

ENCOURAGE SCHOOLS TO TEACH BASIC SKILLS THAT PREPARE STUDENTS FOR LIFE AS AN ADULT

The overarching goal of our country's education system is to teach students the knowledge and the critical thinking skills they need to succeed as independent, responsible adults. Unfortunately, education systems today are focused on checking boxes, teaching scripted curriculum, and administering standardized tests. We need to return to ensuring students think creatively and act independently.

Parents and teachers should partner as they work to prepare students for their future lives as adults. The important life skills they will need as they enter adulthood include communication skills, goal setting, budgeting, physical fitness, and time management. Too many students today are simply expected to pick up this information informally and on their own as they progress through high school. But if students are never taught what these skills are and how to specifically use them, society cannot expect young adults to be prepared for college, career, and most importantly, life.

Students need core courses like algebra and geometry, but these courses alone do not teach them everything they must know to achieve success. Many high school graduates finish school not knowing how to create a budget, balance a checkbook, read bank statements, or plan for savings. The consequences of this lack of training often become evident quickly, as many students take out student loans to pay for college. Credit card companies then target college students with free offers for signing up for new cards, and these students accumulate significant debt by the time they graduate.

Several classes could help high school students with their transition into adult life, including courses on financial literacy, career pathways, classical physical

education, nutrition, and mental health. These classes could all be integrated into existing coursework and would significantly help students obtain the life skills needed to be successful in their careers and communities.

THE FACTS

- ★ 45 million borrowers in the U.S. have a total student loan debt of \$1.7 trillion.
- ★ In a 2018 study, only one-third of adults could answer at least four of five financial literacy questions regarding mortgages, interest rates, inflation, and risk.
- ★ Less than one-quarter of U.S. children ages 6-17 years exercise for the recommended 60 minutes per day.

THE AMERICA FIRST AGENDA

At the federal level, support policies that:

- ★ Encourage states to use funds from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and from Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the purposes of:
 - Financial literacy instruction;
 - Critical thinking;
 - Digital literacy; and
 - Obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.

At the state level, support policies that:

- ★ Encourage schools to teach basic skills that prepare students for life as an adult.

- ★ Promote supplemental life skills education.
- ★ Develop accountability models that include credit for offering basic skills courses for high school students.
- ★ Implement successful models of classical physical education programs in schools.

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