

Strategies to Achieve and Implement a *Required* Personal Finance Course in High Schools

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Keywords: personal finance, high school, education partnerships

Target audience

The need for financial education for high school students is currently getting a lot of attention from media and from the public. The latest Survey of the States, conducted in 2009 by State Farm and the Council for Economic Education, revealed that completion of a Personal Finance course is a graduation requirement in 13 states. Tennessee is proud to be one of those 13. Becoming a part of this group took a combined effort of public support, UT Extension and other Tennessee Jump\$Start Coalition support, and education of the state's lawmakers. This session is designed for Extension educators and other financial educators interested in implementing personal finance education in the high school classroom and preparing high school teachers to deliver the subject matter.

Objectives/Purpose

Tennessee's network for financial education includes a wide range of partners in education, government and the private sector. With encouragement from this network, state officials and legislators took steps to ensure that Tennessee high school students become more financially literate, resulting in a course requirement for graduation beginning with the class of 2013. The Tennessee Department of Education developed standards for the required course and the employment requirement for those teachers who will teach the course. Organizations submitted proposals to the TDOE to be approved providers of this teacher training. UT Extension is one of the approved providers. The purpose of this program is to share successes and provide other states with strategies to implement a required personal finance course in high schools.

Content/Description

The evolution of the personal finance course for Tennessee high school students – who was involved, what was done, how the standards were developed and the implementation of teacher workshops--will be covered during the session. Presenters will provide a model that others may adopt to achieve a required financial education course for high school students in their states. Participants will be given guidelines for using the NEFE High School Financial Planning Program as the basic curriculum for a half credit financial education course and the workshop format used to provide teachers with the 14 hours of personal finance education, the employment requirement by the Tennessee Department of Education for a teacher to be approved to teach the course. Additional supplemental resources for teaching and evaluating personal finance in the classroom will be shared. Resources include games, tests, on-line evaluation tools, websites, state content standards, and additional curriculum sources.

UT Extension educators conduct approximately 13 two-day workshops annually across the state, reaching over 600 teachers since 2007. The teachers attending workshops during 2009 estimate they will teach personal finance to over 25,000 students during the school year 2009-2010. UT Extension and other Tennessee Jump\$Start Coalition partners are continuing to work with the state department of education to develop a uniform assessment for personal finance.

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