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HAWAII EARNS A 'D' GRADE IN 2026 NATIONAL REPORT CARD ON TEACHING PERSONAL FINANCE IN HIGH SCHOOLS

State Projected to Raise Grade to 'B' by 2030

DENVER—Hawaii earned a D grade in the [2026 National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve Financial Literacy in High Schools™](#), issued by the Denver-based [National Endowment for Financial Education® \(NEFE®\)](#). But the state is projected to raise its grade to a B by 2030.

NEFE is issuing this sixth report card, which reflects how well personal finance is taught in high schools. The previous five report cards were issued by the Center for Financial Literacy (CFL) at Champlain College in Burlington, Vt. The first report was issued in 2013. Beginning with this latest edition, NEFE assumes responsibility for the report card, expanding its reach and influence as a leading measure of state-level financial education policy for years to come.

“We are encouraged to see states adopting policies that increase access to financial education interventions, but the research tells us that a standalone, full-semester course effectively improves students’ financial literacy,” says Billy Hensley, Ph.D., president and CEO of NEFE. “NEFE stands ready to support states as they build on their existing programs and will continue to advocate for states to adopt policies that ensure students have access to the financial education they need and deserve.”

John Pelletier, senior fellow at NEFE, says Hawaii does not currently require students to complete a personal finance course or personal finance content prior to graduation. But, Pelletier notes, a law passed this year will require some personal finance instruction for all students, beginning with the Class of 2030.

“The law requires a student-led Personal Transition Plan project with some instructional oversight by educators that is completed over a four-year period in high school,” says Pelletier. “The Plan also includes topics that are not personal finance in nature, and it is not clear what type of educator licensing and training educators will need to oversee for students’ completion of the Plan.”

National Report Card Overview

Pelletier projects that when the Class of 2031 graduates, 29 states will require high school students to take a standalone personal finance course, with an estimated 73% of public high school students who graduate in 2031 taking a substantive personal finance course prior to graduation. When the first report card was issued in 2013, only three states earned an A grade, representing just 5% of students in the nation’s public schools.

“Financial literacy is linked to positive outcomes like wealth accumulation, stock market participation, effective retirement planning and avoiding high-cost alternative financial services. Conversely, poor financial literacy and negative financial behaviors often go hand in hand,” says Pelletier. “High school personal finance education can help alleviate the cycle of poverty that exists in our nation. Requiring all

students to take a standalone financial literacy course, regardless of their race, ethnicity or economic status, is an important step our nation can take toward reducing inequality.”

A [2025 nationwide opinion poll](#) from NEFE found that 83% of U.S. adults believe the state they live in should require a semester- or year-long course focused on personal finance as a graduation requirement, while 82% of respondents who attended high school say they wish they were required to complete a personal finance class while they were in school.

“NEFE’s data reflect strong public support for financial education in high school. The vast majority of Americans agree their state should require a semester- or year-long course for graduation, and that personal finance is equally as important as core subjects like math, science and English. Furthermore, most Americans believe the quality of their financial life would be better had they received financial education in school,” Hensley adds.

To produce the report card, NEFE conducted detailed reviews of high school graduation requirements, state academic standards for personal finance education, and laws, regulations and guidelines related to how each state delivers personal finance education in its public high schools. A national map with information on the 50 states and the District of Columbia and a downloadable copy of the [full report card is available here](#).

About the National Endowment for Financial Education

The National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) is the independent, centralizing voice providing leadership, research and collaboration to champion effective financial education and advance financial well-being. NEFE has received national recognition for strengthening action-oriented research agendas, mobilizing intermediaries, and creating better solutions for researchers, educators, practitioners and policymakers. Beginning with the 2026 edition, NEFE assumes the administration of the National Report Card on State Efforts to Improve High School Personal Finance Education. For more, visit www.nefe.org.

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