



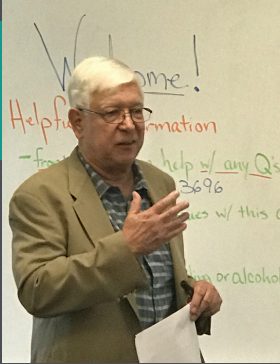
ARIZONA FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Enlighten, Engage, Empower

Midwestern University in Glendale, AZ
Saturday, October 11th, 2025
8:00am - 3:30pm

Remembering John Morton

*Founding President of the
Arizona Council on Economic Education,
a visionary educator, passionate advocate
for economic literacy, and beloved teacher*



ARIZONA COUNCIL
ON
ECONOMIC EDUCATION

We honor the life and legacy of John Morton, the founding president of the Arizona Council on Economic Education. As a passionate advocate for teachers and students, John was a trailblazer in economic education. Known as the "Grandfather of AP Economics and Financial Fitness for Life," his passion, humor, and engaging teaching methods inspired countless educators and empowered generations of students. John's influence lives on in classrooms across Arizona and beyond, as hundreds of thousands of teachers carry forward his economic education mission. He will be deeply missed.

Please join us in celebrating his extraordinary legacy and the profound impact he has made on education.



"John's leadership in the economic education field continued to grow. When I became president of the National (Joint) Council we undertook several nation-wide programs including the development of the Master Curriculum Guide in economics which eventually morphed into the National Standards in Economics and a variety of ancillary materials. John was involved in development of most of these materials and in so doing became instrumental in moving economics teaching into the mainstream of the education throughout the Country. John will be sorely missed by all those who have labored in the economic education. His insights, his work ethic and his desire to help others impacted thousands of teachers and tens of thousands of students." - Mike MacDowell, Trustee of the Calvin K. Economics Foundation

"I'm so sorry to hear of John's passing. He was such an incredible icon in our field. What a fabulous economic educator he was! Every so often, I'm demonstrating a lesson and I read something and I think, "That has to be John Morton!" I look up the author of the lesson and lo and behold, it's John! Deepest condolences to everyone in Arizona on John's passing! - Andrew T. Hill, Ph.D., the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

"In 1974 when I took my first job at Northern Illinois University as Director of the Illinois Council on Economic Education, John was one of the first teachers I met. His reputation preceded him. At Homewood Flossmoor High School he had already earned deserved reputation among educators as a leader in bringing economics instruction to the high school classroom. As the Director of the Center for Economic Education at NIU, I joined with John to lobby for a state mandate in economics instruction in IL." - Jack Soper



Event Sponsors



Economic Policy Institute



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
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Economic Education



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ARIZONA FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Enlighten, Engage, Empower

Welcome Educators,

Welcome to this year's Arizona Financial Literacy and Economic Education Conference! We are thrilled to have you here as part of a passionate community of educators dedicated to preparing students with the skills and understanding they need in economics, personal finance, and entrepreneurship. This event is designed to provide you with fresh ideas, tools, and strategies to elevate your teaching. I hope you leave feeling energized and confident in your ability to inspire and empower your students. Thank you for the vital work you do to build brighter futures for Arizona's learners.

Sincerely,



Elena Zee
President & CEO, Arizona Council on Economic Education

Arizona Financial Literacy and Economic Education Conference

October 11, 2025

Conference Agenda

- 8:00 - 8:30** Registration/Breakfast/Exhibitors
- 8:30 - 8:50** **Welcome Session**
- 9:00 - 9:50** Breakout Session 1
- 10:00 - 10:50** Breakout Session 2
- 10:50 - 11:50** **Plenary Session**
Keynote & Economic Education Teacher of the Year Award Ceremony
- 11:55 - 12:55** **Lunch and Exhibitors**
Lunch in Barrel Student Center II Cafe
- 1:00 - 1:50** Breakout Session 3
- 2:00 - 2:50** Breakout Session 4
- 3:00 - 3:30** **Closing Session**

Morning coffee sponsor:



Keynote Speaker



Dr. Roger Freeman **Retired Superintendent** **Littleton Elementary School District**

Dr. Freeman's professional mission has been to increase opportunity and dignity for families. His experience as a father, teacher and principal helped inform his district leadership. He was one of the most highly recognized and longest serving Valley superintendents in the modern school choice era. As superintendent he focused on an orderly learning environment, instructional improvement, and student efficacy by eliminating attendance area enrollment in favor of choice academies with strategic community partners such as ACEE. The academies are pathways to Kids at Hope Destinations and the community brings resources to learning that enrich the student experience.

As part of that effort, Dr. Freeman worked with the WestMEC and Tolleson Union Governing Boards to bring CTE opportunities and resources to his district community. He served as President of ASA for an unprecedented two-year term, as the Chair of GPEMC for an unprecedented four years and served for over a decade on the Board of Directors for ABEC, where he also served as the policy co-chair, and on the Board of WestMARC, where he also served as co-chair of the education and workforce development committee.

Awards:

- 2024 School Connect – Changemaker Award
- 2024 AASA Superintendent of the Year
- 2023 All Arizona Superintendent
- 2022 Kids at Hope/ASU Outstanding Dedication to Hope
- 2021 Raymond S Kellis Leadership Award (ASA)
- 2019 WestMARC West Valley Inspiration in Leadership Award
- 2016 ASU Educational Excellence Impact Award
- 2011 Arizona Distinguished Administrator for Superintendents
- 2010 All Arizona Superintendent
- 2002 Arizona Distinguished Administrator (Principal)



Session 1

9:00am - 9:50am

A.I. or H.I.? - Artificial Intelligence or Human Ingenuity?



Debbie Henney

Secondary - Room 112

What does artificial intelligence mean for the future of labor and jobs? In this session participants will engage in a classroom-ready simulation that engages students in a production process where they make decisions about how, when and whether or not to employ A.I. Students will explore questions like, is A.I. a substitute for labor? A complement? What are the costs and benefits of using A.I.? How will A.I. change the nature of jobs? Bring your art skills, mathematical understanding, scientific knowledge and overall human ingenuity to this fast-paced and fun activity.

Counting on Cash: Building Money Skills in Students

Mathematics - Room 114



**Robin Palmer
& Donna Dempsey**

In a world of swipes and taps, it's easy for students to miss out on the foundational skills of using physical money. This workshop equips teachers with hands-on strategies to help students build fluency with dollars and coins—deepening their understanding of money value, budgeting, and financial decision-making.

Innovations in Experiential Civic and Economic Education

General K-12 - Room 116



**KaRa Lyn Thrasher
& Sabrina Estrada**

What if students could decide how school dollars are spent? This session explores School Participatory Budgeting (SPB), a hands-on process that blends civic education, financial literacy, and student leadership. Learn how schools across Arizona, including Starline Elementary's "Kids City" simulation, are empowering students to make real budgeting decisions. Discover tools, lessons, and strategies to bring this powerful, standards-aligned learning model to your own school community.

Empowering Educators to Advance Financial Literacy with My Classroom Economy

Elementary - Room 118



Amanda Mayer

Transform your classroom into a thriving, student-run economy with My Classroom Economy (MyCE), a free, gamified financial literacy program from Vanguard. Hear from educators who have successfully implemented MyCE to boost engagement, behavior, and money management skills. Learn how this classroom management framework supports real-world learning, explore new product features, and take home free resources. Whether you're new to MyCE or looking to deepen your impact, this session offers inspiration, strategies, and classroom-ready tools.

FREE Resources from the Federal Reserve

Secondary - Room 127 - Lecture Hall



Kelly Oliva

Take a guided tour of the brand new FRE.org and see how we've upgraded your favorite FREE economics, personal finance, and social studies resources this year. Learn how to seamlessly integrate our resources into your online classroom or find the perfect active learning lesson to get your students engaged.

An Economic Happily Ever After! Teaching Economic Principles Through Storytelling

Secondary - Room 129 - Lecture Hall



Shannon Sweat

Bring fairy tales to life in your economics classroom! This interactive session uses classic stories to teach key economic concepts like opportunity cost, incentives, and trade-offs. Participants will analyze characters' decisions, rewrite story endings using economic reasoning, and reflect on how these ideas connect to real-world choices. Whether you're new to storytelling or looking to refresh your lessons, this session offers creative strategies to make economics both meaningful and memorable.

Session 2

10:00am - 10:50am

A Non-Therapist's Guide to Combatting Financial Imposter Syndrome



Emily Schwartz

Secondary - Room 112

Do you ever feel like a financial therapist in addition to your teaching duties? This session is for you! Financial Imposter Syndrome is the belief many students have that they are just “naturally bad at money” due to background, negative thought patterns, external influences, and more. Come learn some research-based strategies (the ones counselors use!) to help students overcome Financial Imposter Syndrome so they can actually learn the budgeting, saving, credit, and investing concepts in your curriculum. No therapy degree required.

Building Financial Reasoning: Helping Students Make Sense (and Cents) of Money for Secondary Teachers

Mathematics - Room 114



**Robin Palmer &
Evan Furman**

Financial reasoning goes beyond knowing how money works—it's about helping students think critically, solve problems, and make informed decisions about their financial futures. In this session, explore engaging strategies and classroom-ready activities that connect math, literacy, and real-life situations. From credit and loans to investing and risk, discover how to guide students in developing the awareness, skills, and behaviors they need for lifelong financial wellbeing.



Press Start on Financial Literacy: Engaging Students with Video Games

General K-12 - Room 116



**Danielle Bonfig &
Brian Flanigan-Arthurs**

Discover how video games can bring personal finance to life for students of all ages. This session explores how popular titles illustrate key financial concepts like budgeting, investing, and risk management. Learn how to connect in-game decisions to real-world money skills, helping students build habits and understanding that translate beyond the screen. Leave with strategies to make financial literacy relevant, fun, and empowering for every learner.

Teaching the Complexities of Wealth

Secondary - Room 118



Christi Carlson

Discussing wealth inequality can be challenging, but it's a vital part of economic education. This session equips teachers with the tools and confidence to explore the causes, vocabulary, and potential solutions surrounding wealth distribution. Using trusted resources and adaptable lesson plans, educators will gain strategies to lead thoughtful, informed conversations that align with standards and help students better understand the complexities of economic inequality in society.

Storybook Economics

Elementary - Room 129 - Lecture Hall



**Teresa Mungai &
Anthony Delauney**

Looking for creative and engaging ways to introduce economics to young learners? This session will provide a hands-on exploration of how the Owning the Dash children's book series can be a powerful tool for teaching foundational economic concepts in the elementary classroom. Through storytelling, relatable characters, and age-appropriate lessons, these books help students explore topics like decision-making, budgeting, and saving. Come learn how to foster financial literacy and real-world thinking for your students through story-based learning.

Session 3

1:00pm - 1:50pm

Budgeting for an Arizona Road Trip



Heather Moll

Elementary - Room 112

Arizona has many exciting cultural traditions and natural resources that can be used for entertainment. But with each of these choices come costs. The costs might be measured in distance, time, money, gasoline, and energy. All of these costs add into making decisions. Come join the Arizona Geographic Alliance in showcasing a lesson titled "Arizona: Let's Plan a Road Trip" where students will use different maps to not only plan a trip but also to learn about diverse entertainment options in Arizona.

Engaging Students in Economics and Math by Bringing NASCAR into the Classroom



Cinnamon Conrad

Mathematics - Room 114

Rev up student engagement with a middle school unit that uses NASCAR to teach economics and math through real-world applications. Explore lessons where students analyze race data, calculate speed and fuel use, and investigate the economic impact of events on host cities. The unit also includes geometry concepts and project-based challenges. Leave with ready-to-use materials and creative strategies that make learning fast-paced, hands-on, and career-connected.



Economic Principles Across the Multiverse: Games, Shows, and Movies

General K-12 - Room 116



**Danielle Bonfig &
Brian Flanigan-Arthurs**

Bring economics to life through the worlds of Minecraft, Pokémon, The Sims, and more! This interactive session uses games, shows, and movies to teach concepts like choice, cost, and incentives. Participants will explore creative activities, connect media examples to economic principles, and take on a hands-on challenge. Walk away with student-ready resources that make economics relevant, fun, and rooted in the stories kids already love.

Personal Finance Lessons Rooted in Economic Thinking

Secondary - Room 118



Megan Kirts

Applying the principles of economic thinking to financial choices empowers students to succeed as consumers, employees, employers, savers, and investors. Access a new series of high school personal finance lessons grounded in the cost-benefit, marginal, opportunity cost, and interdependence principles. Attendees will participate in a selection of active learning exercises drawn from the featured lesson plans.

Creating Young Entrepreneurs Through Shark Tank

Secondary - Room 129 - Lecture Hall



**Mitchell Pinda
& Aimee Jensen**

Back by popular demand, this session guides teachers through a hands-on project that helps students become entrepreneurs. Learn how to take students from identifying community needs to pitching business ideas in a Shark Tank-style event. Explore the traits of entrepreneurial thinking, and walk away with ready-to-use lesson plans, templates, and strategies that build economic literacy, communication skills, and student confidence in creative problem-solving.

Session 4

2:00pm - 2:50pm

Exploring Maps to Reinforce Math Skills

Elementary/Mathematics - Room 112



**Donna Dempsey
& Diane Krueger**

Bring math to life by putting it on the map—literally! In this hands-on session, discover creative ways to use maps to build elementary students' skills in measurement, geometry, data, and number sense. From calculating distances to identifying patterns and interpreting map scales, participants will explore activities that make math meaningful, visual, and fun.

Investing In Yourself: Guiding Students Through Career Exploration

Secondary - Room 114



Robin Palmer

Help students recognize their greatest asset—theirselfes! In this interactive session, discover classroom-ready activities that empower students to explore their interests, develop their talents, and connect skills to career paths. You'll walk away with tools to help students see how building their abilities is a smart investment in their future, whether they choose college, career, or something in between.



Economics Unleashed: Developing Curious, Creative "Economists" Through Student Agency

Secondary - Room 116



Vicki Schomaker

Reimagine your classroom as a launchpad for student agency in economics. This session showcases two dynamic projects—What in the World Wednesdays and The Undercover Economist—that turn students into economic storytellers, talk show hosts, and critical thinkers. Learn how to boost engagement through student-led inquiry, real-world research, and media creation. Leave with project frameworks and tools that help students connect economic concepts to their lives and communities.

America 250 & Economics: Tools for Exploring 250 Years of Economic Growth and Change

General K-12 - Room 118



Jill Scott

As the U.S. approaches its 250th anniversary, this session explores the nation's economic evolution from 1776 to today. Participants will examine key economic transformations—industrialization, globalization, and the rise of the digital economy. Through primary sources, data analysis, and inquiry-based strategies, teachers will discover ways to engage students in economic thinking using historical case studies. Interactive activities will encourage discussions on economic turning points and their impact on future economic trends. Attendees will leave with practical resources and strategies to integrate America 250 themes into their economics classrooms, fostering student curiosity about the past, present, and future of the U.S. economy. (Grades 5+)

Unlocking Opportunity: Implementing the Arizona Seal of Personal Finance for Real-World Readiness

Secondary - Room 129 - Lecture Hall



Danielle Bonfig

Arizona's Seal of Personal Finance helps students graduate with verified financial literacy skills, but many educators aren't sure where to start. This session breaks down how to implement the Seal, align instruction and assessment, and integrate it into existing coursework. Learn from real-world models, explore community partnerships, and walk away with practical strategies to help students earn this valuable credential and build essential 21st-century skills.

Arizona Economic Education Teacher of the Year Finalists

Elementary/Middle School Division



Cinnamon Conrad

Alice Vail Middle School

“By connecting math to meaningful, real-life situations, we give students the tools they need to succeed in life.”



Susan Spigelmire

Liberty Traditional School

“Stories about characters making choices, earning money, or setting goals help students connect to economic concepts.”

ACEE Signature Programs

 ACEE
Poster Contest



 ACEE
Financial Fitness
in Action



 ACEE
Family Night



 ACEE
EconReads



 ACEE | ECONOMICS
CHALLENGE

 ACEE | PERSONAL FINANCE
CHALLENGE

Academic Resources

 ACEE
Money Minutes



 ACEE
KINDER - 12TH GRADE
INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

 ACEE
Building Young
Entrepreneurs



 ACEE
Get Your Game On



Presented by ACEE



Arizona Economic Education Teacher of the Year Finalists

High School Division



Janay Perone

Boulder Creek High School

"I emphasize 'economic storytelling,' encouraging students to communicate ideas visually and build creativity and conceptual understanding."



Mitch Pinda

Valley Vista High School

"Financial literacy empowers students to take ownership of their futures and build confidence in achieving financial goals."



Vicki Schomaker
Mountain View High School

“Financial literacy equips students with the power to build wealth, avoid debt, and understand the world around them.”



Shannon Sweat
ASU Preparatory Academy Digital

“These are life skills students need as they graduate high school and pursue their education and careers.”



Exhibitors

Arizona Council for the Social Studies

Arizona Council for History Education

AZ Technology in Education Association

BOK Financial

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Foundation For Teaching Economics

Magic School AI

Making Sense Out of Dollars

My Classroom Economy

NAU - Economic Policy Institute

Owning the Dash

U of A Center for the Philosophy of Freedom



**Thank you to our host,
Midwestern University!**



Remembering Barbara Gray

*Dedicated educator and
visionary leader who
transformed economic
education across Arizona*



ARIZONA COUNCIL
ON
ECONOMIC EDUCATION

Barbara Gray, a Thomas R. Brown Foundation trustee and an extraordinary leader in economic education, passed away on July 5, 2024, leaving behind a legacy of dedication and excellence.

For many years, Barbara taught Advanced Placement courses in economics and political science at University High School in Tucson. Not only was she admired by students and colleagues for her exceptional teaching talent, she was also recognized as a U.S. Presidential Scholar Educator and a Flinn Foundation Outstanding Educator.

In 2011, she became the Director of Educator Programs at the Thomas R. Brown Foundation (TRBF), where she played a pivotal role in developing the Foundation's strategic vision for strengthening economic education in Arizona. Under Barbara's leadership, TRBF dramatically ramped up the number of teacher training workshops offered each year, significantly benefiting K-12 educators and students across the state.

Even after retiring as the Director of Educator Programs at the end of 2019, Barbara continued to champion economic education as a TRBF board member, using her sharp mind and deep experience to further elevate the Foundation's work. In both her roles at TRBF, Barbara mentored many teacher leaders, creating a powerful multiplier effect and ensuring her unwavering commitment to advancing economic education will be felt for years to come.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Barbara will be remembered for her kindness, generosity, principled nature, remarkable intelligence, and robust intellectual curiosity.

Professional Development Programs

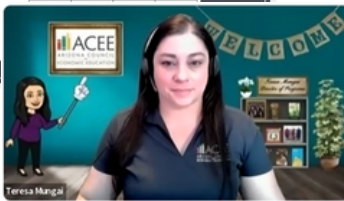
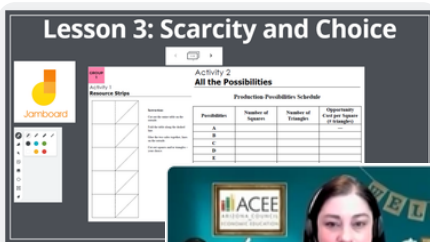
Arizona Standards-Aligned PD for K-12 Teachers in Economics, Finance, Math & Entrepreneurship.



[Learn more](#)

Workshops and Webinars

ACEE conducts comprehensive K-12 economics and personal finance education teacher professional development workshops in alignment with Arizona Department of Education standards for each grade level.



ACEE conducts comprehensive K-12 economics and personal finance education teacher professional development webinars. On-demand webinars are available for viewing and earning PD certificates on your schedule.

In-Service for Your School or District

Enjoyed today's sessions? Bring this experience to your school or district with our in-service programs. Learn more about how we can support your team's professional development!

Thank you for attending from the ACEE Staff



Elena Zee



Teresa Mungai



Kathy Pondy



Donna Dempsey



Teojia Williamson



Robin Palmer



Jen Senatore



Jamiela Jones



Lauren Joseph



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