



**Junior
Achievement™**



JA FINANCE PARK®

VIRTUAL ENTRY SIMULATION

2021 - 2022

Executive Summary

Junior Achievement (JA) is the nation's largest non-profit organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their futures, and make smart academic and economic choices. Spanning the U.S. in 103 locations in 42 states, volunteers and teachers provide in-school and after-school programming to students in grades K-12 in the core content areas of work readiness, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. Nationally, JA reaches over 3 million students per year in 127,800+ classrooms and after-school locations in inner cities, suburbs, and rural areas with the help of nearly 152,000 dedicated volunteers from all walks of life.

JA Finance Park® Entry is the capstone program for middle school students that teaches key concepts about personal finance and budgeting, building a foundation for solid financial decisions throughout their lives. The program culminates in an on-site or virtual simulation so students can put into practice what they've learned by developing and committing

to a family budget based on a hypothetical life situation. Students who take part in the *JA Finance Park Virtual Entry* simulation receive a simulated life profile with a family situation, job and salary, and debt level. Students are also taught to recognize the impact of credit history on budget planning and purchasing options.

During the 2021-22 academic school year, students from many JA Areas across the U.S. participated in the *JA Finance Park® Entry* capstone program. The in-class curriculum focuses on personal financial planning and career exploration. At the culmination of the program, students participate in a virtual experience in which they practice what they have learned by developing and committing to a personal budget during the simulation in which they receive a simulated life profile with a family situation, job and salary, and debt level. This report provides findings from a sample of students who responded to attitudinal questions about their learnings and the value of their simulation experience while they were actually participating in the simulation.

This executive summary provides findings from attitudinal questions asked of *JA Finance Park® Virtual Entry* simulation participants. Information about the data collection, sample, and analysis plan can be found in the Methodology section at the end of this summary. Findings from the pre- and post-simulation attitudinal questions follow, along with a brief description of how students performed on the knowledge questions during the simulation.



**Feelings About
JA Participation**

93%

**believe it helped them
prepare & understand
budgets**

Junior Achievement™

Key Findings

- » After the simulation, the majority (92.6%) of students indicated they believed that participating in the simulation helped them to better prepare for future budgeting challenges and understand how a budget works.
- » After the simulation, the majority (82%) of students responded that learning about the various career clusters helped them to think differently about potential careers and motivated them to spend more time considering and exploring those careers.

Confidence About Budgets

85%

believe the simulation prepared them for future budgeting



Learning About Various Careers

82%

say JA helped them think differently about potential careers

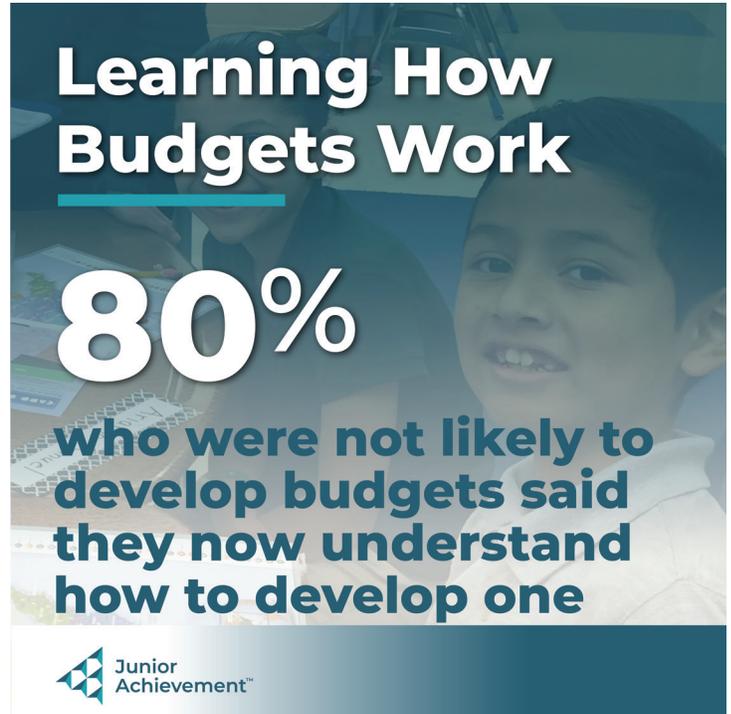


- » 84.5% percent of students who responded they were not confident in their ability to budget prior to the JA Finance Park Virtual Entry simulation indicated that they believed the simulation prepared them for future budgeting challenges.
- » 79.9% of students who indicated prior to the simulation that they were not likely to develop a budget indicated that they believed that the simulation helped them to understand how a budget works.
- » More than half of the students (58.8%) who responded that budgeting was not important prior to the simulation indicated that the simulation prepared them for future budgeting challenges.

Methodology

Data Collection and Questions

Questions are coded into the *JA Finance Park® Virtual Entry* simulation and data were collected and stored in a data repository while the students were participating in the simulation. Three attitudinal questions were asked of program participants before they engaged in the simulation, one knowledge question was asked in the middle of the simulation, and six attitudinal questions were asked upon completion of the simulation. JA Areas have the option to modify questions if they have particular questions they believe are would be useful in understanding their area. Participation rates of students among the JA Areas varied.



Learning How Budgets Work

80%

who were not likely to develop budgets said they now understand how to develop one

 Junior Achievement™

The infographic features a background image of two young boys looking at a laptop. The text is overlaid in white and dark blue. The Junior Achievement logo is located at the bottom left of the infographic.

DISCOVER®

JA Finance Park® Virtual Entry is made possible through the support of Discover Financial Services.