



## 2026 NATIONAL REPORT CARD

# Illinois

CLASS OF  
2026 GRADE



PROJECTED CLASS  
OF 2031 GRADE



### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Is a high school course with personal finance concepts required to be taken as a graduation requirement?

Yes, since 2006, Illinois has required that all high school students participate in consumer education prior to graduation. Beginning in academic year 2020-2021, high school students are also required to file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid with the U.S. Department of Education or, if applicable, file a state financial aid form (this new graduation requirement can be waived in certain circumstances). Beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year, each school district must designate a staff member as a contact for matters related to this financial aid form completion requirement and this individual shall provide students with free resources to help them comply with this requirement. Each district must also provide career and technical education opportunities for students.

#### Sources:

- [105 ILCS 5/27-305 Consumer Education](#)
- [105 ILCS 5/22-87 Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#)
- [Illinois Graduation Requirements](#)
- [Career & College FAFSA](#)
- [Illinois Mandated Units of Study](#) (see page 11 for Career and Technical Education and page 17 for Consumer Education)

### HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION STANDARDS

Illinois law requires that in grades nine to 12, public high schools students take consumer education in a course or courses that include instruction on the following topics: (i) understanding the basic concepts of financial literacy (with a very detailed list of topics) and (ii) understanding the roles of consumers interacting with agriculture, business, labor unions and government in formulating and achieving the goals of the mixed free enterprise system. Each district must provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes consumer education in its high school course offerings. The law indicates that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) shall devise or approve the consumer education curriculum for grades nine through 12 and specify the minimum amount of instruction to be devoted thereto. State regulations require that this training be 50 minutes per day for a period of nine weeks. This results in a minimum of 37.5 hours of consumer education in high school, assuming the instruction is conducted five days a week for a nine-week period. Regulations also indicate that superintendents are required to maintain evidence showing that each student has received adequate instruction in consumer education prior to the completion of grade 12. Consumer education may be included in course content of other courses, or it may be taught as a separate required course. Teachers providing this instruction are required to hold an educator license valid for the grade levels taught and have completed at least three semester hours in consumer education courses.

State law and regulations also requires that high school students be provided with opportunities to prepare themselves for entry into the world of work. Every district is required to have a Career Awareness and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



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Exploration Program that enables students to make more meaningful and informed career decisions. Each district must provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes Career and Technical Education—Orientation and Preparation in its high school course offerings.

### Sources:

- [105 ILCS 5/27-305 Consumer Education](#) (Formerly 105 ILCS 5/27-12.1, please note that the Illinois Administrative Code still references this former statutory section)
- [105 ILCS 5/22-87 Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#)
- [23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.420\(i\) & \(k\)](#)
- [23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.440\(a\)\(8\) & \(11\)](#)
- [23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.440\(b\)\(3\)](#)
- [Illinois Mandated Units of Study](#) (see page 11 for Career and Technical Education and page 17 for Consumer Education)
- [Career Technical Education](#)

### PROJECTED GRADE FOR CLASS OF 2031

No policy change is pending that would change the Illinois's grade.

### PRE-K TO GRADE EIGHT EDUCATION STANDARDS

For grades K to eight, the social science standards include Economics and Financial Literacy standards. In addition, each school district is required to offer students a Career Awareness and Exploration Program in grades K to eight. This program should be available at all grade levels.

### Sources:

- [Standards and Instruction: Social Science Learning Standards](#)
- [Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science](#) (see page 15)
- [23 Ill. Admin. Code 1.420\(i\)](#)
- [Career Technical Education](#)

### EXTRA CREDIT

Beginning with pupils entering the ninth grade in the 2021-2022 school year, one semester, or part of one semester of the two years of social studies required for graduation, may include a financial literacy course. The Social Science Learning Standards include high school standards for financial literacy. Each local school board may establish a special fund in which to receive public funds and private contributions for the promotion of financial literacy. The ISBE website includes financial literacy resources for educators.

### Sources:

- [105 ILCS 5/27-605\(e\)\(5\)](#)
- [Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science](#) (see page 16)
- [105 ILCS 5/27-305\(d\) Consumer Education](#)
- [Teacher Resources](#)

### CAVEAT

It is not clear how Illinois measures student achievement in financial literacy or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the consumer education requirement.