

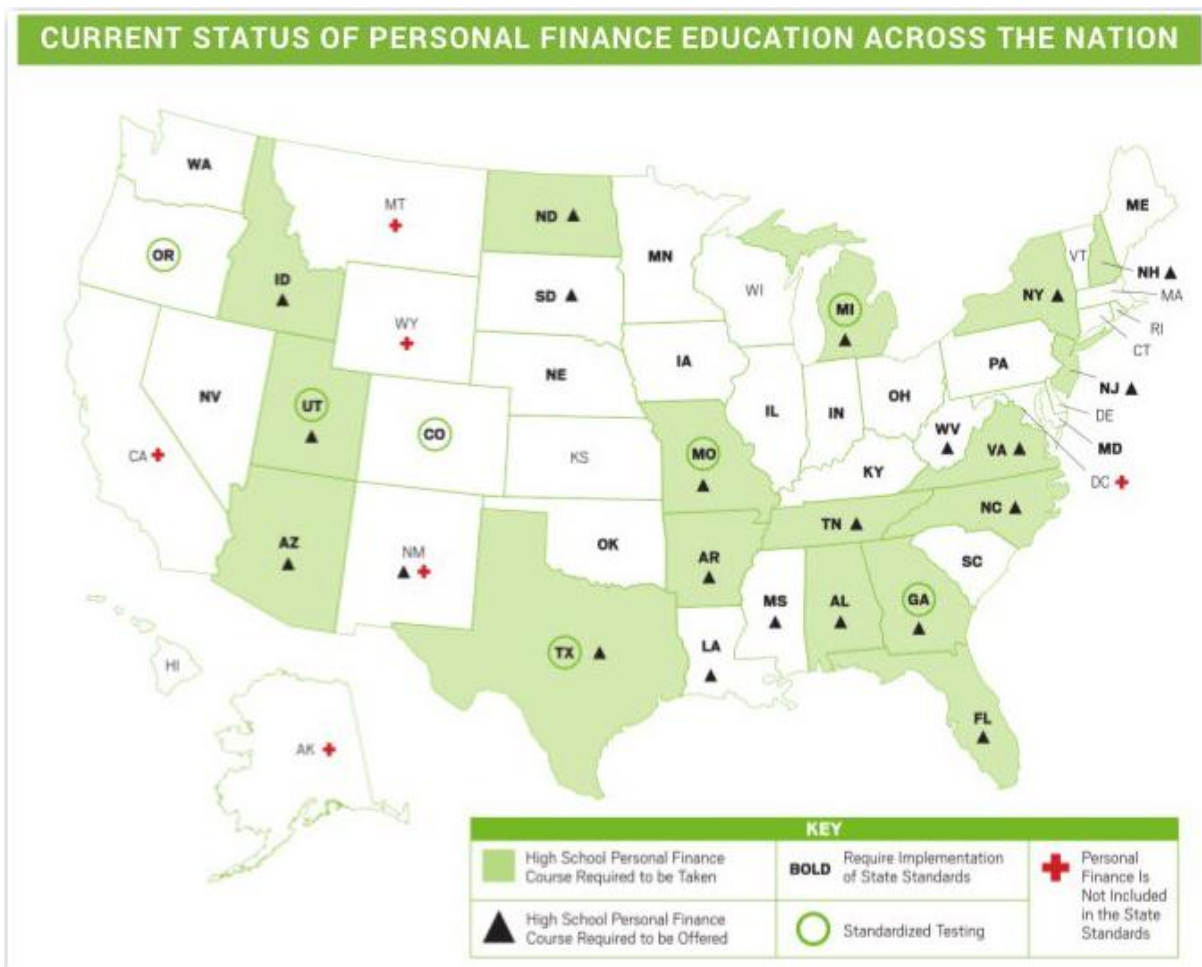
Why Aren't More States Taking On Economics and Personal Finance Education?

By [Brenda Iasevoli](#) on February 8, 2018, published by Education Week Curriculum Matters

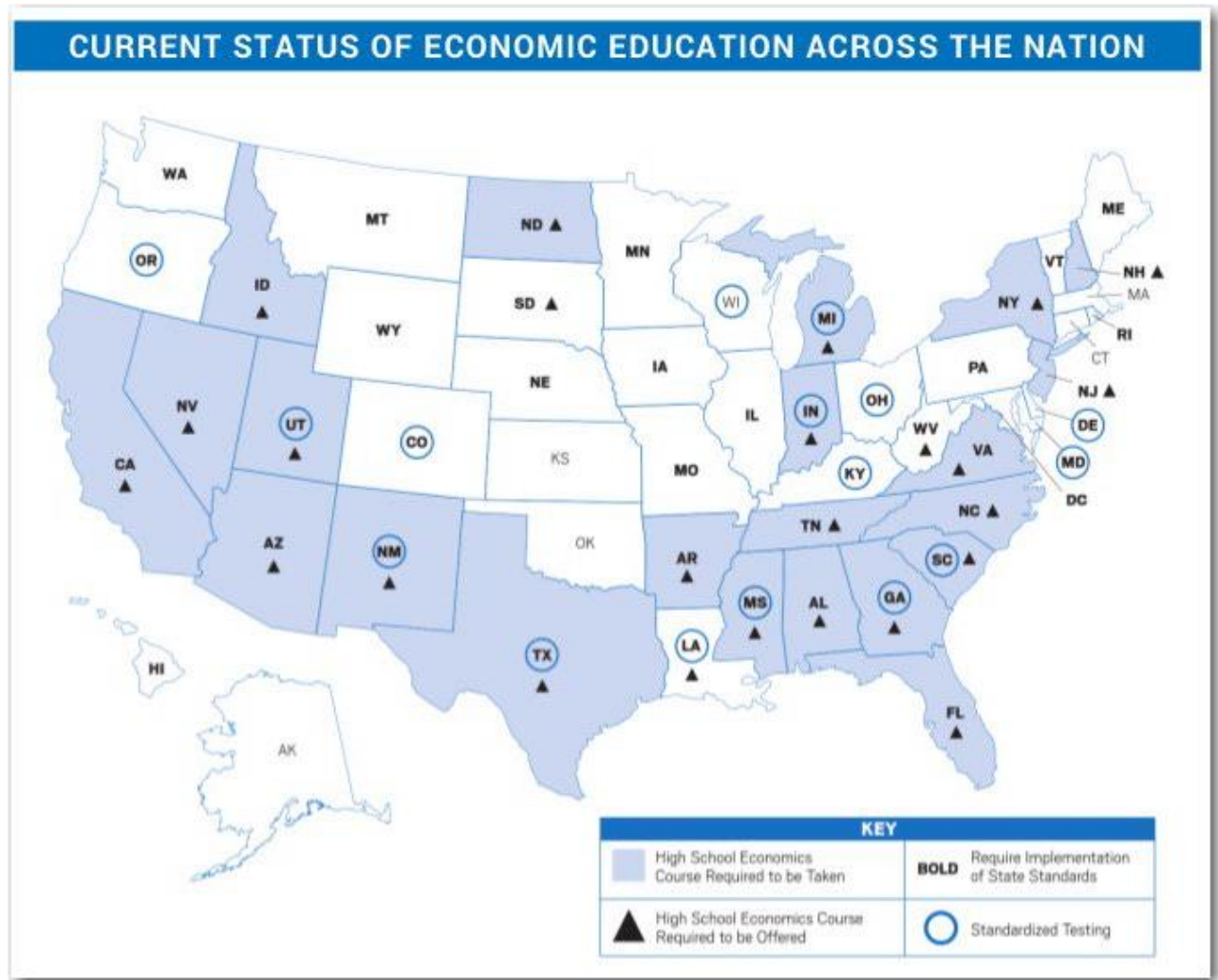
Every two years, the [Survey of the States](#) looks at the state of K-12 economics and personal finance education in 50 states and the District of Columbia. This year, things don't look so great. There has been little increase in economics education and no growth in personal finance education, according to the latest report by the Council for Economic Education.

There are many benefits to personal finance and economics education; some data suggest that it leads to a greater likelihood of saving for retirement, reduced personal debt, less likelihood to take on high-cost debt, and better credit scores.

Still, only 17 states require high school students to take a course in personal finance, and not a single state has added personal finance to its K-12 standards since 2016, according to the report, which was released Thursday.



Only 22 states require high school students to take an economics course, and although all 50 states and D.C. do include economics in their K-12 standards, only 43 states require districts to put them into practice.



A December report by the Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College in Vermont doesn't paint a rosier picture. It looked at how well schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia were delivering personal finance education. Twenty-six states scored in the C through F range. States at the bottom landed there for not requiring public high schools to teach financial literacy. You can read more about the report [here](#).

So why aren't more states making personal finance and economics education a priority?

"There are a lot of stresses on the school day," said council President Nan Morrison. "There's been a big emphasis in recent years on math and English/language arts, which are really important. But with teachers focused on those areas, it's hard to make room for what schools would think of as electives."

The survey's objective is to change that view of economics and personal finance as extraneous, and put these courses on a footing with core subjects. If Morrison had her way, states would have standards and requirements, vetted resources, and trained teachers for economics and personal finance just as they do for math.

Part of the problem is seeing economics and personal finances as divorced from the core subjects that students need to learn. To change that view, the report highlights states that work these subjects into other courses. Texas, for instance, integrates personal finance into the K-8 math curriculum.

"This demonstrates to students that math has a practical application," Morrison said.

She finds hope in the fact that the council has seen a doubling in each of the last two years in the number of page views of its resource "**Math in the Real World**," indicating that teachers like the idea of bringing math and personal finance together.

To move the needle on economics and personal finance education, change might have to come from the ground up.

"Parents can really make a difference if they simply ask that these subjects be taught in schools," Morrison said. "We have to open up the dialogue between students, parents, and schools. When these conversations start to happen, teachers and principals are more inspired to bring these lessons to the classroom because they realize these are issues kids really want to talk about and it's nothing to be afraid of."

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