2026 NATIONAL REPORT CARD

New Jersey

CLASS OF 2026 GRADE

B

PROJECTED CLASS OF 2031 GRADE

B

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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

Yes, New Jersey requires students to complete at least 2.5 credits in financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy. This requirement took effect with the grade nine class in academic year 2010–2011 (the Class of 2014). Ten credits equal a full-year academic course, and 2.5 credits equals a course length of a quarter of an academic year or 30 hours of instruction. The New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) notes on its website that the state's Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills requirement "*provides the framework for students to learn the concepts, skills, and practices essential to the successful navigation of career exploration and preparation, personal finances and digital literacy*." New Jersey also requires that high school student complete at least five credits (half-year course) in career readiness or career and technical education. Such courses meeting this requirement may also contain some financial literacy content.

Sources:

- N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 Graduation Requirements
- Minimum Graduation Requirements PDF

EXTRA CREDIT

The DOE makes financial literacy resources available online for educators to use.

Sources:

- Personal Financial Literacy Instructional Resources

PROJECTED GRADE FOR CLASS OF 2031

No policy change is pending that would change New Jersey's grade.

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION STANDARDS

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards specify expectations in nine content areas. One of those content areas is Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills (CLKS) and these education standards include personal finance concepts. The CLKS standards includes two content areas that include financial literacy topics: Standard 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy; and Standard 9.2 Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation and Training. The DOE indicates that the 2.5-credit legal requirement may be met in the following ways: (i) by completing a standalone, half-year course; (ii) through other approved educational experiences that may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: independent study, online learning, study abroad programs, student exchange programs, and structured learning experiences; or (iii) by completing one or more elective courses that integrate the content and skills required by the regulation that are taught by staff holding a Social Studies; Business: Finance, Economics, and Law; Comprehensive Business; Comprehensive Family and Consumer Sciences; General Business certificate; or Math certificate. Given the many ways allowed to meet this requirement, it is impossible to estimate the hours of instruction for each school district. The level of instruction is likely to vary greatly between school districts and could even be vastly different by student within a single high school.

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School districts are responsible for the progress of all students in developing the knowledge and skills specified by these learning standards that are not included in the statewide assessment.

Sources:

- New Jersey Student Learning Standards
- Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills (webpage)
- 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy
- 9.2 Career Readiness
- Career Readiness, Life Literacies & Key Skills Standards (CLKS Standards)
- N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1(a)

PRE-K TO GRADE EIGHT EDUCATION STANDARDS

New Jersey requires personal finance instruction in elementary school. In 2019, legislation was enacted that requires school districts to incorporate financial literacy instruction in each of the grades six through eight to pupils enrolled in those grades, beginning in the 2019–2020 academic year. The purpose of the instruction is to provide middle school students with the basic financial literacy necessary for sound financial decision-making. The law states that the instruction must: (i) be appropriate to, and reflect the age and comprehension of, the students enrolled in the particular grade level and (ii) include content on budgeting, savings, credit, debt, insurance, investment, and other issues associated with personal financial responsibility as determined by the State Board of Education. The Financial Literacy and Career Awareness Standards have learning expectations for grades two, five and eight. The law also requires that the DOE provides school districts with sample instructional materials and resources that may be used to support the implementation of the grade six to eight financial literacy instruction requirement.

Sources:

- N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.34
- 9.1 Personal Financial Literacy (see Frequently Asked Questions)
- Financial Literacy Standards
- Career Awareness Standards

CAVEAT

It is not clear how each district meets these regulatory requirements or how the state monitors local school district implementation of the financial literacy education requirement.