

NFEC Releases Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM for Public Review

Financial literacy standards focused on demonstrated financial capability, real-world tasks, performance-based assessment, near-term financial responsibilities.

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Financial Educators Council (NFEC) today released the [Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM](#) for public review and comment. The standards establish clear, measurable expectations to prepare high school students and transition-age youth not yet living independently for the near-term financial decisions and responsibilities they will face as they move toward adulthood.



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Our students deserve more than financial concepts. Financial education should ensure students can make real decisions, complete meaningful tasks, build systems, and manage money in real life.”

Vince Shorb, CEO, National Financial Educators Council

Unlike the financial education standards currently used in high schools today, the Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM require students to demonstrate real-world financial capability. The framework moves beyond knowledge exposure by requiring students to apply what they learn, complete meaningful financial tasks, build useful systems, and produce resources they can use in their own lives.

“These standards were built to close a clear gap,” said Vince Shorb, CEO of the National Financial Educators Council. “Knowing financial concepts is not the same as being able to manage real financial responsibilities. We

designed this framework so students leave instruction with evidence of what they can actually do - the decisions they can make, the tasks they can complete, the systems they can build, and the resources they can use as they transition toward adulthood.”

Addressing a National Gap

The NFEC identified a consistent gap across financial education standards used in high school mandated coursework: traditional standards emphasize financial concepts, definitions, and lower-order thinking skills without requiring students to demonstrate that they can apply what they learn to real financial situations. Foundational knowledge is important, but knowledge alone does not demonstrate financial capability.

In its analysis of financial education standards across all 50 states, the NFEC policy analysis report [National Evaluation of State Financial Literacy Mandates](#) and Academic Standards Alignment found that no state offering high school financial education included outcome-based performance measures across its standards, and few included meaningful real-world application requirements.

The Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM were developed to close this gap by shifting the focus from what students know to what they can produce and demonstrate.

A Different Model for Financial Education

The Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM differ from traditional high school financial education standards in four important ways:

- They are built around demonstrated financial capability - students applying what they learn to real financial decisions, completing meaningful tasks, building useful systems, and producing resources they can actually use in their own lives.
- They emphasize applied learning and applied readiness. Students do not simply learn about financial decisions. They practice making them and demonstrate that they are prepared to act when those situations arise.
- They include performance-based assessment, so achievement can be measured through what students actually produce and demonstrate - not knowledge tests alone.
- They maintain a near-term, real-world focus - prioritizing the financial decisions and responsibilities students face now and during the first two years of transitioning toward self-sufficiency.

The standards are intended to help schools, educators, policymakers, and financial education stakeholders move beyond course mandates and toward measurable student performance. By focusing on what students produce and demonstrate, the framework provides a more practical foundation for evaluating whether financial education is preparing youth for the financial responsibilities they will encounter in real life.

How the Standards Are Structured

The Applied Financial Capability StandardsSM are organized in a structured progression from broad areas of financial capability to specific, measurable student outcomes. Each Standard Cluster addresses a major area of near-term financial decision-making and establishes the overall outcome students should achieve, the need the standards address, and relevant safety and privacy considerations. Individual standards then define the decisions, tasks, and competencies students should be able to demonstrate, along with clear performance expectations and evidence of achievement.

Each standard is further broken into Learning Objectives and more detailed Enabling Learning Outcomes (ELOs) that guide instruction, real-world application, and assessment. This structure connects high-level financial capability goals to the specific actions, decisions, processes, and tasks students are expected to complete, giving educators a clear framework for moving students from knowledge to demonstrated performance.

These standards are organized across 14 core areas, 61 standards, and more than 1400 Enabling Learning Outcomes (ELOs). Each standard includes clear performance expectations and requires observable evidence of student capability.

Invitation for Public Review

The NFEC invites educators, researchers, financial professionals, youth-serving organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders to review the proposed standards and provide comment. Contributors whose ideas are incorporated will be formally recognized in the published standards, including acknowledgment of name, professional affiliation, and contribution.

To review the standards and submit an application to [participate in the public comment process, visit here.](#)

About the National Financial Educators Council

The National Financial Educators Council (NFEC) is an IACET Accredited Provider, Certified B Corporation, and financial education organization dedicated to elevating financial education standards, supporting educators, and improving learner outcomes through research, standards development, professional training, curriculum resources, and advocacy. As an IACET Accredited Provider, the NFEC offers IACET CEUs for learning events that comply with the ANSI/IACET Continuing Education and Training Standard.

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