financial aid resources, workplace readiness aligned with [EC Section 49110.5](#) (CA Legislative Info), and philanthropic literacy. The model also includes refinements based on teacher feedback to support effective pacing and account for differences in instructional time, particularly during FUSD's longer spring semester.

Preview: Scope and Sequence Reflecting the Revisions Needed for Compliance in 2027–28

PERSONAL FINANCE (NEXT GEN)	
SEMESTER-AT-A-GLANCE (Semester Course)	
Course Description This semester-long course introduces students to the essential concepts of personal finance needed to become financially capable and confident. Core topics include banking, credit, budgeting, investing, career planning, and more.	
Learning Outcome By the end of the course, students will develop a strong understanding of personal finance and be prepared to manage the financial responsibilities they will face after graduation.	
Course Materials This course will use instructional resources provided by Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF).	
Quarter 1 [39 days] or Quarter 3 [46 days]	Quarter 2 [43 days] or Quarter 4 [52 days]
Unit 1: Behavioral Economics (3 Days) • Your Values and Money (est. 55 min) • Your Brain and Money (est. 37 min) • Overcoming Cognitive Biases (est. 34 min)	Unit 5: Managing Credit (4-6 Days) • Credit Statements (est. 45 min) • Your Credit Report (est. 49 min) • Your Credit Score (est. 47 min) • Building Credit From Scratch (est. 41 min)
Unit 2: Banking (10-12 Days) • Checking Accounts (est. 61 min) • Savings Accounts (est. 53 min) • Reasons for Banked Entry (est. 49 min) • Being Unbanked (est. 61 min) • Switching to Sola (est. 70 min)	Unit 6: Paying for College (8-10 Days) • Planning for College 101 (est. 43 min) • Applying for FAFSA (est. 54 min) • Scholarships and Grants (est. 57 min)
Insertion A: Budgeting Lessons from NGPF Unit 10: Budgeting • Budgeting 101 (est. 51 min) • Budgeting 102 (est. 46 min) • Challenges to Saving (est. 51 min) • Digital Wallets & P2P Apps (est. 62 min) • Online and Mobile Banking (est. 70 min)	Insertion B: From • Student Loans (est. 63 min) • Financial Aid Packages (est. 37 min) • Student Loan Repayment (est. 53 min) • Time for Podcasts (est. 31 min)
Unit 3: Investing (14-17 Days) • Why Should I Invest? (est. 21 min) • What is the Stock Market? (est. 77 min) • What is a Stock? (est. 92 min) • What is a Bond? (est. 44 min) • Mutual Funds (est. 49 min) • Investing Funds (est. 32 min) • Open-End Funds (est. 31 min) • Start Investing (est. 60 min) • The Importance of Investing for Retirement (est. 57 min) • How to Invest for Retirement (est. 34 min) • Modern Investing (est. 77 min)	Unit 7: Career (6-8 Days) • Career Exploration (est. 47 min) • Finding a Job (est. 58 min) • Resumes and Cover Letters (est. 38 min) • The Interview (est. 67 min) • Starting a New Job (est. 77 min)
Insertion C: Planning Lessons from NGPF Unit 10: Budgeting • Budgeting 101 (est. 51 min) • Budgeting 102 (est. 46 min) • Challenges to Saving (est. 51 min) • Digital Wallets & P2P Apps (est. 62 min) • Online and Mobile Banking (est. 70 min)	Unit 8: Insurance (6-8 Days) • Intro to Insurance (est. 57 min) • Auto Insurance (est. 45 min) • Renters & Homeowners Insurance (est. 44 min) • Life Insurance (est. 48 min) • How to Access Health Insurance (est. 56 min) • Other Types of Insurance (est. 59 min)
Unit 4: Types of Credit (7-9 Days) • Intro to Credit (est. 30 min) • Young People and Credit Cards (est. 43 min) • Using Credit Wisely (est. 55 min) • Loan Fundamentals (est. 43 min) • Auto Loans (est. 40 min) • Mortgages (est. 49 min)	Unit 9: Taxes (8-7 Days) • Taxes and Your Pay Stub (est. 55 min) • The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (est. 47 min) • Taxes and Taxes (est. 45 min) • How to File Taxes (est. 42 min) • Comprehending the 1040 (est. 50 min)
Insertion D: Planning Lessons from NGPF Unit 10: Budgeting • Budgeting 101 (est. 51 min) • Budgeting 102 (est. 46 min) • Challenges to Saving (est. 51 min) • Digital Wallets & P2P Apps (est. 62 min) • Online and Mobile Banking (est. 70 min)	Removal A (NGPF Unit on Budgeting) • Budgeting 101 (est. 51 min) • Budgeting 102 (est. 46 min) • Challenges to Saving (est. 51 min) • Digital Wallets & P2P Apps (est. 62 min) • Online and Mobile Banking (est. 70 min)
Extended Learning Opportunities Mini-Unit: Racial Discrimination in Finance Mini-Unit: Buying a Car Mini-Unit: Buying a House	Extended Learning Opportunities Mini-Unit: Alternatives to 4-Year Colleges Mini-Unit: Entrepreneurship Mini-Unit: Cryptocurrency

Explanation of Changes to FUSD's Updated PF Semester Course Scope & Sequence

To ensure FUSD's Personal Finance course is in full compliance with [Education Code 51284.5](#), several updates were made to the existing scope and sequence. Changes are identified above as follows: additions are highlighted in green, and removals are highlighted in red. The rationale for each change is explained below.

Addressing Insertion A & C, and Removal A:

- We removed [Unit 10: Budgeting](#) for the following reasons. Teachers emphasized the need to introduce budgeting much earlier in the semester and identified opportunities to integrate many budgeting lessons into earlier units such as [Unit 2: Banking](#). To make room for the additional components needed, and to improve instructional flow, we eliminated the stand-alone [Budgeting](#) unit. Three of its six lessons were integrated into other units (see Insertions A & C), while the remaining three were removed (see Removal A).
- Note: If additional time is available at the end of the semester, one of the removed budgeting lessons, [Build Your Budget](#), can be used as a culminating activity.

Addressing Insertion B:

- We added NGPF's mini-unit on [Philanthropy](#) after the [Investing](#) unit to address Topic 12: [Charitable Giving](#), identified in [Ed Code 51284.5](#). This topic had not been explicitly covered in the previous version.

Addressing Insertion D:

- Insertion D links to the [California College Guidance Initiative \(CCGI\) resource hub](#), which provides a wide range of grade-appropriate lessons for [Topic 10: Identifying Means to Finance College](#). The hub also includes California-specific resources such as [CalKIDS](#) and [Cal Grant](#) programs.

Addressing Insertion E:

- The addition of [DIR/CHSWC Young Workers' Program](#) resources was made to strengthen alignment with Topic 3: [Employment and Understanding Factors That Affect Net Income](#). Specifically, these lessons address the requirements outlined in subdivision (a) of [Ed Code 49110.5](#). Our previous scope and sequence did not fully address these elements.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Personal Finance Dictionary \(Spanish & English\)](#)
- [Question of the Day](#)
- [Interactive Library](#)
- [Mini - Units](#)
- [Video Library](#)
- [Podcasts in the Classroom](#)
- [Arcade](#)
- [NGPF Virtual PD](#)
- [NGPF On-Demand PD](#)

For text accessible full document see [Appendix 5 Fresno Unified School District PF Scope and Sequence Reflecting the Revisions Needed for Compliance in 2027–28](#).

Understanding the Provider Landscape and Alignment Tool Process

All instructional materials highlighted in this guide are completely free to access. Each featured Comprehensive Curriculum Provider (a term fully defined in the following section) submitted a completed alignment tool verifying their curriculum's coverage of California's 13 statutory personal finance topics (see [Appendix 6](#)). These resources represent strong options to support implementation, but they are not intended to limit local decision-making. LEAs are strongly encouraged to explore a wide range of instructional materials, whether free or paid, provided they follow appropriate review processes and meet the legal requirements outlined earlier in this chapter.

This guide is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all available personal finance resources. Curriculum providers are still updating or expanding their materials to meet California's new requirements. The resources included here reflect what was available and reviewed as of August 2025. Users of this guide are encouraged to check for updates and new tools that may support their implementation efforts.

A Collaborative and Interconnected Landscape

Educators, particularly those new to teaching personal finance, should understand that this is a highly collaborative and interconnected field. Many providers build on each other's work or incorporate shared resources into their curricula. For example, MyMoney.gov, developed by the Financial Literacy and Education Commission, curates content from agencies such as the Federal Reserve, FDIC, and IRS. These same materials may also appear in other programs or be accessed directly from agency websites.

As you review the curriculum providers in the following section, you may notice significant overlap among tools and content. Some programs even offer formal integration features, such as Everfi's crosswalk to Next Gen Personal Finance, to help educators blend resources effectively. Similarly, platforms like the Jump\$tart Clearinghouse aggregate resources from across the field to support the development of flexible, well-rounded instructional programs.

Curated Curriculum Resources: Comprehensive and Specialty Providers

This section introduces instructional materials that have been reviewed for alignment with California's 13 personal finance topics. Materials are organized into two categories:

Comprehensive Providers

These providers offer, or are in the process of finalizing, a complete and ready-to-implement curriculum that covers all 13 topics. Their offerings typically include course sequencing guidance, lesson plans, slide decks, assessments, supports for diverse learners, and some level of professional learning and/or classroom assistance.

These curricula offer a strong starting point for districts and educators designing their personal finance course. They ensure the required topics are covered, providing a solid foundation that educators can adapt and refine to meet local needs. Instead of spending time creating content from scratch, teachers can focus on customizing and sequencing lessons. Many new teachers will be building their content knowledge through

professional learning, so having comprehensive and aligned materials available can ease the transition and make implementation more manageable.

Context Matters

Comprehensive providers vary in their instructional approach, platform requirements, use of technology, and levels of support. For example, a provider that delivers content through a specific Learning Management System (LMS) may be a strong fit for districts already using that platform—but could create barriers for others without that infrastructure. Districts should review each provider through the lens of their own context:

- What is the delivery model?
- Does the instructional design align with existing teaching practices and infrastructure?
- What are the technology requirements?
- What level of instructional and technical support is included?

Specialty Providers

These organizations may not address all 13 required topics, but they offer deep expertise in specific areas such as credit, investing, or college financing. Specialty providers can serve as valuable supplements to a broader curriculum—filling content gaps or enriching instruction with high-quality, targeted lessons. Their materials often work well as standalone mini-units or enhancements to a core program.

Context Matters

A strong example of specialized alignment is the [California College Guidance Initiative \(CCGI\)](#), which manages California’s state-funded college and career planning platform for students grades six through twelve, [CaliforniaColleges.edu](#). While it does not offer comprehensive personal finance instruction, its tools for postsecondary planning, career exploration, and college financing are extensive and designed uniquely for California’s students and schools. Thus, CCGI is a particularly valuable partner when addressing California’s Personal Finance Topic 10: *Identifying means to finance college, workforce education, low-cost community college options, and other career technical education pathways or apprenticeships* and for addressing California-specific financial information as outlined in topic 13.



Teacher Tip: Leverage resources from specialized providers to meaningfully enhance a broader curriculum

Example: [CaliforniaColleges.edu](https://calcolleges.edu) can be used to supplement the resources provided by comprehensive curriculum providers when California-specific information about college, careers and/or financial aid is needed. Educators have access to step-by-step tutorials, instructional videos, and lesson plans through their [Resource Hub](#).

Every California public school student in grades 6-12 has an account on [CaliforniaColleges.edu](https://calcolleges.edu) connected to their Statewide Student Identifier (SSID). Students have access to free tools and resources including career assessments that help students identify career options and favorites, California salary information and information about related careers within California's CTE industry sectors. Students can leverage college and career search tools, identify and compare the cost of attendance between postsecondary options, complete financial aid lessons that include information about CalKIDS, [Cal Grant](#) and the [California Dream Act Application \(CADAA\)](#), and launch and track their applications to California's public higher education (CCC, CSU and UC) and financial aid systems.

Using This Section

Each comprehensive provider is presented in a snapshot format that includes a brief program overview, access information, supports for diverse learners (often highlighted through a sample lesson), and details about delivery models and instructional flexibility. While all of these providers also offer professional learning, access to high-quality PL is such a critical factor in both teacher confidence and the long-term success of California's new personal finance requirement that it is addressed in greater detail in a separate section. For specific professional learning opportunities associated with each provider, please refer to chapter 5.



Teacher Tip: As You Explore

Create a shared folder or document to organize links and notes about each provider.

Use this folder as a collaborative space to gather feedback from colleagues on what's working.

Prioritize curriculum with embedded reflection, simulations, and accessible design features.

Consider blending resources—some of the strongest implementations combine elements from multiple providers.

In contrast, specialty providers are presented in a chart format that reflects their alignment to one or more of the 13 topics, helping educators identify where these focused resources can supplement a broader curriculum.

Comprehensive Provider Snapshots

These snapshots are designed to help educators make informed choices about which resources best align with their instructional context and student needs.

While all seven providers presented in this section meet the criteria of addressing California's 13 required personal finance topics, it's important to note that "comprehensive" does not mean identical. There are key differences in how providers structure and deliver their curriculum. Everfi, Financial Beginnings, Intuit for Education, Junior Achievement, and Next Gen Personal Finance all offer full semester-length courses with organized units, pacing guides, assessments, and turnkey delivery models. These resources can be implemented with minimal adaptation, making them especially useful for educators who need a complete course ready for classroom use.

The FDIC's Money Smart for Young People, while also aligned with all 13 topics, provides approximately 22 hours of content, making it a strong instructional foundation rather than a full semester course. To meet the time requirements of a typical one-

semester course, teachers may need to supplement the core Money Smart curriculum with additional resources or enrichment activities.

The California Council on Economic Education (CCEE) is currently finalizing a full semester course specifically aligned to California's new requirement, which will be completed by May 31, 2026. In the meantime, they offer a collection of high-quality, open-source lessons that address all 13 topics. These materials are robust but require districts or teachers to develop their own course sequencing and pacing. This approach offers flexibility and cost-efficiency but assumes a greater level of planning on the part of the implementer.

Everfi: Financial Literacy for High School



- [Everfi Website](#):
- Create an Account: [Register | Everfi Educational Platform](#)
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5.

Overview:

More than 55 hours of digital and offline learning resources are available, including fully developed digital simulation-based lessons and offline project-based learning activities designed to support instruction.

Access:

Teachers and students can access Everfi resources through Single Sign-On (SSO) platforms such as ClassLink, Clever, and Google, or by [registering directly on the Everfi login web page](#). Educators use the teacher dashboard to assign content, access extension lesson plans, and track progress with the built-in gradebook.

To Access Everfi's California Demo Account

- Login at everfi.com/login
- username: CAdemoteacher@everfi.com
- password: Youtheducation1!

Supports for Diverse Learners:

Courses are designed modularly with short, accessible lessons that include interactive elements, visual aids, storytelling, and formative assessments to support student

engagement, understanding, and flexibility in pacing, while also offering extensive accessibility features like text-to-speech, alt text, and closed captioning. Assessments are thoughtfully structured to measure learning without penalizing mistakes, and companion offline materials with differentiation strategies and learning aids help reinforce and extend digital instruction. For additional information see: [Using Everfi to Support Students That Receive Special Education Services](#).

Sample Lesson: Lesson 3: Budgeting

This lesson introduces students to budgeting through an interactive, story-driven format. Students follow Kalik as he learns how to manage his money while saving for a special trip with friends—an approach that helps ground financial concepts in relatable, real-world experiences. Students explore the importance of maintaining a budget, examine different budgeting methods, and practice creating a budget that balances wants and needs.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the reasons for maintaining a budget
- Identify different types of budgeting methods
- Create a budget for prioritizing wants and needs

The lesson incorporates high-leverage teaching strategies such as built-in formative assessments with immediate feedback that explains why answers are correct or incorrect. It also supports accessibility and inclusion through features like optional audio narration, full Spanish translation, and diverse character representation to reflect a broad range of student experiences.

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

Teachers and students can access through SSO (ClassLink, Clever, Google) or through traditional registration at everfi.com/login. All resources are available through the teacher dashboard including digital lessons, ability to assign content to students, extension lesson plans, and gradebook. Lessons can be assigned via LMS of choice or printed out and presented in hard copies.

Preview: Everfi Semester Course: CA Financial Literacy + Scope



For text accessible full document see [Appendix 7 Everfi Semester Course: CA Financial Literacy + Scope](#).

Financial Beginnings



Overview:

Financial Beginnings provides a structured personal finance curriculum built around practical, real-world decision-making. Instruction focuses on helping students apply core financial concepts such as budgeting, credit, investing, consumer protection, and postsecondary planning through authentic scenarios they are likely to encounter as they transition to adulthood. Lessons emphasize everyday financial choices, long-term planning, and overall financial well-being, encouraging students to connect content to their lived experiences.

The curriculum is delivered through a combination of downloadable, ready-to-teach materials, including slide decks, student workbooks, and facilitator guides, as well as digital resources that support independent and classroom-based learning. Lessons are designed for flexibility, allowing educators to implement the program as a standalone semester course, integrate individual units into existing coursework, or adapt materials for supplemental or project-based instruction. Across formats, the program prioritizes applied learning, guided decision-making, and consistent opportunities for students to practice financial reasoning in realistic contexts.

Access:

Educators and districts can explore and begin using Financial Beginnings materials through a combination of open-access and account-based systems. Sample curriculum components such as activity books, presenter guides, and slide decks are publicly available for preview or download directly from the Financial Beginnings site, allowing teachers to see lesson structures and content before committing to full access.

To access the full suite of instructional materials, including complete workbooks, facilitator guides, and course sets, teachers or district staff must contact Financial Beginnings and request an educator or classroom host account through the organization. Once set up, this account provides entry to the full library of curriculum resources.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

The curriculum is intentionally designed to support California's diverse student population, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and students from varied cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Lessons include vocabulary supports, visual aids, scaffolded worksheets, and structured note-taking guides to

promote accessibility and comprehension. Instructional materials incorporate culturally responsive practices by featuring diverse names, family structures, and financial contexts that reflect students' lived experiences. Sample lessons such as budgeting, credit scores, and investing demonstrate the use of real-world scenarios, guided decision-making tasks, and multiple modes of expression consistent with Universal Design for Learning principles.

Sample Lesson: Introduction to Investing & Compound Interest

In this lesson, students are introduced to investing as a long-term wealth-building strategy, with a focus on understanding compound interest and the role of time in investment growth. Students analyze charts and visual models to compare different investment scenarios, exploring how starting early, contribution amounts, and time horizons influence outcomes. The lesson emphasizes conceptual understanding over technical complexity, helping students build a foundational mental model of how investing works.

Instructional strategies include conceptual modeling, guided mathematical reasoning, and real-world simulation. Visual representations and scaffolded worksheets help make abstract ideas concrete, supporting multilingual learners and students with diverse learning needs. Students engage with realistic scenarios such as investing early versus delaying contributions to connect compound interest to personal financial goals. Multiple modes of expression, including verbal discussion, written reflection, and visual analysis, are intentionally built into the lesson, aligning with Universal Design for Learning principles and promoting equitable access to core investing concepts.

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

Financial Beginnings' curriculum is designed for flexible implementation across instructional settings. Lessons may be delivered in a traditional classroom format, through blended or project-based learning approaches, or supplemented with guest speakers. Educators are provided with pacing guidance, suggested adaptations, and alternative examples to support differentiation and local context. The curriculum also includes real-world application opportunities such as simulations, case studies, and career-connected financial scenarios that help students apply financial concepts beyond the classroom.

Intuit for Education



- [Intuit for Education Website](#)
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5.

Overview:

Intuit for Education offers a flexible, interactive curriculum with over 148 hours of teacher-guided and self-paced personal and entrepreneurial finance curriculum plus games, simulations, and other resources totaling over 220 hours of content. The program includes videos, games, and real-world simulations and tools powered by Intuit's financial tools—used by over 100 million individuals. With 43 self-paced lessons totaling over 49 hours of asynchronous content and 90 guided, 60-minute lessons, the curriculum supports both independent and teacher-led instruction. This design allows for differentiated instruction and hybrid learning, making it adaptable to a wide range of classroom needs. Resources include detailed lesson plans, interactive activities, slide decks, and assessments, along with LMS integration for seamless classroom implementation. Educators are further supported through live and on-demand webinars, how-to videos, and a teacher community for professional learning.

Access:

There are two ways in which a district and their educators can use the portal. First, if the district would like to approve Intuit for Education to be widely used by their educators, an authorized representative must first approve the platform by signing Intuit's Services Agreement, accepting the Terms of Service, and reviewing the Privacy Statement. This step ensures compliance with FERPA and other state education privacy laws. This will also then allow educators to use LMS integration capabilities. Second, if teachers only want to use our guided materials without allowing student online access, educators are able to make an account and get instant access to our in-classroom guided materials only which can be accompanied by our simulations, games, and calculators.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

Intuit for Education is designed with flexibility and inclusivity at its core, offering lessons in both teacher-guided and self-paced formats to support differentiated instruction and

multiple pathways for student learning. Spanish versions of the videos in the self-paced curriculum are offered. Intuit is also committed to accessibility, designing its curriculum and digital tools in alignment with the WCAG 2.2 Level AA. Key features include structured page headings, keyboard and alternative input support, high-contrast color palettes, reduced-motion options, and closed captioning on videos. To ensure ongoing usability for all learners, regardless of ability, background, or learning needs, Intuit regularly conducts automated testing, manual reviews, and incorporates user feedback into continuous improvements. We have a [VPAT](#) available for viewing.

Sample Lesson: Basics of Taxes

This lesson ([Teacher-guided, Self-paced, Simulation](#)) introduces students to the purpose and structure of various tax types, including income, payroll, property, and sales taxes, and explores how tax revenue supports public services and different levels of government. Available in both a 60-minute teacher-guided format and an 82-minute self-paced version, the lesson supports flexible instruction across settings. High-leverage instructional strategies are embedded throughout, including real-world application. Teachers can use built-in formative assessments and checks for understanding to identify learning gaps and form targeted small groups. This structure allows educators to provide personalized support using either format.

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

Intuit for Education is built to support multiple instructional models, offering both teacher-guided and self-paced lesson formats to accommodate diverse classroom settings. Teachers can deliver live, 60-minute teacher-guided lessons or assign self-paced modules that allow students to work at their own pace, enabling greater flexibility for in-person, remote, or hybrid learning environments. This format allows educators to tailor pacing and instructional approaches based on student need, using self-paced lessons for independent reinforcement or leveraging teacher-guided materials for targeted small-group instruction. The curriculum's modular structure makes it easy to assign entire units or select specific lessons, and its compatibility with major LMS platforms ensures smooth integration into existing digital classrooms. Intuit's delivery model empowers teachers to make real-time adjustments while providing consistent, standards-aligned content in a format that supports both autonomy and guided learning.

Preview: Intuit For Education Personal Finance Materials



[Intuit for Education: Personal Finance Semester Course](#)

This teacher-guided course is designed for educators to teach the skills students need to feel confident as they make financial decisions. It includes a comprehensive, flexible curriculum, and resources to help bring concepts to life in the classroom and throughout adulthood.

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Lesson Links</i>
Intuit: The Importance of Financial Literacy	4 Lessons
Intuit: Money Mindsets	4 Lessons
Intuit: Banking	6 Lessons
Intuit: Budgeting	6 Lessons
Intuit: Saving	6 Lessons
Intuit: Credit	11 Lessons
Intuit: Investing	11 Lessons
Intuit: Career Planning	6 Lessons
Intuit: Paying for College	5 Lessons
Intuit: Insurance	10 Lessons
Intuit: Taxes	8 Lessons

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Lesson Links</i>
<u>Intuit: Economics</u>	3 Lessons
<u>Intuit: Personal Finance Course Review</u>	3 Lessons

Intuit for Education Alignment to California's 13 Topics

Topic	Corresponding Units
1. Banking Basics	Unit: Intuit: Banking
2. Budgeting for Independent Living	Unit: Intuit: Budgeting
3. Employment and Net Income	Unit: Intuit: Career Planning
4. Credit Management and Debt	Unit: Intuit: Credit
5. Understanding Loans	Unit: Intuit: Credit > Intuit: Loan Fundamentals Unit: Intuit: Paying for College
6. Insurance Types and Costs	Unit: Intuit: Insurance
7. Tax System Overview	Unit: Intuit: Taxes > Intuit: Basics of Taxes
8. Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies	Unit: Intuit: Investing Unit: Intuit: Saving > Intuit: Saving for Retirement
9. Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention	Unit: Intuit: Money Mindsets > Intuit: Avoiding Scams and Fraud
10. College and Career Financing	Unit: Intuit: Paying for College > Intuit: Basics of Paying for College
11. Behavioral Finance and Psychology	Unit: Intuit: Money Mindsets > Intuit: Basics of Spending Decisions
12. Charitable giving	Unit: Intuit: Budgeting > Intuit: Changes to a Budget Over Time

For Intuit for Education's California Specific Semester Course Outline, see [Appendix 8 Intuit for Education: CA Personal Finance Semester Course Outline](#).

Junior Achievement



- Website: [JA California Educator Highlights](#)
- For more information contact your regional representative ([JA Locator](#))
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5.

Overview:

Junior Achievement (JA) in California offers a print and digital personal finance curriculum designed to be flexible, standards-aligned, and engaging. JA Financial Literacy is an A–G approved program, offering a semester-length course that integrates project-based learning, case studies, and real-world application through simulations such as [JA Finance Park](#). The curriculum includes pacing guides for both 45-minute and 90-minute instructional blocks and is accessible through printed materials, PDFs, or LMS-compatible digital platforms. A California-specific course aligned to [AB 2927](#) (CA Legislative Info) is in development, with delivery options tailored to local needs. JA also offers supplemental digital content through JA Connect and experiential learning programs like job shadowing and entrepreneurship competitions.

Access:

While free to use, Junior Achievement materials are not accessible via a public facing website. Educators should contact their local JA representative to coordinate access and implementation. Once instructors are registered and gain full access, JA provides extensive onboarding, facilitator training, and ongoing support, with a focus on successful implementation and alignment with California’s 13 personal finance topics. JA programs offer structured facilitation, optional coordination with outside presenters, and culminating activities designed to extend learning beyond the classroom. These program elements are integral to JA’s instructional model and ensure students benefit from real-world experiences and community engagement. Early communication with JA is essential to ensure alignment with school schedules and instructional goals.

To learn more about available resources, instructional support, and access options, educators can visit the [JA California Educator Highlights](#) page or email your regional contact, using the [JA Locator](#) and your school’s ZIP code.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

JA's curriculum is built on a student-centered framework that incorporates four foundational strategies: *Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Doors* (ensuring content reflects student identities and broadens perspectives), asset-based instruction, school-to-home connections, and the intentional use of culturally and linguistically inclusive content. Accessibility is a core focus, with all materials developed in alignment with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). JA also offers facilitator training and in-class support to assist teachers in effectively delivering content. Spanish-language materials are available, and accessibility policies are reviewed regularly to ensure legal compliance and responsiveness to school needs.

Sample Lesson: Case Study: Making Important Life Decisions

In this case study, students apply a decision-making framework to financial and career choices, using a decision tree to explore real-world scenarios involving college, skilled trades, and military service. Students analyze case studies, define key decision-making factors, and reflect on their own choices using graphic organizers. The activity includes multiple entry points for learners and emphasizes accessibility through universally designed student-facing materials.

The project is divided into four discrete steps, each of which has an essential question that students will answer:

- My Savings Plan: How do you plan to save money throughout your lifetime?
- My Budgeting Habit: *What can you do to help prevent overspending?*
- My Credit Score: *How does a credit score influence the things you can buy?*
- My Investment Plan: *How can investing in the markets help you to earn more money?*

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

JA offers both teacher-led and student-directed learning formats. Lessons can be delivered using printed or digital materials, and many include companion self-guided online activities via JA Connect. The curriculum accommodates different scheduling needs through pacing guides for 45 and 90-minute class periods. Additional flexibility is built in through optional in-person or virtual simulation experiences (e.g., JA Finance Park), career exploration modules, and integration with local business and community volunteers. JA's modular structure, extensive local support network, and ability to customize delivery platforms make it adaptable to a wide range of district contexts.

Preview: JA Financial Literacy: Course Outline and Pacing



For text accessible full document see [Appendix 9 JA Financial Literacy: Course Outline and Pacing](#).

Next Gen Personal Finance



- [Next Gen Personal Finance Website](#)
- [Create a Free Teacher Account](#)
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5.

Overview:

Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF) offers a comprehensive suite of personal finance curriculum resources tailored for high school educators. Its semester, and year-long courses, are aligned with national standards and directly address all of California's required personal finance topics. The curriculum is organized into 11 core units, all of which are fully customizable to support diverse instructional needs. In addition, NGPF provides 8 mini-units that allow educators to extend and deepen student learning. To

promote engagement, NGPF incorporates interactive activities, simulations, real-world case studies, and gamified experiences through its NGPF Arcade. Notably, NGPF is also an approved program in the UC A–G Course Management Portal (see chapter 3 for additional details).

Access:

NGPF is designed as a flexible teacher resource rather than a learning management system, so it does not require student logins, classroom setup, or enrollment tracking. Access to the full curriculum requires the creation of a free verified teacher account to ensure that answer keys and assessments remain secure.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

NGPF provides several supports to ensure its curriculum is accessible and inclusive for all learners. To support English learners, many activities are available in Spanish, and NGPF offers a comprehensive English/Spanish Personal Finance Dictionary to support comprehension and language development. The curriculum is delivered through Google Docs, ensuring compatibility with screen readers and accessibility tools. In addition, NGPF has completed an Accessibility Conformance Report (ACR) and continues to improve its resources to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The curriculum also supports culturally responsive teaching by incorporating real-world examples, inclusive imagery, and diverse perspectives that help foster meaningful classroom discussions reflective of students' varied backgrounds.

Sample Lesson: Scams and Fraud

The "[Avoiding Scams and Frauds](#)" lesson, part of [NGPF's Consumer Skills unit](#), introduces students to scams and fraud by defining key terms, identifying common red flags, and outlining appropriate responses if someone is scammed. Designed for a single class period, the lesson features clearly stated objectives and a variety of multimedia and scenario-based activities that make the content accessible and relevant to all learners. It opens with a Question of the Day to activate prior knowledge and spark student interest, followed by a blend of short readings, videos, and interactive prompts to sustain engagement. The hands-on activity "Spot the Scam Signs" reinforces learning by having students apply their knowledge to real-life examples. To support diverse learners, vocabulary assistance is available through NGPF's English/Spanish Personal Finance Dictionary, and review activities are included at the end of each unit. The lesson's structure, interactive components, and real-world relevance make it effective for students with varied learning needs and backgrounds.

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

NGPF's curriculum is delivered through Google Docs and Slides, with interactive options available via Nearpod to support varied teaching styles and learning environments. The student-centered design emphasizes real-world application through project-based learning, simulations, case studies, and hands-on activities. Every lesson includes a student-facing component, and supplemental tools, such as the Bank Simulator, which allows students to manage a virtual bank account, pay bills, and transfer money, enhance practical skill-building. These flexible features make NGPF's resources well-suited for use as a full course or as supplemental instruction across diverse classroom settings.

Next Gen Personal Finance Alignment with California's 13 Topics

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Corresponding Units</i>
1. Banking Basics	Unit: Next Gen: Banking
2. Budgeting for Independent Living	Unit: Next Gen: Budgeting
3. Employment and Net Income	Unit: Next Gen: Careers
4. Credit Management and Debt	Unit: Next Gen: Types of Credit Unit: Next Gen: Managing Credit
5. Understanding Loans	Unit: Next Gen: Types of Credit
6. Insurance Types and Costs	Unit: Next Gen: Insurance
7. Tax System Overview	Unit: Next Gen: Taxes
8. Investing and Wealth Building Strategies	Unit: Next Gen: Investing
9. Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention	Unit: Next Gen: Consumer Skills
10. College and Career Financing	Unit: Next Gen: Paying for College
11. Behavioral Finance and Psychology	Unit: Next Gen: Behavioral Economics
12. Charitable giving	Mini Unit: Next Gen: Philanthropy

[Preview: NGPF Curriculum Crosswalk to CA's 13 Personal Finance Topics](#)

FDIC: Money Smart for Young People (MSYP)



- [Money Smart FDIC Website](#)
- For more information and/or support email Consumereducation@fdic.gov
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5

Overview:

Money Smart for Young People (MSYP) is a modular personal finance curriculum developed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The curriculum is organized into standalone lessons supported by teacher guides, student-facing materials, and instructional slides, allowing educators to select and sequence content based on local instructional priorities and course design. Money Smart emphasizes practical application and real-world financial decision making through scenarios that reflect common financial experiences, including managing bank accounts, budgeting for independent living, understanding credit, filing taxes, evaluating insurance options, and recognizing fraud and scams. Interactive digital tools further support skill development by allowing students to practice financial decisions in simulated environments. While Money Smart addresses all required personal finance topics, the scope and depth of individual lessons are designed to support targeted instruction rather than a complete standalone semester course, and districts and educators are encouraged to combine it with additional instructional resources or extended projects to ensure sufficient instructional time, depth, and coherence for a one-semester personal finance course aligned with California's graduation requirement.

Access:

The [MSYP curriculum](#) is open-access and available through the FDIC website. Instructional materials include lesson plans, student handouts, slide decks, and educator guides, all of which can be without account creation or additional approval process. Educators are free to print, share, and adapt content to meet local instructional needs. The FDIC also offers digital tools like *How Money Smart Are You?* to extend learning through interactive, real-life financial scenarios and support student engagement.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

FDIC embeds robust support for diverse learners throughout the MSYP curriculum. Lessons include multiple entry points, scaffolded tasks for both beginner and advanced learners, and strategies aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Materials are also culturally responsive, and cross-disciplinary extensions help meet varied academic needs. For learners with disabilities or those requiring additional support, the accompanying *Money Smart for Young Adults* guide and caregiver materials provide further reinforcement.

Sample Lesson: Designing Dreams

This lesson introduces students to goal-setting and future planning by encouraging them to envision their ideal lifestyle and evaluate its financial implications. The lesson exemplifies FDIC's accessibility and scaffolding strategies, including vocabulary supports, multiple activity formats, and modifications for different learning levels.

Lesson 2: Designing Dreams: As teens begin to formulate a better understanding of the vision they hold for their future, practicing financial planning in situations applicable to their lives becomes an important topic for discussion. This lesson immerses teens in the process of financial planning by first defining concrete goals and identifying their values and then constructing a plan to implement their goals through meaningful practices, including weighing needs and wants, avoiding peer pressure, and understanding the importance of a budget.

Objectives:

1. Determine personal values and financial goals
2. Determine personal financial decisions
3. Create a financial plan
4. Summarize the purpose of financial planning

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

MSYP is primarily designed for teacher-led delivery, featuring detailed pacing suggestions for 55–80-minute sessions. Lessons include a variety of individual and group activities, with flexibility for implementation as a full course, targeted unit, or standalone topic. The curriculum does not require an LMS and is suitable for use in semester or year-long models. Educators can also leverage FDIC's Reality Fair planning guide and optional community partnerships to deepen real-world connections.

PREVIEW: FDIC's MONEY SMART for Young People – Table of Contents

MONEY SMART for Young People

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MONEY SMART for Young People -- Alignment with California Topics:

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Corresponding Lesson</i>
1. Banking Basics	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 4 & 5
2. Budgeting for Independent Living	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 7, 8, 9 & 10

Topic	Corresponding Lesson
3. Employment and Net Income	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 2 & 3
4. Credit Management and Debt	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 10, 12 & 16
5. Understanding Loans	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 1, 21 and 22
6. Insurance Types and Costs	MSYP 9-12 Lesson 11
7. Tax System Overview	MSYP 9-12 Lesson 1 & 6
8. Investing and Wealth Building Strategies	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 14 & 15
9. Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 19 & 20
10. College and Career Financing	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 1 & 12
11. Behavioral Finance and Psychology	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 2 & 4
12. Charitable giving	MSYP 9-12 Lesson 17
13. Other topics that are directly and specifically relevant to personal finance	MSYP 9-12 Lessons 9, 13, & 18

The California Council on Economic Education



- [CCEE Website](#)
- For more information contact: jmitton@ccee.org
- See Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers in chapter 5.

Overview:

California Council for Economic Education (CCEE) has prioritized the development of a California specific personal finance curriculum to meet the requirements of [EC Section 51284.5](#) (CA Legislative Info) and is developing a semester course expected to be available by spring 2026. CCEE has long offered high-quality lessons from non-commercial sources, including [EconEdLink](#) and regional Federal Reserve banks. They are now curating these materials, organizing them around student-facing questions such as “What do I want—and what will it take?” or “How can I make the best financial decisions in a changing world?” to create a cohesive, fully supported semester course. Each unit includes instructional narratives, pacing guidance, and a glossary of student-friendly terms.

Access:

Educators can access the curriculum materials through Google Docs, Canvas, the CCEE website, and email delivery with both printable and digital resources available. For information on how to best utilize these resources, contact Joshua Mitton, CCEE’s Chief Program Officer, at jmitton@ccee.org.

Supports for Diverse Learners:

CCEE’s curriculum is intentionally designed to be customizable and adaptable to meet the needs of diverse learners. Rather than relying on a rigid script, it provides flexible daily plans, suggested pacing, and multiple entry points for students to access content and demonstrate understanding. Differentiation is built into both the instructional design and the selection of content. Core lesson resources are interactive, visual, and scenario-driven, allowing students to engage with financial concepts at varying levels of complexity. Each unit includes opportunities for reflection, collaboration, role-playing, and real-life application, all approaches that align with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and support equitable access to learning.

Sample Lesson: The Car Loan Project

[CCEE's Car Loan Project](#) exemplifies real-world relevance and differentiated access. Students use online calculators to explore real-time financing scenarios, then work individually or in groups to compare different auto loan terms and interest rates. The use of online tools levels the playing field for students with varying math skills by scaffolding calculations. It also invites students to contextualize the financial implications based on lifestyle or employment constraints. The project-based structure encourages students to make personal decisions while reinforcing numeracy and research literacy. The task allows for choice and student ownership, making it easier to scaffold for students with IEPs or ELL accommodations. Teachers can extend the lesson by including a role-play or oral presentation component.

Delivery Model & Flexibility:

Districts and teachers have the flexibility to implement these resources as a curriculum or to integrate individual components into locally developed courses. Sample pacing guides suggest sequencing options while emphasizing adaptability to local needs. Instructional approaches balance direct instruction (30 percent), student-centered simulations and activities (30 percent), and independent or project-based learning (40 percent). Case studies, goal-setting tools, and scenario-based planning exercises are incorporated to support deep student engagement and personalized learning. Teachers are encouraged to scaffold early learning through personal reflection activities and conclude the course with future-focused planning and application.

Specialty Provider Alignment Overview and Chart

To further assist with curriculum planning, this section highlights additional high-quality providers whose resources focus on specific topics within the 13. While not identified as comprehensive, these specialty resources offer valuable supports and resources that can help address instructional gaps and/or better support your locally identified needs.

A Specialty Curriculum Alignment Chart follows this section, visually mapping each provider to the personal finance topics they address. This chart is meant to assist educators in selecting targeted resources for supplementing their core curriculum.

Specialty Provider Alignment to California Topics

Topic	Aligned Provider
1. Banking Basics	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Credit Abuse Resistance Education Federal Reserve Education (FRE) Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Finance in the Classroom Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills Vanguard Classroom Economy
2. Budgeting for Independent Living	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Credit Abuse Resistance Education Federal Reserve Education (FRE) Finance in the Classroom Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills Vanguard Classroom Economy

Topic	Aligned Provider
3. Employment and Net Income	California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) Federal Reserve Education (FRE) Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Finance in the Classroom Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills
4. Credit Management and Debt	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Credit Abuse Resistance Education Federal Reserve Education (FRE) Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Finance in the Classroom FoolProof Academy Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills

Topic	Aligned Provider
5. Understanding Loans	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Credit Abuse Resistance Education Finance in the Classroom Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills
6. Insurance Types and Costs	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) FoolProof Academy Finance in the Classroom Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL Practical Money Skills
7. Tax System Overview	California Franchise Tax Board (FTB) Finance in the Classroom Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MyMoney.gov Practical Money Skills TaxEDU Vanguard Classroom Economy

Topic	Aligned Provider
8. Investing and Wealth-Building Strategies	Federal Reserve Education (FRE) FoolProof Academy Finance in the Classroom Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MoneySKILL Practical Money Skills US Securities and Exchange Commission Stock Market Game: InvestQuest (SMGIQ)
9. Consumer Protection and Fraud Prevention	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Credit Abuse Resistance Education Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Finance in the Classroom FoolProof Academy Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MyMoney.gov MoneySKILL Practical Money Skills US Securities and Exchange Commission

Topic	Aligned Provider
10. College and Career Financing	California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) College Money Matters Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Finance in the Classroom Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MyMoney.gov MoneySKILL Practical Money Skills US Securities and Exchange Commission
11. Behavioral Finance and Psychology	Discovery Education: Econ Essentials Finance in the Classroom Hands on Banking Jump\$tart Clearinghouse Khan Academy MyMoney.gov
12. Charitable Giving and Civic Engagement	FoolProof Academy Hands on Banking Practical Money Skills

Additional Resources to Build California-Specific Connections

California's unique economic landscape, labor laws, and state-sponsored initiatives offer valuable context for personal finance instruction. Staff at the University of California, Berkeley Haas School of Business Institute for Business & Social Impact (IBSI) have compiled a list of resources that educators can use to help students connect statewide policies, regional realities, and their own financial futures. These resources support learning goals across multiple topics in California's Personal Finance Curriculum.

To explore these resources, please see [Appendix 10](#).

Specialty Provider—Organization Description

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Description</i>
California College Guidance Initiative (CCGI)	CCGI manages CaliforniaColleges.edu , California's state-funded, college and career planning platform for 6-12 grade students. CaliforniaColleges.edu integrates academic, career, and financial planning tools into a student's educational journey, offering lessons on college affordability, financial aid, and budgeting, while aligning with California's data systems to support informed, equity-focused postsecondary decisions. Instructional resources for educators are available through their CCGI Resource Hub .
California Franchise Tax Board (FTB)	FTB provides clear, authoritative resources to support tax instruction, including explanations of filing requirements, access to official forms, free e-filing tools, and information on refundable credits like CalEITC and the Foster Youth Tax Credit. Teachers can also use the site's calculators, FAQs, and step-by-step guides to help students understand tax documents, filing processes, and how taxes impact take-home pay.
College Money Matters	College Money Matters provides student-centered resources designed to help high schoolers understand the real costs of college and make informed financing decisions. The site offers clear explanations of financial aid and FAFSA, guidance on comparing award letters, tools for evaluating college affordability, tips for finding scholarships and grants, and information on student loans and repayment. It also includes checklists, interactive activities, and student stories that illustrate common challenges and smart strategies for paying for college.

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Description</i>
<u>Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)</u>	Research-based tools, lesson plans, and interactive activities grounded in real-life consumer experiences uniquely designed by a federal agency solely dedicated to protecting consumers and improving financial literacy across all age groups.
<u>Credit Abuse Resistance Education</u>	Engaging, real-world-focused presentations and materials, often delivered by volunteer bankruptcy and financial professionals that help students understand the long-term consequences of poor credit use and empower them to make responsible financial choices early in life.
<u>Discovery Education: Econ Essentials</u>	Offers a Behavioral Economics digital lesson series designed for grades 9–12 that helps students explore how psychology influences economic decision-making. The four-part series includes interactive videos, educator guides, classroom slideshows, and challenge activities that introduce students to key behavioral economics concepts such as irrational decision patterns, the influence of personal preferences, social influences, and price effects.
<u>Federal Reserve Education (FRE)</u>	Comprehensive, standards-aligned resources including lesson plans, videos, interactive modules that help students understand core economic and personal finance concepts.
<u>Federal Trade Commission (FTC)</u>	Offers authoritative, up-to-date resources on consumer rights, fraud prevention, credit, identity theft, and financial decision-making, helping students develop critical skills to protect themselves in real-world financial situations.

Provider	Description
<u>Finance in the Classroom</u>	This financial literacy education hub is designed to support educators, students, and families with high-quality, classroom-ready resources. Though it was developed to support Utah's personal finance requirements, the site serves as a useful clearinghouse of curated instructional materials, external tools, and other learning supports. In addition to lesson ideas, topic overviews, video libraries, and activities, it highlights opportunities for family engagement, work-based learning, and community connections.
<u>FoolProof Academy</u>	Offers a web-based personal finance and consumer life skills curriculum. The program features interactive, self-grading modules that support both in-person and remote learning. The video-driven lessons emphasize critical thinking, media literacy, and smart consumer habits, encouraging students to question advertising, avoid impulse spending, and protect personal information. Teachers can access the full curriculum or select individual modules to suit their classroom needs, track student progress, and integrate engaging, peer-led content into their instruction.
<u>Hands on Banking</u>	Hands on Banking offers a collection of seven mini-courses, including topics such as <i>Earning Money</i> and <i>All About Credit</i> , each made up of a series of brief, focused lessons. These extension and enrichment resources are designed to guide students through real-life financial scenarios and support structured group discussion. The modular format allows educators to integrate individual lessons or entire mini-courses into existing personal finance instruction, making this a flexible supplement for reinforcing key concepts through applied, scenario-based learning.

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Description</i>
<u>Jump\$tart Clearinghouse</u>	This is a searchable database of curated financial education resources from hundreds of reputable providers. The Clearinghouse lists only those resources that meet listing criteria and align with the <u>National Standards for Personal Financial Education</u>. Resources must be educational or informational in nature and may not be used to sell or promote financial products or services. Educators should note that while many resources are free, the database includes both free and paid materials. Users can apply filters to narrow results and view only no-cost options.
<u>Khan Academy</u>	Khan Academy's Financial Literacy course offers personal finance educators a comprehensive, self-paced resource covering topics such as budgeting, saving, credit, loans, insurance, investing, and taxes. Each unit includes engaging videos, articles, and interactive exercises to build real-world financial skills. A dedicated Teacher Resources section provides guidance for in-person and remote instruction, with tools aligned to educational standards to support lesson planning, progress tracking, and flexible classroom integration.
<u>MoneySKILL</u>	This web-based personal finance program offers a library of self-paced instructional modules covering core topics such as income and taxes, budgeting, saving and investing, credit, and insurance. Designed for middle school through postsecondary learners, the platform allows educators to customize course pathways, assign pre- and post-assessments, and monitor student progress. MoneySKILL is accessible across devices and can be used as a flexible supplemental resource.

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Description</i>
MyMoney.gov	Compilation of resources organized by the U.S. Financial Literacy and Education Commission. This resource hub offers reliable, easy-to-navigate materials from across multiple federal agencies, covering budgeting, saving, earning, investing, and protecting finances making it an ideal one-stop source for comprehensive financial literacy education.
Practical Money Skills	Developed by Visa, Practical Money Skills is an education resource hub offering a wide range of standards-aligned lesson plans and instructional materials for grades 9–12. Resources span core personal finance topics such as budgeting, saving, credit, investing, consumer decision-making, and financial goal setting. The site includes ready-to-use lesson plans, student activities, videos, interactive tools, and assessment ideas that support flexible classroom implementation. Practical Money Skills functions best as a supplemental instructional resource, allowing educators to reinforce or extend instruction within an existing personal finance curriculum.
Stock Market Game InvestQuest (SMGIQ)	SMGIQ is an investment simulation from the SIFMA Foundation that helps students practice long-term investing and diversification in a risk-free environment. Using a virtual \$100,000 portfolio, learners can buy and sell stocks, bonds, and mutual funds at beginner, intermediate, or advanced levels. The platform is accessible on both web and mobile devices, making it easy to integrate into classroom lessons on investing, risk management, and building financial literacy.
TaxEDU	TaxEDU offers ready-to-use resources intended to help bring tax concepts to life. Resources include explainer videos, featured lessons, blogs, and a glossary of tax terms.

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Description</i>
US Securities and Exchange Commission	Trusted, expert-developed resources that demystify investing, securities, and fraud prevention, empowering students with foundational knowledge about how financial markets work and how to make informed, long-term investment decisions.

Classroom Vignette: Investing Simulation

Mr. Bennette's students often remark that one of their favorite parts of his class is the stock market game they participate in over the course of the semester. At the same time, he wants to ensure that students develop a broad and accurate understanding of investing. In particular, he wants them to begin cultivating long-term thinking, especially an *investing-for-growth* mindset rather than a focus on short-term gains. He also wants students to understand diversification as a strategy for reducing risk and to see how different types of investments behave under various market conditions.

As a result, in addition to his usual stock market game, Mr. Bennette decided to introduce a new simulation during his investing unit: [SMG InvestQuest](#), developed by the [SFIMA Foundation](#).

This simulation requires students to divide their investments among individual stocks, mutual funds, and corporate bonds. It takes place over five simulated years, with each year divided into quarters. Each quarter presents students with different market conditions, prompting them to decide whether and how to reallocate their assets. Students also engage in decision-making processes that real investors face, such as rebalancing portfolios and navigating changing market cycles.

Throughout the game, students encounter key concepts such as compound interest, asset allocation, volatility, and diversification. Most importantly, they gain insight into how these principles interact over time, helping them build a more realistic and responsible understanding of long-term investing.

Enhancing Curriculum

[Vanguard Classroom Economy](#)

In addition to the comprehensive and specialty curriculum providers featured in this chapter, educators may also benefit from exploring enrichment models that embed personal finance into the daily routines of classroom life. One standout example is the Vanguard Classroom Economy—a hands-on simulation that transforms a classroom into a functioning economy.

Rather than offering standalone lessons, this model provides a structure for students to earn income, pay bills, save for goals, and budget expenses as part of their classroom responsibilities. Designed to run in the background of any subject or grade level, it empowers teachers to determine the degree of integration that works best for their context.

The result is an engaging and flexible tool that builds long-term financial responsibility and strengthens decision-making in ways that feel meaningful to students. For educators looking to reinforce content through real-world application, or to cultivate a classroom culture centered on responsibility, accountability, and autonomy, Vanguard's program offers a practical and memorable way to extend personal finance instruction beyond the worksheet.

The final section of this chapter outlines strategies for iterative improvement, showcasing how teachers can evolve their practice over time to build a truly impactful personal finance program.

Refining Instruction Through Continuous Improvement and Adaptation

While comprehensive curriculum providers offer a strong foundation, the most impactful personal finance courses are those that evolve over time. As teachers gain confidence and deepen their understanding of the subject matter, they naturally refine, adapt, and expand materials to better meet the needs of their students and reflect the unique context of their school communities.

This process of continuous improvement may include integrating culturally relevant examples, using local financial data, inviting guest speakers from the community, or incorporating real-world simulations tailored to student interests. Teachers might also supplement core materials with specialized resources to enhance specific units—whether diving deeper into investing, offering a project-based tax module, or guiding students through postsecondary financing options in more detail.

Once implemented, personal finance courses should be evaluated regularly to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and equitable. Districts and schools are encouraged to:

- Use diagnostic tools and common assessments to measure student learning
- Collect student reflections and post-course survey data
- Analyze course enrollment and performance trends across subgroups
- Gather teacher feedback on instructional materials, pacing, and student engagement

For example, one district administered pre- and post-course surveys and found that student confidence in managing credit and understanding taxes increased by 40 percent. Teachers used these insights to revise lesson timing and integrate new activities in the following semester.

Creating a consistent feedback loop between educators, students, and site leadership ensures that personal finance instruction evolves alongside the dynamic realities of students' financial lives. Strong district-site collaboration, data-informed decision-making, and early investment in teacher professional learning are all essential components of long-term success. Ultimately, the goal is to empower students with financial knowledge that is not only accurate and standards-aligned, but also engaging, relatable, and actionable.

Chapter 5

Professional Learning for Personal Finance Educators

Introduction: Purpose and How to Use This Chapter

California's new standalone personal finance graduation requirement brings with it an urgent need to prepare and support educators, many of whom will be teaching personal finance for the first time. This chapter provides guidance for selecting and engaging in high-quality professional learning (PL) to ensure strong, inclusive, and confident instruction statewide.

This chapter is designed for:

- Teachers seeking training and content support in personal finance instruction.
- Site and district leaders tasked with building local capacity.
- County offices and implementation teams organizing regional PL opportunities.

It includes:

- A framework for what makes professional learning effective.
- Overviews of PL types and common learning goals.
- A curated menu of PL options from trusted curriculum providers and financial literacy organizations.
- Practical tips for planning, accessing, and tracking personal finance PL.

Whether you are exploring this content as a new teacher, an experienced educator teaching a new subject, or a district lead building a systemwide approach, this chapter provides resources and structure to guide your next steps.

What Makes Professional Learning Effective?

Professional learning is most effective when it is not a one-time event, but part of a sustained, collaborative effort to improve teaching and learning. A 2017 report titled [Effective Teacher Professional Development](#) identifies seven key features that characterize high-quality professional learning:

- **Content focused:** Builds deep understanding of subject matter.
- **Active learning:** Engages participants in problem-solving and application.

- **Collaboration:** Encourages shared inquiry and peer learning.
- **Modeling of practice:** Demonstrates effective teaching strategies.
- **Expert support:** Provides guidance from experienced facilitators or coaches.
- **Feedback and reflection:** Offers opportunities for discussion and adaptation.
- **Sustained duration:** Extends overtime to allow for implementation and refinement.

These features are especially important when launching a new course like personal finance, where many teachers may be navigating new content, new curriculum, and unfamiliar instructional strategies all at once.¹⁸

Common Learning Outcomes for Personal Finance Educators

High-quality professional learning for personal finance should empower teachers to:

- Understand and teach California’s 13 statutory personal finance topics
- Build foundational content knowledge in areas like credit, budgeting, investing, and insurance
- Incorporate culturally responsive and inclusive instructional strategies
- Differentiate instruction for multilingual learners and students with disabilities
- Leverage tools such as simulations, case studies, and project-based assessments
- Evaluate and adapt curriculum to meet local student needs and to support English Learners, including Long Term English Learners, and Students with Disabilities
- Develop confidence in leading financial conversations with students and families

Types of Professional Learning

Professional learning comes in many formats. Teachers and leaders should select options that match their goals, experience level, and scheduling needs:

¹⁸ Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). [*Effective Teacher Professional Development*](#). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

- **Introductory PL:** Focuses on foundational knowledge and confidence-building for educators new to personal finance.
- **Implementation PL:** Supports classroom application of specific curriculum, including pacing, differentiation, and instructional modeling.
- **Deep Dive or Advanced PL:** Offers specialized learning on topics such as behavioral economics, financial justice, or career-aligned financial planning.
- **Micro-credentials or Certification:** Formal credentials that document educator expertise in personal finance instruction.
- **Workshops and Conferences:** Regional or statewide events that combine networking, live instruction, and exposure to emerging tools or policies.

Professional Learning Opportunities for Personal Finance Educators

Educators and district leaders have a range of options for building instructional confidence and deepening content knowledge. PL can be facilitated through school sites, districts, county offices, and external organizations, including curriculum providers and national education nonprofits.

Many personal finance curriculum providers offer free, topic-specific training tailored to their instructional models. Others offer more comprehensive PL options, complete with certifications, live sessions, and on-demand learning. The following section highlights professional learning opportunities from the six comprehensive curriculum providers featured in chapter 4, followed by additional state, national, and nonprofit resources available to support educators at all levels of experience.

Professional Learning Offered by Curriculum Providers

California Council on Economic Education: CCEE offers targeted professional learning to help teachers deliver personal finance instruction with clarity and confidence. Sessions include one-day district-based workshops, as well as standalone and multi-part virtual or in-person series, with a focus on both content knowledge and classroom application. For educators using CCEE’s semester course, PL includes guidance on course structure, implementation strategies, and customization. Participants leave with a clear sense of how to get started and tailor the material to their local context.

Everfi: Everfi provides both virtual and in-person professional learning designed to support effective implementation of its personal finance courses. Training sessions can be tailored to meet the needs of individual teachers or scaled to support district-wide adoption. Educators receive hands-on guidance in navigating and delivering the digital

curriculum, with opportunities to explore instructional strategies, technology integration, and classroom management. In addition, teachers gain access to Achieve, a suite of short (3–5 minute) adult learning modules that feature engaging videos, articles, calculators, and interactive tools designed to deepen content knowledge and boost instructional confidence. Teachers have access to a [professional learning landing page](#), allowing them to search by topic area and explore blog posts, webinars, and podcasts, along with asynchronous modules currently in development.

For a menu of Everfi's Achieve professional learning opportunities aligned to California's PF topics see [Appendix 11 Everfi's Achieve PL](#).

[Financial Beginnings](#): Financial Beginnings provides professional learning opportunities designed to build educator confidence in teaching core personal finance concepts and implementing the curriculum. Professional learning focuses on curriculum orientation, instructional delivery, and content-specific understanding, particularly for educators who may be new to personal finance instruction.

Training sessions and workshops are offered upon district or site request and are typically aligned to the Financial Beginnings curriculum. These sessions may be delivered virtually or in person and introduce educators to lesson structure, sequencing, and key financial concepts. Professional learning experiences emphasize common areas where teachers often seek additional support, such as investing fundamentals, credit and interest, and long-term financial decision-making, and provide opportunities for educators to engage with the content from a learner's perspective before teaching it.

In addition to live training, Financial Beginnings supports ongoing educator learning through curriculum-embedded professional resources, including facilitator guides, lesson overviews, instructional notes, and suggested pacing. These materials are designed to help teachers anticipate student misconceptions, clarify complex financial ideas, and approach instruction with greater confidence and accuracy.

[Intuit for Education](#): Intuit for Education offers a range of professional learning resources to help educators build confidence in teaching personal financial. Through live and on-demand webinars and elearning modules teachers can learn how to use Intuit's curriculum and explore effective strategies for delivering core financial concepts. These sessions are free and accessible asynchronously, making it easy for educators to engage at their own pace.

In addition to webinars, Intuit provides professional learning toolkits that focus on fostering inclusive, student-centered classrooms and supporting experiential learning. Educators have access to standalone teaching toolkits that support using interactive tools like calculators, simulations, and games in the classroom.

For more information about Intuit for Education’s professional learning opportunities see [Appendix 12 Intuit PD Offerings](#).

[Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation \(FDIC\): Money Smart](#): FDIC offers at least two annual webinars focused on its youth resources and best practices in youth financial education. Additional train-the-trainer support is also available as requested by teachers, principals, schools, or school districts utilizing their Money Smart for Young People.

[Federal Reserve Education \(FRE\)](#): FRE provides free events, programs, and certifications intended to build teacher confidence.

[Junior Achievement \(JA\)](#): JA provides targeted professional learning to support educators and systems implementing its semester course and related resources. JA team members offer both initial training and ongoing support, available in-person and virtually, to ensure effective delivery of JA’s interactive, real-world financial literacy curriculum. This training is directly aligned with JA’s instructional model and includes preparation for both educators and volunteers. Supplemental training videos are available on demand through JA USA and local area offices. In California, JA is partnering with National University to launch a Financial Literacy Educator Certification, scheduled for release in 2026. As an added support, [JA Connect](#)—an online, self-guided learning platform—is available to all participating teachers and students, offering more than 40 lessons on money management, career readiness, business, and entrepreneurship.

[Next Gen Personal Finance \(NGPF\)](#): NGPF offers one of the most comprehensive professional learning ecosystems in the personal finance space, designed to support both new and experienced educators. Teachers can choose from a wide range of formats, including live virtual sessions held multiple times each week, self-paced modules, and in-person FinCamps hosted each summer. Live PL sessions cover everything from core financial content to instructional strategies and are led by experienced educators and content experts. For those seeking a more structured learning path, NGPF offers certification courses, each consisting of nine hours of instruction and a final exam, available in both live and self-paced formats. These are ideal for deepening content knowledge or building instructional confidence around specific personal finance topics.

To further support new users, NGPF offers the Beginner Series, a set of on-demand modules that introduce best practices for using NGPF curriculum in the classroom. The Starter Pack provides a high-level overview of core personal finance concepts, serving as an accessible entry point for educators new to the content. In addition, teachers have access to dozens of one-hour PL modules focused on specific financial topics, allowing

for just-in-time professional learning. NGPF also hosts free virtual conferences throughout the year, creating space for community, collaboration, and continued growth. For more information see *NGPF PL Spotlight* at the end of this chapter.

California Department of Education Website Resources

Educators and district leaders can explore the financial literacy PL providers listed by the California Department of Education on the CDE's [Grades K–12 Financial Literacy Resources web page](#).

[California Association of School Economics Teachers \(CASET\)](#): Promotes the effective teaching of economic principles for kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12). CASET also provides teacher curriculum design resources, hosts the Economics for Empowerment Summer Seminar, and facilitates the California Exceptional Economics Teacher opportunity.

[Certified Personal & Family Finance Educator \(CPFFE\)](#): The CPFFE Program, offered by the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences, is assessment-based and consistent with the U.S. Department of Treasury Financial Education Core Competencies and National Standards in K–12 Personal Finance Education created by the Jump\$tart Coalition.

[Council for Economic Education \(CEE\)](#): CEE offers training through EconEd. They provide live webinars, on-demand webinars, and local professional learning options.

[Institute for Financial Literacy Annual Conference on Financial Education](#): This conference is a showcase for financial literacy strategies, tips, techniques, and resources attended by representatives from credit unions, banks, kindergarten through grade twelve (K–12) education, social services, debt management, government, and military.

[Jump\\$tart Financial Foundations for Educators \(J\\$FFE\)](#): J\$FFE is a free, comprehensive, and self-paced professional learning program designed to enhance educators' own financial knowledge and build confidence in personal finance instruction. Developed through a national collaboration to ensure consistency and rigor in teacher training, J\$FFE is appropriate for educators working with students in grades K–12 and complements many existing financial education programs.

The interactive modules, Spending and Saving, Credit and Debt, and Investments and Insurance, each contain 3 to 4 lessons, with individual lessons taking approximately 60 to 90-minutes to complete. Additional standalone lessons include Stretching Your Income, Struggling to Pay Bills, and Identity Theft. Educators can

select modules of interest, earn a professional learning certificate upon completion, and access a curated library of resources for continued learning.

J\$FFE can serve both as an introduction to key financial topics and as a refresher for experienced educators. It is well-suited for any educator looking to improve their own financial literacy while gaining tools to bring that knowledge into the classroom.

[Jump\\$tart National Educator Conference \(NEC\)](#): The Jump\$tart NEC offers professional learning for teachers of prekindergarten through grade twelve who want to incorporate financial literacy into the curriculum. For teachers, it is an all-scholarship event, offering tools and information they can use in their classrooms as soon as they return to school. Please note: “All-scholarship” means that teachers must apply for and be awarded a scholarship through one of Jump\$tart’s donor-sponsored opportunities; participants cannot self-pay to register.

As California begins implementing its new personal finance graduation requirement, additional professional learning providers may emerge to meet local needs. While this guide is intended to serve as the primary statewide reference, educators and local educational agencies may periodically consult the CDE’s [financial literacy resources web page](#) for additional related resources.

SPOTLIGHT: NGPF Professional Learning Opportunities

<i>NGPF Virtual PL</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Format</i>	Live, interactive 1-hour sessions are held multiple times weekly
<i>Features</i>	Engage with fellow educators, explore lesson ideas, and delve into personal finance topics
<i>Access</i>	Open to all educators with a free NGPF Teacher Account
<i>Credit</i>	Earn 1 NGPF Academy credit per session
<i>More Information</i>	<u>NGPF Virtual PD</u>

At a Glance

Examples include sessions like *Credit Scores Demystified* and *Behavioral Economics in the Classroom*. These PLs help teachers gain new instructional strategies and content knowledge while networking with peers.

Sessions frequently feature financial industry leaders and innovators who share real-world insights that educators can bring directly into the classroom—and often into their own lives. Topics range from instructional activities to personal finance tools and industry trends.

NGPF On-Demand	Description
Format	Self-paced modules hosted on Nearpod (no subscription required).
Features	Incorporates videos, articles, quizzes, and collaborative boards. Flexible and asynchronous.
Access	Open to all educators with a free NGPF Teacher Account
Credit	Earn 1 NGPF Academy credit per session
More Information	NGPF on-demand learning opportunities

At a Glance

NGPF offers over 50 On-Demand Modules, with new ones being developed regularly. These cover both content-specific topics like budgeting, investing, and credit, as well as pedagogical best practices for delivering financial education.

Two key bundles are especially valuable for educators new to teaching personal finance:

Beginners Series: Focuses on how to navigate the NGPF website, incorporate resources into instruction, and use best practices for pacing and engagement. Ideal for educators who are new to NGPF tools.

Starter Pack: A curated set of 12 modules designed to build foundational personal finance content knowledge. This is an excellent resource for anyone new to the subject or seeking a refresher before jumping into the classroom.

Together, these modules ensure that teachers can enter the classroom with confidence in both what they're teaching and how to teach it.

[See NGPF's On-Demand Alignment to CA's 13 Personal Finance Topics](#)

NGPF Certification Courses	Description
Format	Structured courses available in live (2-hour sessions over several weeks) and self-paced formats.
Features	Deepen content knowledge in specific personal finance areas.
Duration	9 hours of instruction plus a 1-hour final exam (10 total hours spread over 5 predetermined weeks)
Access	Open to all educators with a free NGPF Teacher Account
Credit	Earn 10 NGPF Academy credits and a certification upon passing the exam.
More Information	NGPF Certification Courses

At a Glance

Currently, 11 certification courses are being offered periodically throughout the year. These include Career, Consumer Skills, Taxes, Behavioral Economics, Investing, Cryptocurrency, Paying for College, Advanced Investing, Banking and Budgeting, Credit, and Insurance. These equip educators with a robust grasp of topics needed to lead more confident and comprehensive instruction in their classrooms. Educators that complete six or more of these certifications gain the NGPF recognition of Distinguished Educator of Personal Finance and open opportunities for continued education units for those awarded NGPF scholarships.

<i>NGPF Virtual Conferences</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Format</i>	Full-day events held several times a year on Saturdays.
<i>Features</i>	Feature keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities.
<i>Duration</i>	Multiple Sessions - Usually between the hours of 7:00AM to 3:00PM
<i>Access</i>	Free registration for educators. These events are also archived in NGPF's Virtual Conferences tab.
<i>Credit</i>	Earn multiple NGPF Academy credits.
<i>More Information</i>	NGPF Conferences

At a Glance

Conference themes may include “Emerging Trends in Financial Literacy” or “Equity and Access in Financial Education.” They are ideal for district leads and teacher leaders seeking big-picture strategy and inspiration.

<i>NGPF FinCamps</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Format</i>	In-person, full-day professional learning workshops offered during the summer.
<i>Features</i>	Interactive sessions led by NGPF team members, focusing on curriculum implementation and best practices.
<i>Duration</i>	Traditionally 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
<i>Access</i>	Free, with events hosted in various locations.

NGPF FinCamps	Description
Credit	Earn 7 NGPF Academy credits.
More Information	NGPF FinCamps

At a Glance

FinCamps include hands-on experiences with simulations, budgeting challenges, and curriculum walkthroughs. Participants leave with ready-to-use tools and expanded confidence in delivering engaging lessons.

Special Note

NGPF offers a one-time \$500 stipend through the [California Access to Financial Education \(CAFE\) grant program](#). To qualify, complete 20 hours of NGPF professional learning which includes all of the options above. To learn more, click the link above.

Track your Professional Learning with NGPF Academy

Overview: A recognition program that tracks your NGPF PL and achievements.

Features: Earn badges, track credits, and receive certificates.

Access: Automatically enrolled upon attending your first PL session.

More Info: Visit the [NGPF Academy web page](#)

Chapter 6

Instructional Design, Pedagogy, and Assessment

Access to personal finance courses has been shown to lead to positive financial outcomes in adulthood. For these benefits to reach all students, it is essential that school systems design and implement personal finance instruction that is inclusive and responsive to California's diverse student population. Students vary widely in their cultural identities, socio-economic circumstances, geographic influences, and linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. These differences contribute to a richer, more dynamic learning environment. At the same time, this diversity underscores the need for instruction that is flexible, accessible, and engaging for all learners. By designing instruction that embraces learner variability, educators can ensure that each student has meaningful access to personal finance content and can leave school financially empowered.

Meeting this goal requires intentional instructional design. This chapter explores research-informed strategies and frameworks that support equitable, engaging, and effective personal finance instruction. Thoughtful design involves selecting robust teaching strategies that meet the diverse needs of learners, fostering student engagement, and creating meaningful learning experiences. Equally important is the alignment between instruction and assessment, ensuring that assessment practices support ongoing growth, reflection, and improvement.

This chapter explores the following topics to provide a foundation for designing inclusive, effective, and engaging personal finance courses:

- Integration of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction
- Use of culturally sustaining pedagogy to honor student identities
- Targeted supports for multilingual learners
- Engagement through inquiry-based and project-based learning
- Integration of financial technology and digital literacy tools
- Alignment of instruction and assessment to support student learning and growth and to support continuous improvement

Part I: Instructional Design for Equitable Access

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for teaching and learning that guides the design of learning environments that promote success for all students. The primary focus of UDL is to create opportunities for learners to "internalize the process of learning itself."¹⁹ It acknowledges that students have variability, and that variability is predictable and something that can be planned for. It also recognizes that barriers to learning are found in the design, not the learner, and that context matters in determining whether particular aspects of variability serve as assets or barriers to learning.²⁰

Developed by the [Center for Applied Special Technology](#) (CAST), the [UDL guidelines](#) help educators address learner diversity through three principles: engagement (the why of learning), representation (the what of learning), and action and expression (the how of learning).²¹

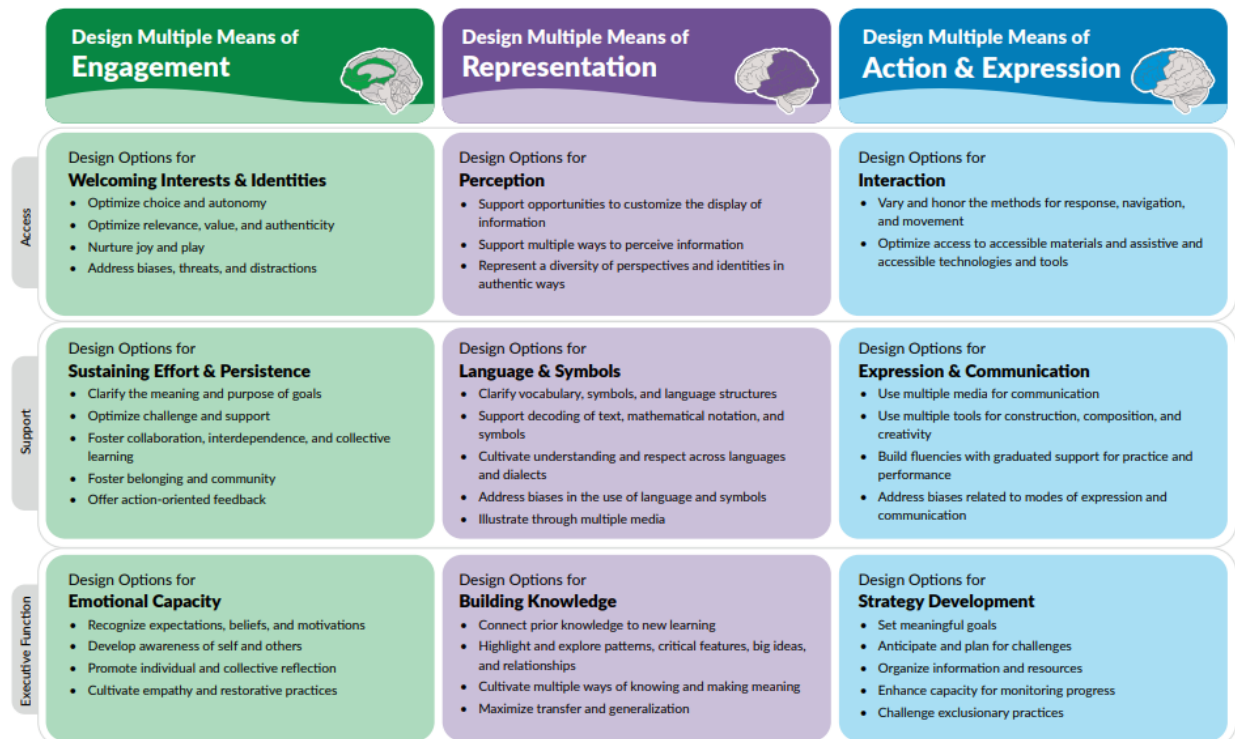
¹⁹ Anne Meyer, David Rose, and David Gordon. 2014. *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and practice*. CAST Professional Publishing. p. 3.

²⁰ San Diego County Office of Education. [Universal Design for Learning](#). Accessed August 1, 2025

²¹ Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). n.d. ["What is Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)?"](#) Accessed March 12, 2025.

The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

The goal of UDL is **learner agency** that is purposeful & reflective, resourceful & authentic, strategic & action-oriented.



 CAST | Until learning has no limits[®]

udlguidelines.cast.org © CAST, Inc. 2024
Suggested Citation: CAST (2024). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 3.0 [graphic organizer]. Lynnfield, MA: Author.

At the core of UDL is the focus on developing student agency by designing classroom environments that provide multiple means of engagement, representation and action, and expression. Thinking more broadly, it provides for the why, the what and how of the learning. To design with UDL in mind, educators should set rigorous learning objectives, anticipate potential barriers that may hinder student engagement or success, and plan lessons that proactively minimize those obstacles.

To assist educators in this process, CAST developed the UDL Guidelines. Educators can use this tool to identify concrete strategies to provide multiple means of engagement, multiple means of representation, and multiple means of expression. According to CAST

The Guidelines were developed to support educators across contexts—early childhood, primary, secondary, postsecondary, higher education, afterschool, workforce, etc.—to apply the UDL framework to practice. The Guidelines are not meant to be a “prescription” or a “checklist,” but a tool that offers a set of suggestions that can be applied to reduce barriers, sustain and honor learners’ multiple identities, and maximize learning

opportunities for every learner. The Guidelines can be mixed and matched according to specific learning goals and can be applied to particular content areas and contexts.

The principle of engagement recognizes that students differ in what motivates them to engage in learning. What sparks their curiosity is influenced by their identities and their ability to connect lessons to what matters in their lives. This guideline also emphasizes that students might be impacted by other factors such as spontaneity or novelty, while other students thrive with strict routines. Therefore, teachers should plan for engagement by addressing students' interests and identities, students' varying methods of sustaining effort and persistence, and students' power to harness emotion and choose how to move forward in learning.

Representation focuses on the varying ways in which students perceive things and make meaning of information. This can be due to students' cultures, home languages identities, past experiences, and perspectives. Additionally, it may be due to factors such as sensory disabilities or learning disabilities. What is important is that lessons honor and value the different approaches students bring. Though there is no single means of representation that is optimal for every student, educators can plan for student success by giving information with multiple modalities and offering a variety of perspectives. They can also communicate in ways that clarify language and symbols. And, educators should use multiple ways to help students construct meaning and develop new knowledge.

Students vary in how they express what they know. While some, including those with disabilities, may prefer writing, others might communicate more effectively through verbal means. Educators can support this diversity by using curricular materials that accommodate different preferences and by providing various media and tools for expression and communication. Additionally, scaffolding both lower- and higher-level executive functions can help students develop effective learning strategies.²²

Classroom Vignette: UDL Implementation

During a unit on the uses and effects of credit, Ms. Chen noticed some students seemed to grasp the concepts quickly while others struggled to connect with the information and stayed unengaged. She used the district adopted online curriculum as the main source of information and used the embedded formative assessments to gather data.

²² Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST). n.d. "[The UDL Guidelines](#)." Accessed March 18, 2025.

As she continues through the unit, Ms. Chen decides to incorporate the guiding principles of UDL to improve student learning.

Multiple Means of Engagement:

Ms. Chen will incorporate activities that relate to student interests and incorporate some choice in how they work. She will set up different stations, including a computer station with simulations, a station for working with diagrams, and a station for building models, and allow students to choose their preferred activity. She adds "Scenario Stations" where students can pick a scenario related to credit and then work at a station that aligns with that scenario. This could mean creating a budget for a college student using student loans or analyzing the credit implications of buying a car.

Multiple Means of Representation:

To address learner variability, Ms. Chen decides to incorporate visual aids, an interactive simulation included with the district curriculum, and a short video discussion on how credit scores are determined. Additionally, Ms. Chen invites guest speakers (virtually or in-person) from different backgrounds to share their experiences with credit. She will also provide a graphic organizer for students to take notes and record their own thinking.

Multiple Means of Action and Expression:

Instead of a traditional written quiz, students are given the option to create an informative brochure or record an audio or video public service announcement. In developing their products, the students were required to address the key concepts covered in the unit and explain how to manage credit. Ms. Chen provides a rubric for the digital storytelling project that includes components such as creativity, clarity of information, and visual appeal. This allows students to express their understanding in a format that suits their strengths and preferences.

Personal Finance Foundational Principle: Topic 4

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI 6-12.6; RI 6-12.8

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9-10.7 / RI.11-12.7; W.9-10.6 / W.11-12.6

CA Model School Library Standards: 9-12 2.2.b; 9-12 3.3.a

Differentiated Instruction

Students classified as having a disability qualify under one or more of 13 eligibility categories as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including

but not limited to specific learning disabilities, autism, speech or language impairments, and emotional disturbance. These students bring with them a wide range of strengths, challenges, and learning profiles that contribute to the richness of the classroom environment. Their presence encourages educators to design innovative and responsive instructional practices that promote inclusion and equity. By recognizing and valuing these diverse abilities, educators can create learning environments that not only accommodate individual needs but also foster collaboration, empathy, and creativity among all students.

Differentiated Instruction within a Universal Design for Learning Framework

To ensure equitable access to curriculum for all learners, varied instructional methods need to be used. Years of research have indicated that utilizing Differentiated Instruction as well as Universal Design for Learning are both ways that can increase engagement and content acquisition.

Differentiated Instruction (DI) is an approach that involves adjusting teaching methods to meet the diverse needs of students. It focuses on differentiating the content, process, and product based on individual learner profiles. Using data gathered through observation, assessments, and other formative tools, educators can implement targeted strategies to support each student's unique learning needs, ensuring more equitable and effective instruction.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework designed to make learning environments accessible and effective for all students. By incorporating Multiple Means of Representation, Action and Expression, and Engagement, UDL promotes greater inclusivity and equitable access to instruction. When lessons and classroom environments are intentionally designed to meet a wide range of learner needs from the outset, the need for separate or specialized modifications for individual students is significantly reduced.

As teachers approach their lessons, individual student needs and classroom experience will allow them to determine how DI can fit within a UDL based lesson. This may look like gathering data on specific parts of the lesson and making choices for subsequent lessons as well as making notes for future changes to lessons if needed.

Classroom Example

As Ms. Reyes planned her upcoming lesson on budgeting strategies, she used the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to ensure every student had multiple ways to access the content, engage with the material, and demonstrate their understanding. She included a mix of videos, hands-on simulations, and graphic

organizers, anticipating the diverse needs of her learners. Then, applying Differentiated Instruction (DI) principles, Ms. Reyes took it a step further: she offered tiered reading materials based on students' reading levels, created flexible grouping options for the simulations, and provided a menu of project choices for students to show their learning. By thoughtfully combining UDL and DI, Ms. Reyes designed a lesson that was both accessible to all students from the start and adaptable to meet their individual strengths, interests, and needs.

Use of technology

Technology is an essential tool in classrooms across the state and plays a critical role in supporting modern instruction. However, its use must be intentional and purpose-driven to effectively enhance student learning. When integrated thoughtfully, technology can introduce students to valuable tools that support the ongoing development of personal finance skills and understanding. Applications and financial simulation websites, for example, can serve as dynamic platforms for students to practice money management and explore global financial systems. These digital resources not only make learning more interactive and engaging but also broaden students' awareness of financial tools and strategies available in a rapidly evolving, interconnected world. Technology also helps level the playing field for students with and without disabilities. Providing access to audio and video versions of instructional materials, as well as tools that support multiple modes of expression, ensures that all students can engage meaningfully with the curriculum. When used thoughtfully, technology becomes a powerful means of promoting accessibility, equity, and inclusion in the classroom.

As technology continues to evolve, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly common in education. Many AI tools now allow teachers to modify the Lexile level of a text to better meet the needs of their students. Often, content is presented at a reading level where students may understand the topic conceptually, but struggle with decoding the text. By adjusting the Lexile level, educators can ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage with meaningful content in an accessible way. This is just one of the many ways AI can be a useful tool in curriculum design.

Classroom Vignette: Budgeting for Real Life

Ms. Tolianna has just completed a unit in her senior Personal Finance course focused on fixed, variable, and periodic expenses, with special emphasis on the financial responsibilities commonly faced by first-time renters. To help students apply these foundational budgeting skills in a real-world context, she assigns a culminating project in which each student creates a detailed monthly budget based on one of five entry-level job scenarios representative of possible career paths after high school graduation.

To begin, Ms. Tolianna models how to responsibly and effectively use AI tools to support financial research. She visually guides students through the process of using an approved AI platform to search for local job postings, explore starting wages, and understand required job qualifications. During the demonstration, she uses think-aloud strategies to illustrate how to frame precise questions and identify relevant keywords and phrases. Students take notes on effective search terms they can use to individualize their own research. To support diverse learners, Ms. Tolianna provides guided notes that students can fill in during the demonstration. After the session, a transcript of the live AI search is uploaded to the class learning management system (LMS) for students to reference during their independent work time.

Using their assigned job's estimated monthly take-home pay, students then research and calculate realistic monthly costs for essential living expenses, including rent, utilities, groceries, transportation, as well as discretionary spending such as entertainment (e.g., movies or streaming services). With the support of the AI tool, students explore cost-of-living data specific to a geographic area of their choice.

Once students have compiled their expenses, they will create a personalized budget worksheet using a format of their choice (e.g., spreadsheet, digital graphic organizer). Their budgets will clearly label fixed, variable, and periodic expenses. Students will then return to the AI tool to analyze their proposed budgets, asking for suggestions on how to optimize their spending, reduce unnecessary expenses, and increase savings in order to meet personal financial goals such as building an emergency fund or saving for a car.

After revising their budgets based on AI-generated suggestions, students will further categorize their expenses as *wants* or *needs* and make final adjustments to better align their budget with their long-term financial priorities.

To extend the learning experience, students will complete a spending habits profile quiz provided by Ms. Tolianna. Based on their quiz results, they will then use the AI tool to identify budgeting apps or templates that are well-suited to their personal financial behavior and goals.

Upon completing the project, students will write a brief reflection on their experience using AI during the budgeting process, considering how responsible digital literacy and emerging technology can support real-world financial planning beyond the classroom.

Through this comprehensive budgeting activity, students not only strengthen their understanding of key Personal Finance concepts but also build essential skills in financial decision-making, digital literacy, and the practical use of AI tools for everyday life.

Curriculum Adaptations

Curriculum adaptations ensure all students, regardless of ability, learning style, or educational background, can access and engage with financial literacy content. Educators are encouraged to consider the following adaptations to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment. These adaptations not only accommodate learners with specific needs but also enhance engagement and retention for all students.

Suggested Curriculum Adaptations

<i>Adaptation</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>When to Use</i>
Option of digital or paper worksheets	Supports students with fine motor challenges and varying preferences for digital vs. physical interaction.	Use when students demonstrate difficulty with handwriting, have accommodations for assistive technology, or express a preference for one format over the other.
Assessments given in a variety of modalities	Allows for equitable assessment of different types of learning (e.g., visual, verbal, kinesthetic) and skills (e.g., critical thinking, communication).	Use when assessing complex concepts or when students have IEPs/504 plans requiring alternative formats (e.g., verbal, project-based, or visual).
Options for movement-based activities	Activates different parts of the brain to enhance engagement, memory, and participation.	Use during extended lessons, after assessments, or when students appear disengaged or fatigued from sedentary tasks.

Collaboration with Other Content Area Teachers

Each teacher on campus brings their own unique set of experiences, strengths, and instructional strategies into the classroom. This diversity is a powerful asset when

implementing a new curriculum, such as personal finance. The common focus of every educator should be centered on one essential goal: helping students succeed. As teachers navigate this content, many for the first time, it is important to remain open to continuous learning and professional growth. Personal finance is a dynamic, real-world subject that benefits from collaboration, shared resources, and reflective teaching practices. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues across departments and, when possible, across school sites to explore interdisciplinary opportunities and participate in professional learning communities. By working together and sharing what works, educators can create engaging, relevant, and accessible instruction that prepares all students for life beyond the classroom.



Teacher Tip

Establish an easily accessible network of teachers across your district who can serve as a sounding board during the rollout of this new course. Remember, each teacher has their individual experiences and possesses their own toolbox of strategies that they are able to share.

Course Offerings for Diverse Learners

Districts must ensure that, as they plan master schedules to meet legal graduation requirements, a full spectrum of course offerings is considered. The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#) guarantees that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum and receive the supports and services necessary to make meaningful progress, including in newly required courses such as Personal Finance. In alignment with this, [EC Section 51225.32](#) (CA Legislative Info) mandates that Personal Finance be offered as a graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2030–31.

To fulfill both legal obligations and best practices in equitable education, districts should intentionally design course schedules that reflect a range of instructional settings. This

includes offering self-contained Personal Finance courses taught by Special Education teachers for students who require more intensive, individualized support in a more restrictive environment. While many students with disabilities can successfully access content in General Education settings with appropriate accommodations, others benefit from smaller class sizes, specialized instructional strategies, and scaffolded pacing. Providing a variety of course delivery models not only ensures compliance with IDEA and [AB 2927](#)(CA Legislative Info), but also promotes equitable access to critical life skills. Financial literacy is a foundational competency for independence and postsecondary success, and all students, regardless of ability, deserve instruction that meets their learning needs and prepares them for the responsibilities of adult life. Intentional course planning rooted in inclusivity helps districts create pathways that honor the diverse strengths of their student populations.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

It is important to recognize that students will come into personal finance classes with pre-existing knowledge and experiences with financial literacy. Students already have real-life experience in managing money and many have already made decisions about stretching resources, prioritizing expenses, and navigating financial challenges. Acknowledging and building on this existing knowledge will make financial education more relevant and empowering.

The chart below outlines key features of a culturally sustaining approach to education and describes what these features look like in practice. It emphasizes the importance of valuing students’ language and culture as important elements to learning. Additionally, the chart highlights the need for schools to engage in meaningful collaboration with communities to ensure that education aligns with their aspirations. Together, these elements create an educational environment that is both inclusive and responsive to the diverse backgrounds of students.

*Features of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy*²³

<i>Feature</i>	<i>What it Looks Like</i>
Valuing community languages, practices, and ways of being	Students’ languages, literacies, cultural ways of being are centered meaningfully and consistently in classroom learning instead of being considered “as add-ons.”

²³ California Department of Education. “[Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy](#).” Accessed March 14, 2025.

<i>Feature</i>	<i>What it Looks Like</i>
Schools are accountable to the community	Educators and schools are in conversation with communities about what they desire and want to sustain through schooling.
Curriculum that connects to cultural and linguistic histories	Educators connect present learning to the histories of racial ethnic and linguistic communities both locally and nationally.
Sustaining cultural and linguistic practices, while providing access to the dominant culture	Educators value and sustain the cultural and linguistic practices of the community while providing access to the dominant culture (white, middle class, and standard English speaking).

In personal finance education, culturally sustaining pedagogy means that educators develop learning environments that validate and build from student’s diverse cultural backgrounds and financial experiences. To achieve this goal, classes should use resources that are based on student and community knowledge, situating learning within authentic contexts. In addition to key concepts, teachers should focus on financial skills such as decision making and critical thinking. And, importantly, educators should learn what works best for a community by partnering with and listening to community members.²⁴

Chicago Public schools in Illinois developed a comprehensive financial literacy program that centers a culturally sustaining approach. The district’s approach allows “students to experience core instruction that is responsive to and sustaining of who they are and what they bring. This approach empowers them to connect, imagine, and act as ethical, critical actors that shape the world.”²⁵ For example, in an introductory unit to financial education at the high school level, students are asked to explore the questions, “What does it mean to be financially empowered?” and “What does it take for me to be a

²⁴ National Endowment for Financial Education and the Council for Economic Education. 2021. [“Rethinking Financial Education to Support Diverse Cultures- A synopsis of the policy convening discussion held on February 11, 2021.”](#) Accessed March 14, 2025.

²⁵ Chicago Public Schools Department of Student Voice and Engagement. [“Why Financial Education?”](#) Accessed March 17, 2025.

responsible, critical, and empowered financial decision maker?” One of the resources recommended in this unit is *Pathways to Financial Success*, which includes an activity in which students explore money habits with their families, thus seeing their families as role models for financial decision making.²⁶

Similarly, educators might turn toward resources that address the needs of particular student groups. For example, [MyMoney.gov](https://www.mymoney.gov/) includes a section on Tribal and Native Resources with links to financial programs, benefits, and services designed for Tribal communities. While most of these resources are not curriculum materials, they offer valuable context for understanding the financial systems and opportunities that shape Tribal families’ experiences. Educators can use this information to highlight how different communities navigate financial institutions, helping students consider how culture, sovereignty, and access influence financial decision making.

Using culturally sustaining pedagogy as a guiding principle in implementing personal finance courses is critical to ensuring the success of all students. While this framework primarily emphasizes linguistic and ethnic diversity, it can also be applied to support students from diverse economic and geographic backgrounds. By acknowledging and valuing students’ lived experiences, educators can make financial literacy more relevant and empowering. This approach ensures that all students gain the knowledge and skills needed to engage with financial systems effectively. Ultimately, integrating culturally sustaining pedagogy fosters an inclusive learning environment where students see their identities reflected in their education.

Classroom Example

Mr. Morgan extends a unit on employment and understanding factors that affect net income by having his students investigate the benefits of entrepreneurship. As part of these lessons, he has his students investigate the inquiry question, “How can entrepreneurship empower communities to achieve economic independence and cultural resilience?” In investigating this question, Mr. Morgan engages his students in the lesson [Donuts and Pink Boxes: Forms of Resilience](#) which has students explore the history Ted Ngoy and donut store ownership by Cambodian Americans in Southern California. During the lesson, students read multiple articles then discuss questions about how entrepreneurship provided economic opportunities for many Cambodian refugees and the role it played in community building. This lesson is available in the [Cambodian American Studies Model Curriculum](#).

²⁶ Chicago Public Schools Department of Student Voice and Engagement. “[CPS Empowered! Curriculum Crosswalk](#).” Accessed March 17, 2025.

Support for English Learners

As of the 2022–23 school year, there were 1.113 million students enrolled in California’s public schools who were classified as English learners. It is the goal of the state’s education system to ensure that English learners acquire full proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as possible and to ensure that English learners achieve the same rigorous grade-level academic standards that are expected of all students.²⁷

To that end, in 2017, the California Board of Education adopted the California English Learner Roadmap: Strengthening Comprehensive Educational Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Learners. This English Learner Roadmap was adopted with the mission “California schools affirm, welcome, and respond to a diverse range of English learner (EL) strengths, needs, and identities. California schools prepare graduates with the linguistic, academic, and social skills and competencies they require for college, career, and civic participation in a global, diverse, and multilingual world, thus ensuring a thriving future for California.”²⁸

The [English Learner Roadmap](#) acknowledges that California’s adopted standards, including the [California English Language Arts and English Language Development \(ELD\) standards](#), emphasize the academic uses of language for all students and student engagement with college and career-ready curriculum using English and other languages.

Taken together, these standards highlight the tightly interconnected nature of developing disciplinary content understandings, analytical practices, and academic uses of language for all students. This shift enables the educational system to move beyond remediating students’ English language skills to simultaneously developing their language and literacy skills while engaging in the full range of academic content learning.²⁹ This is particularly important in courses like personal finance, where students must engage in real-world reasoning, technical vocabulary, and decision-making.

At the foundation of the English Learner Roadmap lie four supporting principles. These principles guide educational systems to develop a coherent set of practices, services,

²⁷ California Department of Education. “[Facts about English Learners in California](#).” Accessed March 18, 2025.

²⁸ California Department of Education. 2018. “[California English Learner Roadmap: Strengthening Comprehensive Educational Policies, Programs, and Practices for English Learners](#),” p. 10.

²⁹ Ibid, 47.

and approaches to teaching that provide a high-quality education for English learners. These principles are summarized in the chart below.¹¹

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Practices</i>
Principle 1: Assets-Oriented and Needs Responsive Schools	Pre-schools and schools are responsive to different EL strengths, needs and identities, and support the socio-emotional health and development of English learners. Programs value and build upon the cultural and linguistic assets students bring to their education in safe and affirming school climates. Educators value and build strong family, community, and school partnerships.
Principle 2: Intellectual Quality of Instruction and Meaningful Access	English learners engage in intellectually rich, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that foster high levels of English proficiency. These experiences integrate language development, literacy, and content learning as well as provide access for comprehension and participation through native language instruction and scaffolding. English learners have meaningful access to a full standards-based and relevant curriculum and the opportunity to develop proficiency in English and other languages.
Principle 3: System Conditions that Support Effectiveness	Each level of the school system (state, county, district, school, pre-school) has leaders and educators who are knowledgeable of and responsive to the strengths and needs of English learners and their communities, and utilize valid assessment and other data systems that inform instruction and continuous improvement; resources and tiered support is provided to ensure strong programs and build the capacity of teachers and staff to build on the strengths and meet the needs of English learners.

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Practices</i>
Principle 4: Alignment and Articulation within and Across Systems	English learners experience a coherent, articulated and aligned set of practices and pathways across grade levels and educational segments beginning with a strong foundation in early childhood and continuing through to reclassification, graduation and higher education. These pathways foster the skills, language(s), literacy and knowledge students need for college- and career-readiness and participation in a global, diverse multilingual 21st century world.

As with all academic courses, it is important that English learners have access to courses in personal finance. They should be afforded the opportunity to enroll in these classes, and the classes must be designed so they can access the course content. To ensure that multilingual learners can engage in academic content while simultaneously developing proficiency in English, the State Board of Education adopted the [English Language Development Standards for Kindergarten Through Grade 12](#) (ELD Standards). Among the intended uses of the standards is to provide curriculum developers with guidance on creating rigorous, linguistically, and academically rich curriculum and instructional materials for multilingual learners, and to provide teachers with a foundation for delivering instruction that supports students in developing English proficiency and meeting grade-level academic standards.³⁰

The three parts of the [ELD Standards](#) are organized around interrelated and complementary domains: “Interacting in Meaningful Ways,” “Learning About How English Works,” and “Using Foundational Literacy Skills.” Students interact in meaningful ways through collaboration (engagement in dialogue with others), interpretation (comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts), and production (creation of oral presentations and written texts). They learn about how English works through developing an understanding of how text is structured, using language to expand and enrich ideas, and by connecting and condensing ideas. Using foundational literacy skills includes print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency.³¹

³⁰ California Department of Education. 2012. [English Language Development Standards for Kindergarten through Grade 12](#). p. 9.

³¹ Ibid, 132.

The [ELD standards](#) also identify clear targets for students to meet, disaggregated by three proficiency levels: emerging, expanding, and bridging. To support English learners, teachers can employ six interacting and research-based instructional practices for teaching content and language simultaneously. These practices allow teachers to do so in ways that honor multilingual learners' assets:

- Engage students in discipline-specific practices to build their content knowledge
- Anchor the learning in real-world experiences and phenomena that are relevant and meaningful to students
- Value, promote, and cultivate students' cultural and linguistic assets to further the classroom community's learning
- Foster team-based learning and student-to-student discussions grounded in collaborative sensemaking
- Explicitly teach discipline-specific language and literacy with the goal of supporting reading, writing, and discussion in the discipline
- Use, and help students to use, multiple modalities to promote and enhance autonomy³²

Implementing these practices and supporting multilingual learners in personal finance education requires intentional strategies to enhance comprehension, engagement, and language development. The following list outlines examples of specific approaches educators can use to make financial literacy more accessible and meaningful:

- **Use visuals and multimedia.** The personal finance curriculum provides many opportunities to incorporate images, charts, infographics, and videos to support comprehension. Additionally, educators can make use of interactive tools such as online budgeting calculators and loan comparison websites. Label key vocabulary terms like *income*, *savings*, *interest* in classroom displays.
- **Provide sentence frames and word banks.** Sentence starters are powerful tools to help multilingual learners develop the language necessary to express ideas. For example, in a lesson on savings, teachers might provide the sentence frame: *One benefit of saving money is...*

Additionally, students can develop and use word banks with key financial terms. To have the greatest benefit, the word banks should be interactive, not static. Teachers can model how to structure responses while gradually developing independence by encouraging students to form their own sentences.

³² California Department of Education. 2020. [Improving Education for Multilingual and English Learner Students: Research to Practice](#). 353–355.

- **Scaffold texts.** This is an important strategy for helping multilingual learners engage with course-level texts. In personal finance, the type of reading that students do is often technical and includes disciplinary concepts and vocabulary that may be new to them. Previewing reading and connecting texts to students' prior knowledge is an effective strategy. Teachers might highlight key information in financial documents such as loan applications and provide summaries or simplified explanations before introducing complex financial texts.

Teachers can also help students by chunking reading into smaller sections with guiding questions and vocabulary support. It is important that teachers use such scaffolds to help students access grade-level texts rather than providing lower-level texts or avoiding reading altogether.

- **Use collaborative learning to support oral language development.** Collaborative learning is key to instructional approaches such as Project-Based Learning (see section below). Collaboration does not have to be a large event—teachers can employ think-pair-share throughout the class period to encourage peer discussions. They can also use small group work for financial decision-making activities. These discussions are made more effective and equitable when teachers utilize protocols such as those available in the [San Diego County Office of Education Oracy Toolkit](#).
- **Build on students' first language and prior knowledge.** Allow multilingual learners to use their home language when brainstorming ideas before writing or speaking in English. Encourage cognate recognition (e.g., *banco* in Spanish and *bank* in English). Connect new concepts to what students already know (e.g., linking personal finance to decision-making in daily life).

Classroom Vignette: Investing in the Future: Integrating Language Supports in a Personal Finance Classroom

In Mr. Salgado's personal finance class, the week begins with a challenge: students will design a diversified investment portfolio that supports a personal financial goal such as retirement, homeownership, or funding higher education. The project will require them to compare investment types, apply principles of risk and return, and consider real estate as a long-term asset.

To support students' comprehension and use of academic language, Mr. Salgado introduces essential discipline-specific terms, including diversification, risk tolerance, and compound interest. These are posted on a visual glossary with bilingual definitions and icons (Emerging), available both on the wall and digitally. Students refer to it

throughout the task as they research, discuss, and write about their investment strategies.

After a short overview, students dive into goal-setting. One group discusses the benefits of investing early for retirement, while another debates whether real estate or stocks are a better strategy to fund college. Mr. Salgado circulates, listening in and offering supports based on each student's language development needs.

At one table, two students at the Emerging level are working with multilingual peers. As they begin comparing options, Mr. Salgado provides them with sentence frames for comparative analysis and justification (Emerging), such as:

- “This investment has [high/low] risk and a [high/low] return.”
- “I like this option because...”

These sentence starters give students access to classroom discussions and help them participate even as they're still acquiring foundational English.

Nearby, a group of students at the Expanding level are wrestling with choosing between index funds and real estate. Mr. Salgado hands them a structured portfolio planning guide with scaffolded reasoning questions (Expanding) like, “How does this investment help meet your goal?” and “What risks should you consider over 10 years?” He pauses to model an academic response aloud, then asks the students to rehearse their own with a partner before writing independently (Expanding). One student practices: “I chose real estate because although it has higher up-front costs, it offers long-term appreciation and potential rental income.”

Later in the week, the class shifts toward finalizing portfolios and preparing presentations. Mr. Salgado introduces a sample rationale from a former student and distributes a presentation rubric aligned with academic language expectations (Bridging). Students at the Bridging level begin outlining their presentations using a mentor text as a model (Bridging). One student plans to include graphs showing compound interest over 15 years and to cite sources that explain current real estate trends.

During presentations, students speak to their classmates about their choices. One student explains, “Diversifying my investments between an index fund and a rental property reduces my risk while increasing long-term return.” Another responds with a thoughtful question about liquidity and access to cash in an emergency. Students are not only demonstrating financial reasoning but also engaging in academic argumentation using discipline-specific vocabulary.

Throughout the process, Mr. Salgado uses informal check-ins and a reflection journal to track both financial understanding and language use. Each student, regardless of English proficiency level, contributes meaningfully to the task, gaining confidence as a decision-maker and communicator.

Rationale for Scaffolded Supports:

These embedded scaffolds reflect the language demands and developmental needs described in the California [ELD Standards](#).

- Students at the Emerging level benefit from clear visuals, native language support, and structured sentence-level tools to express ideas.
- Students at the Expanding level engage in deeper reasoning with supports that structure their thinking and promote academic talk.
- Students at the Bridging level extend their language use into formal academic genres, supported by models and feedback.

All scaffolds are integrated into the lesson itself, demonstrating how academic language development can happen within rigorous content instruction for students.

Personal Finance Foundational Principle: Topic 8

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9–10 and 11–12.3, W.9–10 and 11–12.7, RH.9–10 and 11–12.2, 7, 8, WHST.9–10, 11–12.1, 2

CA ELD: PI.9-10 and 11-12.1, 2, 4, 12; PII.9-10 and 11-12.1, 6, 5

MSLS: 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2,4.1, 4.2

As with all student groups, educators must recognize that English learners are not a monolith, and they need to be prepared to address students' unique needs. One particular group of ELs teachers should focus on are Long Term English Learners, or LTELs. These students “have been enrolled in U.S. schools for six years or more, are stalled in progressing towards English proficiency without having yet reached a threshold of adequate English skills and are struggling academically.”³³

There are several system-wide practices that are known to support LTELs. One of which is ensuring that these students have access to rigorous core curriculum, and that they are clustered in classes with a balance of both native English speakers and other

³³ Olsen, Laurie. National Education Association. “Meeting the Unique Needs of English Learners.” 2014. p. 4.

LTELs. In addition, it is essential that they receive explicit instruction in academic language and literacy across the curriculum. There are opportunities to utilize both of these practices in a personal finance course.³⁴

- Educators can effectively help students develop both English language and content skills and knowledge when they:
- Emphasize oral language and active engagement.
- Provide explicit instructions and models.
- Focus on the development of academic reading and writing skills.
- Address key cognitive and language functions required for academic tasks and use graphic organizers to scaffold those functions.
- Build background knowledge, scaffold key concepts, and teach vocabulary.
- Make connections, build relevance, affirm language and culture, and maintain rigor.
- Check for understanding and monitor progress.³⁵

Classroom Vignette: Supporting Long-Term English Learners in a Lesson on Insurance

Topic 6: Types and Costs of Insurance

Personal Finance Outcome: Compare different insurance products and providers based on cost, coverage, and personal needs

Mr. Armstrong is preparing a lesson to help students compare different types of insurance, including home, auto, health, and life, with a focus on evaluating costs, coverage, and personal needs. Knowing that several of his students are Long-Term English Learners (LTELs), he draws on the California [ELD Standards](#) to ensure the lesson supports both content understanding and language development.

To begin, Mr. Armstrong introduces key vocabulary such as premium, deductible, coverage limit, and copay through a visual glossary and real-world examples. Students work in pairs to match terms with definitions and icons representing each concept. He encourages students to use sentence frames such as:

“A [blank] is the amount you pay [blank]. For example, in this policy...”

³⁴ Ibid, 19-23.

³⁵ Ibid, 24-29

Next, students examine sample insurance plan summaries. Mr. Armstrong uses ELD Standard Part I: Collaborative to structure a partner discussion in which students analyze two mock health insurance plans. He provides guiding questions and academic language supports to help LTELs express comparisons and trade-offs:

“Plan A has a lower [blank], but Plan B includes [blank], which might be better if...”

During a whole-class debrief, Mr. Armstrong models complex comparative language using transitional phrases like however, although, and in contrast. He pauses to explicitly highlight these phrases, drawing on ELD Standard Part II: Learning About How English Works, and invites students to use them in their own oral and written explanations.

To close the lesson, students reflect on which plan they would choose and why, writing a short paragraph using a graphic organizer to scaffold their response. LTELs receive an adapted version with sentence starters and word banks, allowing them to express their reasoning while continuing to build confidence with academic language.

By designing with both the personal finance outcomes and [ELD standards](#) in mind, Mr. Armstrong ensures that all students, including LTELs, can access the content, participate in meaningful academic conversations, and apply their learning to real-life decisions about insurance.

Teacher Reflection: Why These Strategies Matter

Long-Term English Learner often have strong oral fluency in social English but continue to struggle with the academic language and complex sentence structures required for success in high school coursework. In a subject like personal finance, where precise language is essential for evaluating contracts, comparing options, and making informed decisions, intentional language support is critical.

In Mr. Armstrong’s lesson, several high-leverage strategies help bridge the gap between language development and financial literacy:

- **Scaffolding Key Vocabulary and Concepts:** Insurance policies include specialized terminology. Using visuals, examples, and sentence frames builds conceptual understanding while supporting language development.
- **Structured Academic Talk:** Guided partner discussions give LTELs the chance to rehearse and refine their language in a low-risk setting. This aligns with California [ELD Standards](#) Part I: Collaborative and helps students build confidence in explaining their reasoning.

- Modeling Complex Language Patterns: Drawing attention to transitions, clauses, and comparative structures demystifies the kind of language used in financial documents and academic discussions. This supports [ELD Standards](#) Part II: How English Works.
- Multiple Means of Expression: Providing writing supports like graphic organizers, word banks, and sentence starters enables LTELs to demonstrate their thinking clearly and successfully—an approach consistent with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as well.



Teacher Tip

Visuals in the room are a great way to encourage passive learning of concepts that are being taught. As you include realia to demonstrate concepts, label the item in English to help students make the connection with the picture and the word they may see in text.

Closed captioning is a great way to introduce language to EL students as well as students with disabilities. Ensure all students have access to language by turning on subtitles anytime a video is shown.

Part II: Instructional Strategies and Assessment

Inquiry-Based Learning

The adoption of the [2014 ELA/ELD Framework](#), the [2016 History–Social Science Framework](#), and, most recently, the [2023 Mathematics Framework](#) emphasizes the importance of inquiry and problem solving in teaching and learning for California’s students. An inquiry approach, foremost, helps students develop curiosity about their own lives and the world around them. By asking and answering questions of disciplinary significance, students develop critical reading and writing skills, evaluate evidence, and develop independence, all while building strong content knowledge.

An inquiry approach to a personal finance course helps students see the importance of economic reasoning in everyday decision making. They learn to “choose what resources to devote to work, to school, and to leisure; how many dollars to spend, and how many to save; and how to make informed decisions in a wide variety of contexts.”³⁶

Examples of Inquiry Questions in Personal Finance

Teachers can help students understand foundational concepts in personal finance by having them investigate questions such as:

- What options are available for savings? Which options are the most beneficial for teenagers? Which options are the most beneficial for those who have established careers?
- What factors influence the type of work individuals engage in?
- What are the benefits of loans? What are the costs?

Additionally, well-crafted questions can help students connect broader economic developments to their own lives. For example, students can investigate questions such as:

- How are interest rates determined and how do they impact your purchasing decisions?
- What types of laws and regulations exist to protect workers’ rights? Why do these protections exist?
- How does geography influence the economy in different regions of California? How does this influence the jobs available to you in your community?

³⁶ National Council for the Social Studies, College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013), 35.

Finally, students can investigate compelling questions which are both “intriguing to students and intellectually honest.”³⁷ These questions allow students to investigate and learn about important concepts in personal finance that are relevant to them and in a way that sparks their interest.

Examples of compelling questions include:

- Are advertisements aimed at teenagers successful?
- How have advancements in technology increased individual's susceptibility to fraud and identity theft? What can you do to protect yourself?
- How much is your time worth, and how do you decide what jobs or gigs are worth it?
- What makes a job offer a “good deal” beyond just the salary?
- Is it smarter to spend, save, or invest your first paycheck?
- Why do some people build wealth over time while others struggle financially, even with similar incomes?
- How do you know if a “buy now, pay later” offer is a smart choice or a financial trap?
- When posing questions such as these, teachers can provide students with access to a variety of sources to help them develop evidence-based answers. For example, teachers can support student inquiry by providing access to authentic sources such as job postings, credit card agreements, local housing data, or news articles. These real-world materials allow students to investigate financial concepts in meaningful and relevant ways. This helps students engage critically with complex texts, analyze different perspectives, and develop the kind of critical thinking skills that are essential for personal finance decision-making.
- Using teacher-generated inquiry questions is an effective way to develop an engaging lesson that promotes critical thinking. At the same time, students can benefit from the opportunity to develop their own questions. One way to do so is through the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) which was created by the [Right Question Institute](#). This protocol allows students to work collaboratively to come up with more meaningful questions. By engaging in inquiry, students not only respond to teacher-generated questions but also learn to pose meaningful questions of their own, building ownership and agency in their learning.

³⁷ Ibid, 17.

Media Literacy in Personal Finance

Teachers who engage students in inquiry-based learning can simultaneously help them develop essential media literacy skills. Studies show that teens and young adults are increasingly reliant on social media as their primary source of news and information, spending nearly five hours a day on these platforms.³⁸ While students have become adept at turning to online sources, they often struggle to evaluate the credibility of these sources.³⁹

While helping students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to be financially literate, teachers can simultaneously address crucial media literacy skills by having students read like fact checkers when they encounter online sources. This can be accomplished by having students consider: who is behind the source, what evidence supports the claims made in the source, and what other sources say.⁴⁰

Classroom Vignette: Paying for College

Ms. Albert is teaching her students about how to pay for education and the importance of college savings accounts. Her goal is to familiarize students with the different options available to them and to help them decide which option would be best for them. During the lesson, she has the students research different 529 programs available from California and other states, the California Kids Investment and Development Savings (CalKIDS) Program, as well as savings programs available through banks and credit unions. Additionally, she shares information about types of loans that students commonly use to pay for college.

The students access online sources of information such as the [CalKIDS website](#), an article published by KQED, [Saving for College? How to Make the Most of Your Investment](#); an article by the Pew Research Center, [5 Facts About Student Loans](#); and a social media post created by a for-profit student loan company. Ms. Albert gives the students two primary tasks as they investigate the sources. First, they are asked to evaluate the relevance and reliability of each source. In small groups, the students discuss the following questions:

³⁸ Jonathan Rothwell. 2023. "[Teens Spend Average of 4.8 Hours on Social Media Per Day](#)." Gallup.

³⁹ Sara McGrew. 2020. "Learning to evaluate: An intervention in civic online reasoning." *Computers & Education*. Vol 145.

⁴⁰ Joel Breakstone, et. al. 2018. "[Teaching Students to Navigate the Online Landscape](#)." *Social Education*. Vol 82(4), 219-222.

Who is behind the source? What perspectives do they have?

What evidence supports the claims by each source?

What do other sources say?

Finally, the students identify the costs and benefits of each savings program as well as student loans. Then the students identify which method of paying for college would be best for them.

Personal Finance Foundational Principle: Topic 11

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI 6-12.6; RI 6-12.8

CA Model School Library Standards: 9-12 2.1; 9-12 2.2

Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a teaching method where students learn by actively engaging in real-world, challenging projects that foster deeper understanding and skills through inquiry and collaboration. In PBL, students explore complex questions and problems, culminating in a tangible product or solution. What sets PBL apart from projects typically assigned at the end of a unit is that *PBL is the unit*. Unit objectives and lessons are integrated directly into the project itself.

To be effective, PBL must include a challenging, authentic question or problem that aligns with learning goals. Students are given opportunities to analyze information, develop solutions, and work collaboratively while considering multiple perspectives. Effective PBL also incorporates opportunities for reflection and the use of related disciplinary skills. Additionally, it uses authentic formative and summative assessments and culminates in a tangible artifact, often presented publicly.⁴¹

In personal finance, PBL helps students develop essential financial decision-making skills through authentic, inquiry-based exploration and collaboration. Students work in teams to develop comprehensive financial plans, assess long-term financial goals, or create multimedia presentations on responsible credit usage. These collaborative projects encourage peer-to-peer discussion and self-directed learning. Through role-playing exercises, simulated financial scenarios, and real-world problem-solving,

⁴¹ Anette Markula and Maija Aksela. 2022. "[The key characteristics of project-based learning.](#)" *Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Science Education Research*. 4(2).

students gain firsthand experience in navigating financial challenges, refining their strategies, and developing sound financial habits.

When developing personal finance courses, districts can explore existing curriculum that incorporates PBL. For example, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta provides several curriculum supports for personal finance, including the guide *Making Finance Personal*.⁴² This resource gives students opportunities to practice key personal finance skills and includes teachers' guidance, handouts, and rubrics for each of its eleven projects.

Chicago Public Schools provides a different model for a course that includes key elements of PBL. Most notable is the inquiry approach that characterizes the course design. Each unit, or module, is organized with an authentic inquiry question. For example, in Module 1, students investigate:

- How do I use economic concepts like supply and demand, scarcity, and opportunity cost to help me make better financial decisions?
- How can my economic choices impact the quality of my life and others?

In Module 3, students are asked:

- How does maintaining an account with a financial institution contribute to my future financial success?
- What banking services are available and how do I build a positive relationship with a financial institution?
- How is the banking system organized and managed?

To answer these questions, students are given access to a variety of personal finance resources. All of which are outlined on the curriculum crosswalk that teachers have access to.⁴³

⁴² Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. 2022. "[Making Finance Personal](#)." Accessed March 17, 2025.

⁴³ Chicago Public Schools Department of Student Voice and Engagement. "[CPS Empowered! Curriculum Crosswalk](#)." Accessed March 18, 2025.



Teacher Tip

“If you can teach it, you know it!”

Create opportunities for students to teach the concepts they’ve researched during the PBL process to younger students. Giving them an authentic audience helps deepen their understanding and makes the learning more meaningful. Partner with local elementary or middle schools to arrange in-person or virtual “classes” where your students can share their knowledge.

Case-Based Learning in Personal Finance

As a structured and scenario-driven form of project-based learning, case-based learning allows students to apply financial concepts in context, preparing them for the kinds of choices they will face in everyday life. In the personal finance classroom, case studies present students with realistic financial dilemmas that require them to analyze options, justify decisions, and reflect on outcomes, skills that are foundational to deeper financial literacy. This approach strengthens economic reasoning and decision-making while also fostering critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. It encourages students to explore the consequences of financial choices and to consider how individual behavior interacts with broader economic systems and institutions.

Several personal finance programs incorporate case studies into their curriculum. Notably, Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF) offers a robust collection of case studies where students analyze scenarios involving budgeting, credit, saving, investing, and more. These cases often require students to evaluate financial trade-offs, apply numerical reasoning, and consider diverse perspectives. Everfi, another leading financial literacy provider, includes interactive case studies that immerse students in realistic financial dilemmas, such as making smart borrowing choices or navigating unexpected expenses. By anchoring abstract concepts in relatable narratives, these programs help learners see the relevance of financial literacy to their own lives.

Case-based learning is also well-suited to culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy. Teachers can select or adapt cases to reflect the diverse experiences of their students, ensuring all learners see themselves in the curriculum. Whether students are exploring the challenges of opening a bank account in an area with limited access to financial institutions, comparing financial products, or navigating financial aid options for college, case studies make room for multiple perspectives and encourage empathy. This not only supports content learning but also gives students a sense of agency over their choices.

Classroom Vignette: Banking Options

To kick off her unit on banking, Ms. Cascarino uses the NGPF case study “Bank on This,” which introduces students to the bank options available to minors and the three main types of institutions that offer checking accounts. She begins by asking students to share what they know (or think they know) about checking accounts and whether they’ve ever considered opening one. As students work through the case, they explore a scenario involving a young person opening their first checking account and evaluate the available options based on perks, fees, accessibility, and account features. Ms. Cascarino facilitates group discussions where students compared accounts from a traditional bank, an online bank, and a credit union, guiding them to consider how different institutions serve different financial needs. Each group recommends the best option for the scenario, citing evidence from the case. To wrap up, students reflect on which account they might choose for themselves and what factors would influence that decision. This activity helps demystify banking for young learners and equips them with tools for thoughtful, informed choices.

Personal Finance Foundational Principle: Topic 1

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI 6-12.6; RI 6-12.8

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RI.9-10.7 / RI.11-12.7; W.9-10.6 / W.11-12.6

Financial Technology (FinTech) and Digital Literacy

Technology continues to transform education by expanding access to information, personalizing learning experiences, and equipping students with tools to engage in real-world problem solving. In the personal finance classroom, these advances open up new opportunities for students to explore financial concepts through interactive simulations,

mobile apps, and digital platforms that mirror the tools used in real-world financial decision making.⁴⁴

One growing area of focus is financial technology, or FinTech. FinTech includes a range of digital tools, like budgeting apps and peer-to-peer payment systems, which are changing how people manage money. For students, understanding FinTech is essential for navigating the modern financial landscape responsibly and safely. Educators can support this learning by incorporating activities that examine the benefits and risks of popular digital tools, evaluate emerging technologies, and promote digital financial literacy. This might include comparing budgeting apps, exploring how algorithms are used in investment platforms, or investigating the implications of buy-now-pay-later services. Embedding FinTech into personal finance instruction helps students build critical thinking skills and become more informed and adaptive financial decision-makers in a digital world.

To help students critically engage with the role of technology in their financial lives, educators can design activities that make FinTech tools and concepts accessible, relevant, and inquiry-driven. These activities allow students to critically engage with the technologies they'll encounter in the real world, giving them the tools to make informed, thoughtful decisions about how they interact with digital financial tools. The following are examples of classroom activities that support digital financial literacy and empower students to make informed choices in a technology-driven economy:

- **App Comparison Project:** Have students research and compare 2–3 budgeting or investing apps, evaluating features such as usability, data privacy, cost, and effectiveness.
- **Buy-Now-Pay-Later Debate:** Students investigate Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) and debate their benefits and drawbacks from the perspective of both consumers and companies.
- **Digital Wallet Simulation:** Using mock scenarios, students simulate transactions using digital wallets (e.g., Apple Pay, Venmo) to explore budgeting impacts, transaction fees, and security concerns.
- **FinTech Timeline:** Students create a visual timeline showing the evolution of financial tools, highlighting major innovations.
- **Algorithm Awareness Activity:** Explore how investment apps and "robo-advisors" use algorithms. Students analyze sample portfolios and discuss the benefits and limitations of automation in financial planning.

⁴⁴ Levente Kovács, and Elemér Terták. 2024. "[Thematic Review of Financial Education and Financial Literacy in the Digital Age](#)." Acta Oeconomica 74 (4): 483–506.

- **Crypto Case Study:** Present a scenario involving cryptocurrency (e.g., buying Bitcoin as an investment) and ask students to weigh the risks, volatility, and regulatory issues.
- **Data Privacy and Finance Discussion:** Students analyze privacy policies from financial apps and explore how their own data is used when managing finances online.

Note: As of the publication of this curriculum guide, AI is increasingly becoming integrated into all aspects of society, including both education and the financial world. It is essential that educators continue to keep abreast of research and best practices in this area so they are better prepared to address and incorporate AI in their instruction.

Assessment

Instructional strategies lay the groundwork for student learning, but assessment plays an equally vital role throughout the process. It goes beyond simply measuring what students have learned at the end of a unit; it supports their financial decision-making skills in real time and contributes to their long-term financial well-being. By integrating regular check-ins, reflective exercises, and real-world applications, assessments provide continuous feedback that helps students connect financial concepts to their lived experiences, ensuring that personal finance education is dynamic and responsive to their evolving needs.

Effective assessment is not confined to a final evaluation; it is a tool that informs instruction every step of the way. Joan Herman and Margarete Heritage describe a range of assessments within a comprehensive system, allowing educators to use minute-by-minute, daily, weekly, unit-based, quarterly, and annual assessments to gauge student success and adjust instruction as needed.⁴⁵

Standards Alignment

As of this guide's publication, California has not adopted official personal finance standards. Therefore, educators should reference alternative sources to further refine learning outcomes. A starting point is the SBE approved [Foundational Principles](#), including essential topics outlined in California [Education Code Section 51284.5](#).

Chapter 2 of this guide provides examples of learning outcomes derived from the state-mandated personal finance topics. It explains each topic's significance, essential

⁴⁵ Herman, Joan L., and Margaret Heritage. 2007. Moving from Piecemeal to Effective Formative Assessment Practice: Moving Pictures on the Road to Student Learning. Paper presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers Assessment Conference, Nashville, TN. Cited in the History-social science framework for California public schools: kindergarten through grade twelve, p. 484.

learnings, and its impact on students' financial well-being. In addition, schools and districts can turn to the [National Standards for Personal Finance Education](#). From there, educators can develop learning goals and objectives aligned with student needs and community contexts.

Educators should align personal finance instruction with the [California Common Core State Standards](#) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, as applicable. Relevant standards include:

- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12 (pp. 81–82)
- Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6–12 (pp. 86–89)

Frameworks such as the Building Blocks for Youth Financial Capability developed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) can be used to align student learning goals, instructional objectives, and assessment strategies. This framework emphasizes three key areas: Executive Function, Financial Habits and Norms, and Financial Knowledge and Decision-Making Skills⁴⁶. By incorporating dimensions such as these, educators can design assessments that not only evaluate content mastery but also support students in developing long-term financial behaviors and critical thinking skills.

Formative Assessment

Once goals and objectives are identified, schools and districts should identify how they will know that students are moving toward proficiency. Formative assessment provides real-time insights into students' learning progress. This type of assessment allows teachers to make immediate instructional adjustments and address students' next steps. As discussed in the 2016 *California History-Social Science Framework*:

The sources of evidence available to teachers in formative assessment are what students do, say, make, or write. Examples include teacher–student interactions through well-designed questions, structured peer-to-peer discussions, dialogues embedded in classroom activities, student work from meaningful tasks, and web-based assessments that provide immediate feedback.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ “Learn about the Building Blocks of Financial Capability.” Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

⁴⁷ California Department of Education. *History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, 2016

Because formative assessments practices measure student progress toward learning outcomes and are used to inform instruction, they are often referred to as assessments *for* learning. In a personal finance class, such assessments might take the form of:

- Daily Financial Journals: Students track daily financial decisions and reflect on their choices, identifying areas for improvement.
- Think-Pair-Share Activities: Students discuss financial scenarios with peers to deepen understanding and refine financial strategies.
- Exit Tickets: Students respond to a brief question about a key financial concept before leaving class, helping educators identify misconceptions.
- Real-Time Budget Simulations: Students make budgeting decisions based on hypothetical income and expense scenarios, receiving immediate feedback on their choices.
- Self-Reflection Checklists: Students assess their understanding of financial topics and set personal financial learning goals.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments determine whether students have attained a specific level of competency. As an assessment *of* learning, it occurs after an extended period of instruction such as at the end of a unit or term. The results can be used for student placement, curriculum adjustments, intervention strategies, and grading decisions.⁴⁸

Effective summative assessments should be designed to measure not only knowledge retention but also the application of financial literacy skills in real-world contexts. Some examples of summative assessments in personal finance education include:

- Unit Tests: Multiple-choice, short-answer, and scenario-based questions that assess students' grasp of key financial concepts.
- Cumulative Final Exam: A broad assessment incorporating budgeting, investing, credit management, and financial goal setting.
- Standardized Personal Finance Exams: Encourage LEAs to consider administering Jump\$tart's Financial Literacy Test, [National Personal Finance Challenge \(NPFC\)](#), or LEAs or state-specific assessments.

⁴⁸ Stanford Teaching Commons. [Summative Assessment and Feedback](#). Accessed March 26, 2025.

Performance-based assessments provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning in a hands-on, real-world way. Examples include:

- **Comprehensive Financial Planning Projects:** Students create and present a full financial plan, incorporating budgeting, saving, investing, and debt management strategies.
- **Case Studies and Decision-Making Scenarios:** Students analyze real-life financial dilemmas and propose solutions based on economic principles and personal finance best practices.
- **Portfolios:** A collection of student work demonstrating their understanding of key financial concepts and their ability to apply them to personal or family financial planning.
- **Financial Literacy Capstone Project:** Students develop a personalized financial plan for post-high school life (college, workforce, entrepreneurship). They then present their findings to classmates or a panel of financial experts.

By incorporating various summative assessment methods, educators can ensure students are not only acquiring financial knowledge but also developing essential decision-making skills that will support their lifelong financial well-being.

Classroom Vignette: Teaching and Assessing Through a Performance Task

Mr. Singh Launches the unit with the Career Earnings Comparison Project, Where students research and compare two careers based on lifetime earnings, education level, job stability, and geographic location. Rather than a final assessment, the project becomes the framework for the entire unit, with each lesson building toward its completion.

Building Understanding Through Inquiry

The unit begins with a class discussion about careers in students' families and communities. Guiding questions include *What careers do you know? How do they compare in earnings and stability? What interests you?*

Students then select two careers: one requiring college or specialized training, the other with different educational demands. Mr. Singh provides a career menu with varied income levels, education requirements, and job stability, though students may choose others. To support research, he integrates online financial literacy lessons. Modules on salary trends and cost-of-living highlight geographic pay differences, while interactive tools allow exploration of industry growth and job demand. Formative assessments throughout the unit check understanding: (1) Exit tickets: one sentence summaries on earnings factors, (2) Think-pair-share: Reflections on career stability, (3) Data analysis

practice: Interpretation of real-world salary and employment data. These quick checks guide Mr. Singh's instructional decisions, including reteaching when needed.

Midway, students participate in a Data Sharing Discussion, presenting preliminary findings and receiving feedback to refine their analysis.

Demonstrating and Reflecting on Learning

For their final Career Earnings Comparison Report, students choose how to present: formal report, infographic, podcast, or video. As they share their work, students reflect on how their research informs their own career planning. By centering the unit on a performance task, Mr. Singh fosters inquiry driven learning while helping students build financial literacy and critical thinking skills that support informed career and financial decisions.

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RH 9-10.7, RH 9-10.8, RH 9-10.9, WHST 9-10.4, WHST 9-10.6

CA Model School Library Standards: 9-12 1.3, 9-12 1.4, 9-12 2.3

Equity in Assessment

Assessment in personal finance education should be equitable, inclusive, and reflective of students' learning needs, diverse backgrounds, and experiences. Culturally sustaining pedagogy encourages educators to design assessments that validate and build upon students' cultural identities, financial experiences, and community knowledge. Strategies for ensuring equity in assessment include:

- **Using Diverse Financial Scenarios:** Assessments should include examples that reflect a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, family structures, and cultural perspectives on money management.
- **Providing Multiple Ways to Demonstrate Learning:** Offering assessments in various formats, such as written reflections, oral presentations, financial simulations, or digital storytelling, allows all students to showcase their understanding in ways that align with their strengths and preferred modes of communication.
- **Designing Assessments with Language Supports:** Offer English Learners access to assessment tools that reduce linguistic barriers such as bilingual prompts, visual aids, sentence frames, and opportunities to clarify understanding in their home language when appropriate.

- **Supporting Academic Language for Long Term English Learners:** Use scaffolded academic tasks like sentence starters for financial reasoning, structured discussion protocols, and modeled responses that develop the advanced vocabulary needed for success in personal finance.
- **Incorporating Community-Based Learning:** Encouraging students to explore financial literacy through community engagement such as interviewing family members or researching cultural financial practices enhances relevance and accessibility.
- **Addressing Systemic Barriers:** Recognizing and addressing disparities in financial knowledge and access to financial resources can help create assessments that empower all students, regardless of their economic circumstances.

By integrating culturally sustaining pedagogy into personal finance assessments, educators create an environment where all students see their experiences valued and reflected in their learning, leading to deeper engagement and more meaningful financial education outcomes.



Teacher Tip

Before giving a summative assessment, ask yourself: *What barriers might prevent my students from fully demonstrating what they know?* Design assessments that minimize those barriers, allowing all students the opportunity to show their understanding to the fullest extent.

Student Self-Assessment and Reflection

Student self-assessment and reflection are essential components of personal finance education, helping students build financial self-awareness and take ownership of their learning. Encouraging students to evaluate their own financial knowledge, behaviors,

and decision-making skills fosters a growth mindset and empowers them to develop practical financial habits. For instance, students can utilize the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's [Youth Financial Capabilities Survey](#) alongside the [Mapping Your Money Journey](#) activity to set meaningful financial education goals, track their progress over time, and refine their financial strategies based on real-world applications. Ultimately, developing the habit of reflection and self-assessment equips students with the skills needed to navigate financial challenges, make sound financial decisions, and build long-term financial well-being.

Classroom Vignette: Reflecting on Learning

At the end of the Fundamentals of Banking for Personal Use unit, Ms. Jones provides her students with a final reflection activity. She distributes the unit's Reflection Tool, which asks students to identify and review the milestones they have completed, such as opening a mock checking account or comparing different banking options.

As students assess their confidence levels on a scale of 1 to 5, Ms. Jones asks them reflective questions, "What made you feel more confident in this topic?" and "What areas do you still have questions about?" She then asks the students to pair-share before engaging the class in a discussion about real-world banking experiences.

One student shares that she was surprised by the hidden fees associated with some accounts. Another reflects on how understanding direct deposit options will help him when he starts his first job. Ms. Jones takes this opportunity to connect their reflections to future financial decisions, reinforcing the relevance of the unit.

Finally, she collects the reflection tools, using them to gauge students' understanding and tailor upcoming lessons to address gaps. By integrating this structured reflection process, Ms. Jones ensures that students not only complete the unit but also connect it to their own financial futures.

Reflection Tool: Fundamentals of Banking for Personal Use

Why It Matters: A foundational understanding of banking is crucial for managing personal finances efficiently.

Milestones (List key concepts or actions you completed, e.g., Opened a mock checking account)

Self-Assessment (Rate your understanding from 1-5; 1= not confident and 5= very confident)

How did this milestone relate to your interests and personal goals?

Reflection: What surprised you most about banking options? How can this knowledge help you in the future?

Chapter Take Aways

A strong personal finance education requires thoughtful instructional design that supports all students and is responsive to their varying needs. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) ensures that every student can engage with financial concepts in meaningful ways, while Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy builds on students' lived experiences, making financial literacy instruction both relevant and empowering. Inquiry-based learning encourages students to ask important financial questions and think critically about their decisions, and media literacy equips them with the skills to navigate financial information online. Each of these instructional approaches can be incorporated into project-based learning, where students actively apply their knowledge to real-world financial challenges. By designing personal finance courses with these principles in mind, educators can create engaging, inclusive, and impactful learning experiences that prepare students for financial success beyond the classroom.

Assessment is not a separate or final step in the teaching process; it is an essential, ongoing component of learning itself. When integrated effectively, assessment guides instruction, supports student reflection, and deepens engagement with financial literacy concepts. Diverse assessment methods such as quizzes, collaborative projects, presentations, or reflective journals allow students to demonstrate their understanding in ways that reflect their individual strengths and preferences. Ongoing feedback helps students recognize their growth throughout the learning process, empowering them to adjust their approaches and improve their understanding. By setting goals based on assessment outcomes, learning becomes more relevant and personalized. Regular reflective practices enable students to assess their progress, celebrate their achievements, and reinforce their agency in shaping their financial future.

Key Takeaways: Instructional Design

- **Equity and access must be intentional.** All students deserve access to personal finance education that is relevant, rigorous, and empowering. Instruction should be designed from the start to accommodate learner variability.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) supports all learners.** By providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression, educators can reduce barriers and expand opportunities for all students to connect with financial concepts in meaningful ways.
- **Relevance drives engagement.** When personal finance instruction reflects students' real-life experiences, future goals, and community contexts, it becomes more impactful and motivating.

- **Real-world financial skills must be practiced.** Financial topics such as budgeting, credit, saving, and investing can feel abstract or intimidating. Using case studies, real-world scenarios, simulations, and other hands-on learning activities helps make these concepts accessible and relevant.
- **Inquiry enhances financial literacy.** Encouraging students to ask probing questions about the economic forces shaping their lives supports the development of analytical skills that are crucial for responsible financial decision-making.
- **Financial reasoning and decision-making should be emphasized.** Beyond learning “what” to do with money, students benefit from learning how to make thoughtful financial decisions based on trade-offs, opportunity costs, and long-term goals.

Key Takeaways: Assessment

- **Assessment is Instruction.** Assessment is a central part of teaching that shapes instruction, supports learning, and empowers student growth.
- **Use a Balanced Assessment System.** Blend formative (ongoing, instructional) and summative (evaluative, end-of-unit) tools to capture learning over time and guide student progress.
- **Align to Meaningful Standards.** Design assessments around mandated personal finance topics, national personal finance standards, Common Core literacy standards, and frameworks like [CFPB’s Building Blocks](#).
- **Prioritize Real-World Application.** Assessments should measure students' ability to apply financial concepts to authentic situations, not just recall definitions.
- **Make Equity Foundational.** Design inclusive assessments that reflect diverse cultures, financial experiences, and learning styles. Use flexible formats and relevant scenarios.
- **Encourage Student Voice and Choice.** Offer multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding through podcasts, infographics, videos, written reports, etc.
- **Embed Reflection and Self-Assessment.** Help students develop financial self-awareness and empowerment by integrating self-assessment tools, personal goal-setting, and reflective practices.
- **Celebrate Growth and Foster Financial Agency.** Assessment should validate students' progress, foster self-awareness, and support them in becoming informed, confident financial decision-makers.
- **Use Ongoing Feedback to Guide Growth.** Formative assessments like exit tickets, peer discussions, and simulations help teachers adjust instruction and students track their own learning.

- **Connect Assessment to Lifelong Financial Well-Being.** Well-designed assessments build students' confidence, decision-making skills, and financial agency for life beyond the classroom.

Additional State Guidance for Instructional Planning

In conjunction with the resources provided in this curriculum guide, educators developing personal finance courses in accordance with AB 2927 are encouraged to consult guidance contained in several recent content area frameworks approved by the State Board of Education, particularly those sections addressing equitable educational practices and effective instructional strategies. The chart below offers access to relevant chapters of several content area frameworks that can further inform course design and enhance personal finance instructional planning.

Topic	Content Area Framework	Location
Culturally Responsive Teaching	Mathematics	Chapter 2: Teaching for Equity and Engagement (See An Assets-Based Approach to Instruction, pp. 6–7, and Cultural and Personal Relevance, p. 8.)
Equitable Education	Mathematics	Chapter 9: Structuring School Experiences for Equity and Engagement (See Productive Strategies for Teaching Diverse Students, pp. 6–11.)
Student Engagement	English Language Arts/English Language Development	Chapter 2: Key considerations in the ELA/Literacy and ELD Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (See Acquire the Skills for Living and Learning in the 21 st Century, p. 60; Motivating and Engaging Learners, pp. 63–64; Respecting Learners, pp. 64–66; Ensuring Intellectual Challenge, pp. 66–68.)

Topic	Content Area Framework	Location
Effective Instruction	English Language Arts/English Language Development	Chapter 7: Content and Pedagogy: Grades Nine Through Twelve (See Effective Expression, p. 685–697; Foundational Skills and Foundational Skills for English Language Learners, pp. 712–714; English Language Development in High School, pp. 718–720; Supporting Students Strategically 715–717; and Integrated and Designated ELD, pp. 720–722.)
Effective Instruction	History–Social Science	Chapter 13: Instructional Practices for Grades Nine Through Twelve (See Civics and Government, pp. 278–279, and Economics p. 279.)
Assessment	English Language Arts/English Language Development	Chapter 8: Assessment (See Assessment Cycles, pp. 825–845; Student Involvement pp. 845–850.)

Chapter 7

Outside Enrichment and Community Engagement

Introduction: Purpose and How to Use This Chapter

Personal finance education becomes most powerful when it reflects real life, and that means going beyond the classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to help educators and school leaders bring personal finance concepts to life through authentic engagement with families, local organizations, industry professionals, and community-based resources. These partnerships transform financial literacy from a series of lessons into a shared, practical skillset that students can use in their homes, neighborhoods, and future careers.

As California schools implement the new personal finance graduation requirement, many will find value in building bridges to the broader community. This chapter provides tools, strategies, and examples to support that work. While some districts may already have strong partnerships in place, others may be starting from scratch. Wherever your school or district is in the process, this chapter offers scalable, equity-centered approaches to deepen impact and strengthen local connections.

This chapter includes:

- A rationale for community partnerships and their role in bringing personal finance instruction to life
- Examples of effective partnership models across different school contexts, including urban, rural, and small districts
- Outreach templates to help educators engage community partners, families, and students
- Strategies for engaging families and communities in financial literacy
- Real-world work-based learning examples, including internships, mentorships, and job shadowing
- Guidance for increasing student access to scholarships and locally sponsored awards
- Recommendations for sustaining and scaling community engagement as personal finance programs grow
- Reflection and evaluation tools to support continuous improvement and deepen partnership impact

This chapter is designed to be adaptable. District leaders can use it to shape long-term planning and strategic partnerships. Site administrators may find inspiration for hosting events or coordinating internships. Teachers can pull directly from templates and activity suggestions to enrich instruction or student-led initiatives.

Ultimately, this chapter aims to help every school in California create a vibrant, inclusive ecosystem for personal finance education that reflects the lived experiences of students, empowers families, and makes financial literacy a shared community endeavor.

Building Partnerships That Make Finance Real

Why Partnerships Matter

In a small Central Valley high school, a senior named Maya shared how a guest speaker from a local credit union changed her thinking about money. The speaker not only talked about interest rates, he told the story of helping his own teenage daughter understand how to budget her first paycheck. That human connection turned abstract lessons into something Maya could relate to and use. It's moments like these, rooted in authentic community interaction, that transform financial education into lifelong financial capability.

Bringing financial professionals into classrooms benefits both students and the institutions involved. Whether it's a bank investing in future customers or a nonprofit fulfilling its mission of economic empowerment, these partnerships generate shared value. Schools gain access to mentors, materials, and experiences, while organizations expand their community impact and visibility.

What Do Effective Partnerships Look Like?

At their best, community partnerships are not one-sided favors, they are mutually beneficial relationships that create value for everyone involved. An effective personal finance partnership connects classroom learning to real-world expertise, engages students with hands-on experiences, and helps local organizations invest in the next generation of financially capable citizens.

For schools and districts, these collaborations offer access to professional networks, curriculum enrichment, and resources that might otherwise be out of reach. Students benefit from mentoring, exposure to careers, and experiential learning opportunities that build confidence and deepen understanding. For community partners, the return includes increased visibility, future customer engagement, workforce pipeline development, and the fulfillment of civic or philanthropic missions.

In short, when designed thoughtfully, these collaborations are a win-win and expand opportunities for students while strengthening the role of financial institutions, nonprofits, and local businesses in community life.

Here are just a few examples of what these partnerships can look like in action:

- **Student-Run Credit Unions:** A California high school partnered with a local credit union to launch a student-operated branch on campus, an approach now replicated in multiple communities across the state. Students were trained to process transactions, manage accounts, and offer peer guidance on money management. For students, it was a transformative, hands-on experience. For the credit union, it was an investment in lifelong customer relationships and community financial wellness.⁴⁹
- **Family-Focused Financial Literacy Nights:** In urban districts, nonprofits have co-hosted family-centered events under banners like *Money Talks*. These multi-evening workshops cover topics such as budgeting, credit, and planning for college. Students gain practical knowledge and see how money impacts household decisions, while parents report feeling better equipped to support their children's financial learning.
- **Competitions and Scholarships:** Some schools host mock stock market challenges or budgeting competitions, while local partners offer scholarships to top-performing students in personal finance courses. These programs infuse energy into the curriculum and offer meaningful incentives for student engagement.

Each of these models demonstrates how partnerships, whether through in-kind support, professional expertise, or co-hosted events, can bring classroom content to life and help cultivate a culture of financial literacy that extends well beyond the school day. And while these examples often emerge from larger or better-resourced schools, effective partnerships are just as achievable in smaller, more rural settings with the right approach.

The following chart summarizes key types of partnerships, example activities, student benefits, and likely partners to support implementation:

⁴⁹ Barela, Beverly. "[MSEFCU Opens Student Branch at Golden Valley High School](#)." *Merced County Times*, 10 May 2018.

At a Glance: Building and Sustaining Community Partnerships for Personal Finance Education

<i>Partnership Type</i>	<i>Example Activities</i>	<i>Benefits for Students</i>	<i>Potential Community Partners</i>
Guest Speakers & Workshops	Classroom visits, expert panels, lunch-and-learn sessions	Real-world relevance, career exposure, mentorship	Local banks, credit unions, Certified Financial Planners (CFP), financial educators
Student-Run Programs & Simulations	School-based credit unions, stock market games, budgeting simulations	Hands-on learning, peer education, leadership development	Credit unions, Junior Achievement, NFTE, NGPF
Scholarships & Sponsorships	Student contests, Financial Literacy Night sponsorship, branded educational resources	Financial support, recognition, community connection	Banks, credit unions, chambers of commerce, service clubs
Internships & Job Shadowing	Summer internships, job-shadowing days, career mentoring	Workforce skills, networking, resume-building	CFP firms, investment advisors, real estate brokers
Family & Community Financial Education	Financial Literacy Nights, FAFSA workshops, bilingual family outreach	Strengthens home-school connection, supports multigenerational learning	PTA/PTO, nonprofits, adult schools, community centers

<i>Partnership Type</i>	<i>Example Activities</i>	<i>Benefits for Students</i>	<i>Potential Community Partners</i>
Student Clubs & Competitions	Personal Finance Clubs, investment competitions, budgeting challenges	Builds student leadership, confidence, and financial decision-making skills	Jump\$tart, local Rotary, school ASB, entrepreneurship orgs

Recognizing Common Goals: Collaboration With Career Technical Education

While current legislation does not authorize Career Technical Education (CTE) credential holders to independently teach the standalone personal finance course required for high school graduation beginning with the Class of 2031, CTE educators can nonetheless play a vital role in reinforcing personal finance concepts across a variety of pathways. Under existing credentialing regulations, only those holding a single-subject credential in Business, Mathematics, Social Science, or Home Economics may be assigned to teach the required course. Although these policies may evolve over time, this guide reflects the credentialing framework as it stands today.

Despite these restrictions, CTE programs are uniquely positioned to enrich and support broader financial literacy efforts. Many CTE teachers maintain robust partnerships with local businesses, industry leaders, and community-based organizations. These types of relationships that can be instrumental as districts and school sites expand their personal finance offerings. CTE educators and coordinators can serve as key collaborators in building real-world connections and extending the reach of financial literacy instruction beyond the classroom.

This collaboration can take both formal and informal forms. For example, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) may be organized not solely by subject area, but by shared goals such as preparing students for financial independence or connecting them with local financial institutions and work-based learning opportunities. Likewise, informal coordination among CTE teachers, personal finance instructors, student club advisors, and counselors can result in shared use of guest speakers, career-readiness events, simulation tools, or competitions that enhance students' financial capability and engagement.

By intentionally leveraging the complementary strengths of CTE and personal finance educators, districts can foster a culture of financial readiness that aligns with both college and career preparation.

Meeting the Needs of Rural and Small School Communities

While schools in metropolitan areas may have easier access to a wide range of financial institutions and community organizations, rural and small school communities can also build meaningful partnerships through creativity, resourcefulness, and strategic planning. In areas where a local bank branch or financial firm may not be nearby, schools can explore relationships with regional credit unions, agricultural cooperatives, community colleges, or statewide organizations that offer virtual engagement. Districts can also reach out to their county office of education, which may have existing relationships with local organizations and can offer support in identifying or facilitating potential partnerships.

For example, a small district might host a virtual guest speaker series with professionals from across the state or collaborate with neighboring schools to bring in a shared presenter for a regional Financial Literacy Day. Educators can also tap into online tools and simulation platforms provided by national organizations, ensuring that students in remote areas have access to the same high-quality experiences as their peers in larger districts. By using digital platforms, partnering regionally, and maximizing available local assets, rural schools can offer rich and engaging financial learning opportunities—even when traditional community resources are limited.

For schools seeking flexible, scalable ideas tailored to their setting, the chart below outlines enrichment options organized by instructional goals.

Additional Outside Enrichment Options for Personal Finance Teachers

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Try This...</i>	<i>Scalable For...</i>
Enrich Classroom Content	Invite a financial planner for a Q&A on budgeting or credit.	Single class, grade-level team

Goal	Try This...	Scalable For...
Build Career Awareness	Host a panel with professionals from banking, real estate, and finance sectors.	Grade-level or whole school assembly
Foster Hands-On Learning	Use a virtual stock market simulator or partner on a student-run store or bank kiosk.	Club, class, school-wide initiative
Expand to Families	Co-host a Family Finance Night with local credit unions or nonprofits.	School-wide, PTA collaboration
Promote Peer Learning	Launch a Personal Finance Club with students mentoring peers or hosting lunchtime sessions.	All grade levels
Offer Work-Based Experience	Connect students to internships or job-shadowing with local financial institutions.	Juniors and seniors
Use Technology to Scale	Record guest speaker sessions for use across sections or in asynchronous learning.	All personal finance classes
Celebrate Student Learning	Organize a “Money Matters” Expo where students showcase budgeting projects or savings plans.	Campus/community event

Getting the Conversation Started: Sample Outreach Templates

Schools and districts interested in building these types of partnerships often wonder how to take the first step. The good news is that many community organizations, financial institutions, and local businesses are eager to collaborate; they just need to be invited. A thoughtful, well-crafted message can open the door to meaningful and lasting partnerships.

To support educators and site leaders in initiating this outreach, the following templates offer practical starting points for common scenarios. These examples include emails and letters you can adapt to your context—whether you are inviting a guest speaker, requesting sponsorship, proposing an internship, or launching a student club.

Each template is designed to strike a balance between professionalism and warmth while keeping the focus on shared goals. They are meant to be flexible and customizable in order to reflect your school's voice, priorities, and community strengths.

Use these examples to initiate conversations that grow into partnerships, and remember: the first ask doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be made.

Sample Outreach Template Key

<i>Template Number</i>	<i>To be used for</i>
1	Initial Outreach Email to a Financial Institution
2	Invitation Letter for a Guest Speaker
3	Invitation to a Local Financial Institution for a Student Workshop
4	Request for Sponsorship for a Financial Literacy Night
5	Invitation for a Business to Provide Student Internships

Template Number	To be used for
6	Parent & Family Engagement Invitation – Financial Literacy Workshop
7	Invitation for Students to Join a Personal Finance Club

Template 1

Initial Outreach Email to a Financial Institution

Subject: Partnership Opportunity for Financial Literacy Education

Dear [Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is [Your Name], and I am [Your Position] at [Your School/District]. We are currently developing a robust personal finance curriculum and seeking to establish partnerships with financial institutions to provide students with real-world financial education.

We would love to explore ways we can collaborate, such as guest lectures, financial literacy workshops, or potential internship opportunities for students. Would you be open to a brief meeting to discuss this further?

Please let me know a convenient time for you. We appreciate your commitment to financial literacy and look forward to the possibility of working together.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

Template 2

Invitation Letter for a Guest Speaker

[School Letterhead]

[Recipient's Name] [Date] [Title]
[Bank/Organization Name]
[Address]

Subject: Invitation to Speak on Personal Finance at [School Name]

Dear [Recipient's Name],

We are excited to invite you to be a guest speaker at [School Name] for our personal finance class. Our students are eager to learn about real-world financial topics, and your expertise in [specific area, e.g., credit management, saving for college, investing] would provide invaluable insights.

We would love to schedule a session on [proposed date and time], but we are happy to accommodate your availability. Your participation would significantly impact our students' understanding of financial literacy.

Please let us know if you are available and if you have any specific requirements for your presentation. Thank you for considering this opportunity to invest in the financial education of young minds.

Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Contact Information]
[School Name]

Template 3

Invitation to a Local Financial Institution for a Student Workshop

Subject: Partnering for Financial Literacy: Workshop Opportunity

Dear [Bank/Credit Union Representative],

I hope you are doing well. My name is [Your Name], and I am [Your Position] at [Your School/District]. As part of our commitment to equipping students with essential financial skills, we are seeking partnerships with local financial institutions to offer hands-on financial literacy workshops.

We would love to collaborate with [Bank/Credit Union Name] to organize a [specific topic, e.g., "Building Credit Wisely," "Budgeting for Teens," or "Smart Saving Strategies"] workshop for our students on [proposed date and time].

Your expertise would provide invaluable real-world insight for our students, and we would be happy to tailor the session to fit your team's availability and preferred focus areas. We can also arrange opportunities to share information about [Bank/Credit Union Name]'s community programs and youth banking services.

Would you be open to discussing this opportunity further? Please let me know a convenient time for a quick call or meeting. Thank you for your time and for your dedication to financial education in our community.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your School/District Name]

Template 4

Request for Sponsorship for a Financial Literacy Night

Subject: Sponsorship Opportunity: [Event Name] at [School Name]

Dear [Business Leader/Bank Representative],

We are reaching out to invite [Organization Name] to be a community partner for our upcoming [Event Name], a Financial Literacy Night hosted by [School Name] on [Date].

This event is designed to engage students and families in understanding key financial concepts such as budgeting, investing, saving for college, and responsible credit use. We are seeking sponsors to help support the event through resource contributions, financial support, or expert speakers.

As a sponsor, [Organization Name] would receive:

- Recognition in event materials, social media, and school newsletters.
- A booth at the event to showcase services or resources.
- The opportunity to engage with students and families in meaningful financial discussions.

Would you be interested in partnering with us to make this event a success? We'd love to discuss potential sponsorship tiers and how we can align the event with your organization's community outreach goals.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to support financial literacy in our schools!
Please let me know a good time to connect.

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your School/District Name]

Template 5

Invitation for a Business to Provide Student Internships

Subject: Partnership Opportunity: Internship Program for Personal Finance Students

Dear [Business Leader],

We are excited to invite [Company Name] to participate in a high school internship program designed to provide students with hands-on experience in the financial industry.

Our [School/District Name] personal finance program equips students with critical financial skills, and we are looking to create pathways for real-world application through internships, job shadowing, or mentorship opportunities at local businesses.

An internship partnership with your organization would:

- Provide students with practical financial industry exposure.
- Help develop a pipeline of financially literate and job-ready young professionals.
- Strengthen community ties between schools and local businesses.

We'd love to discuss how we can tailor an internship experience that benefits both students and your team. Please let me know if you'd be open to a short meeting to explore this opportunity.

Looking forward to collaborating!

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your School/District Name]

Template 6

Parent & Family Engagement Invitation—Financial Literacy Workshop

Subject: Join Us! Financial Literacy Workshop for Parents & Families

Dear Parents & Guardians,

We invite you to attend an engaging Financial Literacy Workshop hosted by [School Name] on [Date] at [Time] in [Location].

This session will provide valuable insights into:

- Budgeting for Families – Simple strategies for managing household finances.
- Saving for College – Understanding financial aid, FAFSA, and scholarship opportunities.
- Credit & Debt Management – How to build and maintain strong financial health.

Our guest speakers from [Partner Organization/Financial Institution] will offer expert guidance and answer any financial questions you may have. This event is free and open to all families, and light refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP by [Date] to help us plan accordingly. We look forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your School/District Name]

Template 7

Invitation for Students to Join a Personal Finance Club

Subject: Join the Personal Finance Club – Learn How to Make Smart Money Moves!

Dear Students,

Are you interested in learning how to budget, save, invest, and build wealth for your future? Join the [School Name] Personal Finance Club and gain real-world money skills while having fun!

What We Do:

- Host finance & investment challenges.
- Learn about smart money habits from experts.
- Plan fundraisers & scholarship opportunities.
- Compete in financial literacy competitions.

First Meeting: [Date & Time] in [Location]

SNACKS PROVIDED!

If you're ready to take control of your financial future, sign up here: [Insert Sign-Up Link] or see [Advisor Name] in [Room Number].

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Best,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

[Your School/District Name]



Teacher Tip

When creating letters, emails, or flyers for communication with outside partners, be sure to customize them to reflect your class or school identity. Use your school's official letterhead, colors, and logos to create a consistent and recognizable visual brand. These design elements help reinforce a sense of professionalism and allow community members to immediately associate your materials with your school or program. Strong visual connections build trust and make your outreach more impactful and memorable. Depending on your district, you may have access to programs such as Canva, Microsoft, or Google for templates that offer free and upgraded versions of their products.

Engaging Families and Communities in Financial Literacy

Engaging families and the broader community is essential to building a sustainable culture of financial literacy. When families are part of the conversation, students are more likely to see financial education as relevant, actionable, and connected to real life. These efforts also strengthen relationships between schools and families, foster community trust, and create opportunities for multi-generational learning.

Importantly, many schools may already be hosting events where financial literacy topics can be meaningfully incorporated, such as Back to School Nights, Open Houses, College and Career Showcases, Senior Nights, or FAFSA workshops. These can be natural touchpoints to incorporate financial education for both students and their families. Districts and sites might also consider launching standalone events, such as a Financial Literacy Night in April to coincide with National Financial Literacy Month, or a tax simulation event in March aligned with the filing season.

For example, a high school might transform its gymnasium into a Financial Literacy Fair, featuring booths hosted by local banks, credit unions, CFPs, scholarship foundations, and credit counseling services. Many of these organizations also offer specialized resources for events like these. One example is [*Bite of Reality®*](#), a hands-on, app-

based simulation provided exclusively to credit unions by the Richard Myles Johnson Foundation. Although credit unions may choose from many different resources and simulations, Bite of Reality illustrates the type of engaging experience they can bring to students. In the simulation, teens receive a fictional occupation, salary, credit score, spouse and child, student loan debt, credit card debt, and medical insurance payments, then move through table-top stations to “purchase” housing, transportation, food, clothing, and other essentials. The game even includes a “credit union” station designed to help students navigate their financial choices.

Breakout workshops at the fair could cover topics such as budgeting, student loans, and credit scores. If a site serves multilingual families, materials and presentations can often be offered in multiple languages with support from bilingual staff or students. Childcare and enrichment activities can be coordinated through existing student programs such as early learning pathways or teacher mentorship academies. With thoughtful planning and the resources already available at many school sites, families can walk away with practical tools, such as budgeting templates, FAFSA support links, and community contacts, that they can use immediately. One powerful example of how schools can bring financial literacy to life for families comes from a partnership in San Diego County that blends hands-on learning with community celebration.

Empowering Families Through Financial Literacy

The San Diego Center for Economic Education at Cuyamaca College works with schools and school districts to host evening personal finance events for families. Participants engage in games, puzzles, and challenges from the Center for Economic Education, rotating through stations focused on topics such as:

Earning Power: Helping participants understand the connection between education, career choices, and income potential.

Savings and Me: Highlighting the importance of setting goals and saving for the future.

Planning for a Pet: Using budgeting for pet ownership to teach about recurring and unexpected expenses.

Needs and Wants: Exploring how to differentiate essential spending from discretionary items for better budgeting.

Volunteers from SDCEE staff each station. At the event's end, students receive gift cards from the California Council for Economic Education, Money Monster storybooks and activity books from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and backpacks from Cuyamaca College. These events are often supported by local leaders such as

representatives on the county board of supervisors or state legislators who provide certificates for the participants.

Importantly, engaging with families and communities acknowledges that students, caregivers, local educators, and community members understand their own opportunities and challenges in ways that outsiders cannot. This approach is most successful when using an assets-based lens, recognizing the strengths and knowledge families already bring. Personal finance education is not just about transferring content knowledge; it's about working with people in context to help them leverage the financial tools, skills, and networks that will empower them and their communities.

Students as Community Financial Literacy Educators

While partnerships with external organizations bring essential expertise and resources, some of the most powerful enrichment opportunities can come from within a school itself. Student-led initiatives, such as peer teaching programs, personal finance clubs, and student-run campaigns, cultivate leadership, reinforce financial concepts, and help build a schoolwide culture of financial literacy.

In Long Beach, a group of high school students launched a Personal Finance Club that evolved into a peer teaching initiative. They hosted lunchtime sessions for underclassmen, shared money tips on social media, and even earned recognition from a national financial literacy organization.

National models like Jump\$tart's Teen Teach-In and Junior Achievement's High School Heroes program offer frameworks for peer-led financial instruction. In these programs, older students are trained to deliver lessons to younger peers, boosting their own mastery while supporting schoolwide financial education.

These student-led efforts reinforce classroom learning while nurturing confidence, agency, and public speaking skills. They are especially effective when paired with adult mentorship and aligned to broader instructional goals, making them a high-impact, low-cost complement to community partnerships.

Civic Action and Economic Empowerment

Students enrolled in (or who have successfully completed) a personal finance course are well positioned to apply their knowledge in ways that benefit their families and communities. Schools and clubs can support these efforts by encouraging students to take civic action, whether through awareness campaigns, community-based projects, or peer-led workshops, which address economic inequities or promote financial wellness. These activities not only empower students to apply financial concepts in authentic and

meaningful ways but also provide valuable opportunities to participate in informed civic engagement projects that address real-world problems and include opportunities for reflection (see information on the California State Seal of Civic Engagement, or SSCE, below).

Classroom Vignette: Integrating Personal Finance, Solutions to Economic Inequality and Civic Action

In Ms. Smith's class, after students complete a semester-long personal finance project, they do a mini unit on economic inequality and solutions to economic inequality. Teaching and learning about economic inequality can be difficult and uncomfortable, but this mini unit emphasizes hope and practical solutions. In addition, the students show their learning through civic action. After students engage with a curated list of podcasts, articles, and videos that address the impacts of economic inequality and possible solutions, they create infographics. Students share their infographics with friends and family and then publish the infographics on the local public media station [KQED's Youth Media Challenge website](#). Throughout the mini unit, students discuss their learning. Students draw on their research to talk about questions like: To what extent is economic inequality a serious problem? What information stood out? Why? What are possible solutions that could help close the wealth gap? They articulate their understanding of the wealth gap problem:

"I think it is a very serious problem because it is the root of other serious issues. People collapse from overworking themselves to provide for their families. Stress, malnutrition, debt are all problems that arise from wealth inequality."

"It's not talked about enough and it's becoming a normal thing, and there's nothing normal about it."

"If nothing is done, then it will continue to get worse. People at the bottom of the economy are struggling too much just to live."

After the class discussions and gathering their data, students then work by themselves or with a partner to create their infographic. The infographic includes their research and three solutions they think will help close the economic inequality gap. This assessment not only gives students an opportunity to demonstrate their learning and share it with others, but it also requires students to employ a combination of many skills: reading and listening, analyzing and synthesizing data, learning how to support a claim with evidence, communicating effectively with a real audience, and citing sources.

Some of the solutions the students recommend:

Increase the child tax credit

Expand job training/vocational and career training

Improve safety and public goods programs

Create “baby bonds” program

Reduce cost of higher education/student loans

Universal basic income

Reform immigration—work visas/legal path for citizenship

Raise taxes on the wealthy and corporations

Reparations

Increase the minimum wage

Antitrust reform

Reduce the cost of healthcare

Improve labor union organization laws

Increase investments in public education

Build more affordable housing

Before students publish their infographics on the KQED website, they share their infographics with friends and family and engage in a conversation with them about how aware they are of the severity of income and wealth inequality in the US and to what extent they think economic inequality is a big problem in the US. Students find the process “eye opening” and “shocking.” One student said, “I believe there’s not enough awareness and people are not sure if it’s affecting them...when in reality it most likely is but it’s normalized unknowingly.”

Ms. Smith’s students also take economic inequality to heart and look at themselves and their families too. When asked what they can do individually to achieve financial success and to help close the economic inequality gap, students reference the personal finance course and all they learn about budgeting, investing, and compound interest. They want to be smart with their money to have a better chance to build generational wealth. This combination of personal responsibility and civic action empowers students to see themselves not only as wise stewards of their own financial future but as contributors to making the world a more equitable place.

[National Standards for Personal Financial Education Standards:](#)

Spending

12-8c: Investigate common types of consumer fraud and unfair or deceptive business practices, including online scams, phone solicitations, and redlining.

Saving

8-2 Savings decisions depend on individual preferences and circumstances, and can impact personal satisfaction and financial well-being

8-5: Compound interest is interest on both the original principal and previously earned interest, as compared to simple interest which is only interest on the original principal.

Earning Income

4-2 People may be able to improve their ability to earn income by gaining new knowledge, skills, and experience.

4-7 Most income is taxed by the government to pay for government-provided goods and services.

8-3 Getting more education, training, and experience can increase a person's human capital, productivity, and income-earning potential.

12-3 People vary in their opportunity and willingness to incur the present costs of additional training and education in exchange for future benefits, such as earning potential.

12-4 Employers generally pay higher wages or salaries to more educated, skilled, and productive workers than to less educated, skilled, and productive workers.

Investing

8-7: The benefits of compounding for building wealth are greatest for people who invest regularly over longer periods of time.

[National Council for the Social Studies](#): The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards:

Civics

D2.Civ.13.9-12. Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences.

Taking Informed Action

D4.7.9-12. Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

Examples of Personal Finance–Aligned Civic Engagement Projects

Awareness Campaigns: Students might launch schoolwide or community-based initiatives that raise awareness about financial literacy gaps or promote key resources such as CalKIDS college savings accounts, FAFSA deadlines, or protections against predatory lending. These campaigns could include posters, social media outreach, or public service announcements, all of which develop communication and leadership skills.

Community Research and Presentations: Students could conduct surveys or interviews about local financial challenges (for example, food insecurity, access to banking, or housing affordability), analyze the data, and present findings to local stakeholders such as the school board, city council, or neighborhood associations. These presentations build critical thinking, civic awareness, and advocacy experience.

Peer Education Programs: As highlighted in the “Students as Community Financial Literacy Educators” section, student-led teaching initiatives offer opportunities for leadership and service. By designing and delivering workshops on topics such as budgeting or avoiding debt traps, students reinforce their financial understanding while supporting learning within their school communities.

Public Policy Proposals: Advanced students may identify an economic issue affecting youth or families, such as financial barriers to higher education or unequal access to credit and propose a policy solution. They can submit these ideas to local officials or advocacy organizations, strengthening their understanding of systems, public institutions, and civic participation.

Volunteerism and Service Learning: By partnering with local nonprofits or community centers, students might assist at tax preparation events, teach financial basics to younger students, or help families navigate digital banking tools. These experiences connect classroom learning to real-world impact while fostering empathy, collaboration, and a sense of social responsibility.

Aligning Projects with the State Seal of Civic Engagement

The following information, taken directly from the California Department of Education's [State Seal of Civic Engagement](#) (SSCE) web page, provides context for how personal finance–related civic action can help students qualify for the SSCE.⁵⁰

[What is the State Seal of Civic Engagement?](#)

- *“The SSCE is a recognition conferred by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for California public school students in grades eleven or twelve who demonstrate excellence in civics education and participation, as well as an understanding of the United States Constitution, the California Constitution, and the democratic system of government.”*

[What are the statewide criteria for earning an SSCE?](#)

- *“The five criteria adopted by the State Board of Education in September 2020 are meant to provide participating LEAs with a framework for making determinations of student qualifications required to earn the SSCE, based on their own local contexts. The criteria are written to ensure that no student is excluded from an opportunity to earn the SSCE based on academic ability, alternative school settings, or unique or unconventional expressions of civic engagement.”*

The student must:

1. Be engaged in academic work in a productive way;
2. Demonstrate a competent understanding of United States and California constitutions; functions and governance of local governments; tribal government structures and organizations; the role of the citizen in a constitutional democracy; and democratic principles, concepts, and processes;
3. Participate in one or more informed civic engagement project(s) that address real-world problems and require students to identify and inquire into civic needs or problems, consider varied responses, take action, and reflect on efforts;
4. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through self-reflection; and

⁵⁰ California Department of Education. [State Seal of Civic Engagement Criteria](#). Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education, updated 2024. Accessed August 4, 2025.

5. Exhibit character traits that reflect civic-mindedness and a commitment to positively impact the classroom, school, community and/or society.

Personal finance–based civic projects align with several criteria of the California State Seal of Civic Engagement, particularly those emphasizing real world application, civic reflection, and a demonstrated commitment to community improvement. When students use personal finance education as a foundation for civic inquiry and action, they are empowered to analyze economic inequities, develop practical solutions, and engage with public stakeholders in meaningful ways. These experiences not only foster civic mindedness and academic purpose but also help students see themselves as contributors to a more just and equitable society, building the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed for lifelong civic engagement.

Internships and Work-Based Learning

When students have the opportunity to apply what they've learned in the classroom to real-world professional settings, personal finance education becomes far more impactful. Whether through summer internships, job-shadowing days, or virtual mentorships, these experiences help students connect financial concepts, like budgeting, credit, insurance, and income, to actual career paths.

Real-World Models

In one Central Coast district, partnerships with local real estate and insurance firms created seasonal job-shadowing opportunities for juniors and seniors. Students prepared by researching the professions and spent a day engaging with professionals, reviewing client scenarios, and observing financial decision-making in action. For many, it was the first time they saw how personal finance concepts played out in real-world contexts.

In another region, a school collaborated with a local branch of a national bank to offer a six-week internship. Students rotated through departments, including customer service, compliance, loan origination, and fraud prevention, gaining valuable exposure to the inner workings of the financial industry. Several students left the experience inspired to pursue finance-related degrees, and the bank identified future potential hires.

Scaling for All Settings

For schools in rural areas or districts with limited access to in-person opportunities, virtual alternatives can be just as effective. One high school used state grant funding to launch a virtual speaker series and small-group mentorship sessions. Students submitted questions in advance, interacted with professionals via Zoom, and reflected

on their learning through follow-up assignments, creating meaningful connections without the need for travel.

Instructional Alignment

Internships and work-based learning not only build career readiness, but also align with national instructional standards. The [*National Standards for Personal Financial Education*](#) include outcomes that support and validate these types of experiences:

- **12-1a:** Research potential income and employee benefit packages that are likely to be offered to new employees by various companies, government agencies, or not-for-profit organizations.
- **12-2b:** Describe how intangible benefits (like workplace culture or flexibility) can affect career choices and income.
- **12-3a:** Evaluate the costs and benefits of investing in additional education or training.
- **12-4a:** Identify different types of jobs and careers where wages and salaries depend on a worker's productivity and skills.

By intentionally connecting internships and mentorships to these outcomes, educators can ensure these experiences are not just enriching, but standards-based and instructionally grounded.

Beyond career exposure, students also benefit when schools help them access the financial resources to pursue those careers.

Expanding Access to Scholarships and Grants

Scholarships and grants are more than financial aid tools; they are affirmations of student potential. Educators can play a pivotal role in guiding students to these opportunities and helping them navigate the application process.

Where to Begin

Encourage students to explore trusted databases such as FAFSA's official site (studentaid.gov), the College Board's [BigFuture](#), [Fastweb](#), and [Scholarships.com](#). Many of these resources allow students to filter opportunities by background, interests, and academic plans. Counselors and teachers can help students create scholarship timelines, gather recommendation letters, and draft personal essays.

Engaging Local Partners

District leaders can initiate partnerships with local businesses, financial institutions, or professional organizations to create scholarship programs that reward personal finance coursework or community involvement. In one Central Coast district, a coalition of small business owners pooled funds to offer a “Future Financial Leader” scholarship for students who completed the course with distinction.

Some schools have created district-managed scholarship archives where local opportunities are collected and published annually. These efforts can reduce barriers to access while building a local culture of support around financial literacy.

Sustaining and Scaling the Work

District and site leaders should be reminded that meaningful relationships with community partners are not built overnight. Enter these conversations with a mindset geared toward longevity. Ask questions such as: “Is this something we could revisit every year around this time?” or “How might we scale this for all personal finance students on our campus as enrollment grows with the graduation requirement?”

Equally important, recognize that community partners face constraints on time and resources. Be open to creative solutions. If a credit union representative is only available for one class period, consider inviting multiple classes or organizing a school-wide assembly. If a speaker joins virtually, ask whether their session might be recorded for use in other classrooms or future school years.

As the 2027–28 school year approaches, when every high school in California will offer at least one section of personal finance, many partners will need to consider how to scale their engagement. Collaboration, flexibility, and long-term planning will be essential on both sides to meet this moment with impact and sustainability.

Reflection and Evaluation: Strengthening What Works

To sustain and improve community partnerships over time, it is valuable to build in intentional opportunities for feedback and reflection. Teachers can invite students to reflect on guest speakers or workshops through short exit tickets, digital surveys, or class discussions. Questions might include: “What was one thing you learned that surprised you?” or “How might this help you make a smarter financial decision in the future?”

District or site leaders can also collect input from community partners to improve future collaboration. A quick follow-up email asking, “Was the timing and format effective for

your team?” or “What could we do to make future visits more impactful?” helps partners feel valued.

Some schools host an end-of-semester review for personal finance teachers to share insights and challenges. A shared document or slide deck can serve as a living resource for future planning.

Embedding reflection and evaluation builds a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that partnerships grow into lasting, meaningful collaborations.

Conclusion

Personal finance education is strongest when it reflects the lived realities of students and their communities. By building bridges between the classroom and the wider world, schools ensure that students don’t just learn about money; they learn how to use it wisely, collaboratively, and with purpose. Community partnerships are not add-ons; they are essential components of a personal finance program that is equitable, relevant, and rooted in the everyday experiences of young people across California.

Long Descriptions of Graphics

Figure 1: Junior Achievement listing on the A–G Program Reference list

The graphic is a screenshot of the A–G Course Management website's 2025–26 Reference List. It reads "Tell us more about the program course. To begin, please select the program and course title." Under Add a Program Course, the field for Program has been completed with "Junior Achievement," and the Course Title Field has been completed with "financial lit," showing a dropdown choice of "Financial Literacy."

The following information appears under the heading Adding Program Courses: Programs (e.g., the College Board Advanced Placement Program, CSU Early Assessment Program) submit their own standardized courses to UC for review. Students are not able to directly enroll in program courses to fulfill the A–G subject requirements. These courses are A–G approved for the program to sell or license their curriculum to be taught by teacher or administrator within the local high school or district. Program A–G reference lists can be found on the A–G Reference List website.

Options on the page are to "Continue" or to go "Back to Course Options."

[Return to figure 1 graphic](#)

Figure 2: Next Gen listing on the A–G Program Reference list

The graphic is a screenshot of the A–G Course Management website's 2025–26 Reference List. It reads "Tell us more about the program course. To begin, please select the program and course title." Under Add a Program Course, the field for Program has been completed with "Next Gen Personal Finance," and the Course Title Field has been completed with "finance", showing dropdown choices of "Personal Finance - NGPF Full-Year Course" and "Personal Finance - NGPF Semester Course."

The following information appears under the heading Adding Program Courses: Programs (e.g., the College Board Advanced Placement Program, CSU Early Assessment Program) submit their own standardized courses to UC for review. Students are not able to directly enroll in program courses to fulfill the A–G subject requirements. These courses are A–G approved for the program to sell or license their curriculum to be taught by teacher or administrator within the local high school or district. Program A–G reference lists can be found on the A–G Reference List website.

Options on the page are to "Continue" or to go "Back to Course Options."

[Return to figure 2 graphic](#)