

## AFSA RFI Responses re: Prosperity Gap

Delivered to the House Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth  
February 15, 2022

**Question 4: Child and Family Policy: How can people receive better support when starting a family or caring for their family, especially in terms of workforce participation? Examples of this policy area include early childhood education, paid family leave and income support programs, tax policy (child tax credit, earned income tax credit), support for care economy.**

Americans of all economic backgrounds are experiencing many challenges and uncertainties as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt a wide range of daily in-person activities, including at public and private schools across the country. In the face of a rapidly changing environment for students, teachers, and communities, school systems across the country shifted many resources to an entirely online platform or a hybrid setting to continue education programs.

While access to computer equipment and high-speed internet remains limited for those most economically vulnerable, we commend Congress for including funding towards the Affordable Connectivity Program, which helps ensure more households can afford the broadband they need for school, in the bipartisan infrastructure package. **We encourage the House Select Committee on Economic Disparity and Fairness in Growth, to examine how educational institutions can promote financial literacy programs to reach students and teachers through more accessible and equitable digital platforms in a post-COVID-19 environment.**

In remarks before the Financial Literacy and Education Commission in 2021, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said, “research does show that education – especially early education – about how to navigate personal finances can have a lasting, positive impact on people’s lives. It can be part of our strategy for building a more equitable economy.” The Secretary also added that people need “help to overcome financial setbacks, tools to manage their daily needs, and support to take steps toward a brighter future. Any push for financial inclusion must include quality financial education, too.”

Empowering individuals to have greater control and understanding over their financial options is critical for every American, especially in K-12 programs but only 21 states require high school students to take a course in personal finance according to the Council for Economic Education. Additionally, the Brookings Institution noted that “participatory learning can positively influence financial literacy by increasing students’ aspirations (e.g., educational and career goals) and motivation to engage in sound financial decision-making (e.g., saving for retirement).” However, U.S. students from lower-income households tend to have lower levels of financial literacy than students from higher-income households according to the CFPB.

It is clear that financial education can and does provide youth with the critical knowledge and skills to make sound [financial decisions](#). We encourage the Select Committee to discuss how public and private education institutions can reach more K-12 students, especially in lower-income areas, through online and digital platforms to convey the importance of personal finance. We also hope the committee will work with organizations like AFSA’s Education Foundation which can provide insights into helping teachers and students across the country who have benefited from our personal finance course, MoneySKILL, with [modules](#) including budgeting, vehicle financing, costs and benefits from borrowing, and dozens of other topics.

Historically, Congress has designated April as "Financial Literacy Month" and we hope that traditions continue in 2022. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know. We look forward to supporting the Select Committee's efforts to narrow the prosperity gap and emphasize with appropriate access to digital and other resources opportunity is not determined by one's zip code.

**Question 13: What successful partnerships have you engaged in with federal, state, local, municipal and tribal governments? How can the federal government support these partnerships?**

The AFSA Education Foundation was founded as a nonprofit in 1990 to promote the delivery of quality personal finance education. For over 30 years, the foundation has been dedicated to providing free personal finance curriculum, resources, and training to educators of all types.

In 2002, the AFSA Education Foundation developed [MoneySKILL](#) as one of the first personal finance courses available exclusively online and nearly 1.3 million teachers and students have enrolled in the program since it was launched. MoneySKILL has evolved with the times and currently provides educators of all kinds (including parents) with a resource to create high-quality, custom, web-based personal finance courses. The curriculum is geared toward middle school, high school, and college students and focuses on a broad range of money management fundamentals and can be used as a standalone personal finance course or included as part of a course in economics, business, math, family and consumer sciences, or wherever personal finance is taught. In addition to being completely free for educators, students, and parents, MoneySKILL is offered in English and Spanish, contains audio dictation options, and aligns with nationally recognized K-12 personal finance standards.

