ARIZONA FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Enlighten, Engage, Empower

Midwestern University in Glendale, AZ
Saturday, October 17, 2026
8:00am - 3:30pm

Vanguard

my classroom economy +Investor
powered by Vanguard

Building lifelong financial confidence

Vanguard is proud to partner with the Council for Economic Education in empowering students nationwide with meaningful financial education. Through My Classroom Economy + Investor, we help bring earning, saving, budgeting, and long-term planning to life for more than one million K–12 students—and counting.

myclassroomeconomy.org

Arizona Financial Literacy and Economic Education Conference

October 17, 2026

Conference Agenda

8:00 - 8:30	Registration/Breakfast/Exhibitors
8:30 - 8:40	Welcome Session
8:50 - 9:40	Breakout Session 1
9:50 - 10:40	Breakout Session 2
10:45 - 12:00	Plenary Session • Keynote Speaker • Former ACEE Teacher of the Year Panel • Economic Education Teacher of the Year
12:10 - 1:00	Lunch and Exhibitors
1:10 - 2:00	Breakout Session 3
2:10 - 3:00	Breakout Session 4
3:05 - 3:30	Closing Session

Morning coffee sponsor: **Julie Jakubek, MBA**
Allstate Insurance

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Center for the Philosophy of Freedom

FREEDOMCENTER@ARIZONA.EDU ★ FREEDOMCENTER.ARIZONA.EDU

OUR MISSION IS YOUR...

ENGAGE WITH US & UPLIFT YOUR STUDENTS!

IMPACT

EMPOWER YOUR STUDENTS. INSPIRE THE FUTURE.

Bring real-world ethics, economics, and civic engagement into your classroom with the University of Arizona's Center for the Philosophy of Freedom. Explore free teaching resources, graduate credit options, dual-enrollment programs, and workshops that help educators inspire critical thinking and leadership in students. Discover upcoming opportunities on our website!

SUCCESS

CONTACT US FOR OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPORTING FINANCIAL LITERACY & LEADERSHIP

The Freedom Center's Take Charge Today program hosted high school students for our Entrepreneurship Academy with the McGuire Center for Entrepreneurship on the University of Arizona campus. Students interacted with business leaders to develop their goals and competed in a Shark Tank competition at the end of the week. For information about the 2027 camp, scan the QR code.

GROWTH

CUTTING EDGE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sphere Education Initiatives and the University of Arizona's Freedom Center proudly present the fourth annual Sphere Summit, *America's 250th: Exploring the Founding Through an Economics and Civics Lens*, a dynamic professional learning experience for educators.

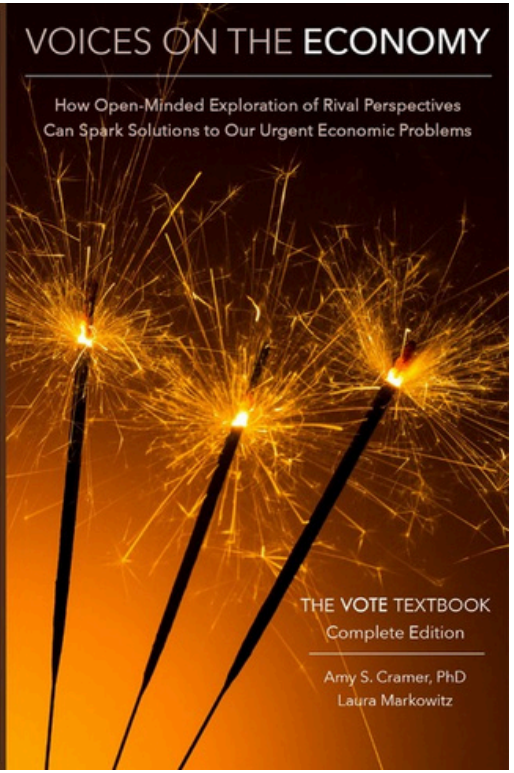
AMERICA'S 250TH: EXPLORING THE FOUNDING THROUGH AN ECONOMICS AND CIVICS LENS

VOTE
VOICES ON THE ECONOMY

FREE Textbook, videos
PowerPoints, and more
www.VoicesOnTheEconomy.org

Voices On The Economy (VOTE) Center
Scan the QR code to access the **VOTE** Center Website

or, go to *www.pima.edu/vote-center*



Exhibitors

Arizona Council for the Social Studies

Arizona Council for History Education

AZ Technology in Education Association

Banzai

Econiful

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Foundation for Teaching Economics

Rapunzl

Sprouting Sparks

U of A Center for the Philosophy of Freedom

Vanguard / My Classroom Economy

Voices on the Economy (VOTE) Center

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

Session 1

8:50am - 9:40am

Teaching Elasticity of Demand the Fun Way!

Krystal Slivinski

Advanced Placement - Science Building Room 140

Tired of teaching elasticity of demand the boring way? Music, games, and interactive activities can make it one of your most enjoyable microeconomics topics. Explore elastic and inelastic demand, graphing and calculating elasticity with the midpoint formula, estimating elasticity for real-world goods and services, and its relationship to total revenue. Leave with simple lessons you can use in class the next day.

The Empty Lot Project

Robin Palmer

Elementary - Science Building Room 141

What does an empty lot have to do with entrepreneurship? Everything. This session explores how to connect civics and entrepreneurship through one simple question: What should go there? Participants will learn to guide students in researching demographics, local businesses, and community needs, then use that research to design a business for a real empty lot or vacant storefront using publicly available data, zoning maps, and local geography.

The Annoyance Economy: How Junk Fees, Wasted Time, and Dark Patterns Tax Your Wallet

Varun Gupta

College, Career, and AI - Science Building Room 142

Join The Knotty Economist for an irritating tour of the ever-growing annoyance economy. We'll explore junk fees, surprise charges, and hard-to-cancel subscriptions that quietly drain family budgets. In this interactive session, you'll get classroom-ready strategies for teaching concepts like market power, price discrimination, dark patterns, and behavioral nudges. Using real examples, you'll help students calculate true costs and learn to spot, question, and avoid these hidden expenses. You'll leave annoyed—but with practical lessons and activities ready for the classroom.

eCTE Middle School Career Exploration Resources

Susan Faretta

College, Career, and AI - Science Building Room 143

Educators will discover curricular resources that are engaging, flexible, and student-centered. Career exploration courses and activities can help students build robust pathways into high school and beyond.

Debt Horror Stories: Real-Life Financial Nightmares and How to Avoid Them

Shannon Sweat

High School - Cactus Wren Room 236

What happens when a simple financial decision turns into a nightmare? In Debt Horror Stories, students will step into the shoes of people who faced overwhelming debt from credit cards, student loans, car purchases, buy-now-pay-later plans, and other financial traps. Through interactive scenarios, group discussions, and decision-making challenges, participants will analyze what went wrong, identify warning signs, and explore how smarter financial choices could have changed the outcome.

Being a Host City: Economic Burden or Boom?

Amanda Geiger

High School - Cactus Wren Room 238

Is the benefit to the city hosting the Olympic games worth the cost? Do the economic benefits of sports stadiums warrant the use of tax dollars to build them? Why would cities court musicians and celebrities to visit? In this session we'll explore free resources from Federal Reserve Education that investigate these topics and help bring the economic way of thinking to these popular debates.

Session 2

9:50am - 10:40am

Understanding the Arizona Seal of Personal Finance

Hannah Rude

High School - Cactus Wren Room 236

This session will dive into the background, requirements, and CCRI details of the Arizona Seal of Personal Finance. The session will explore how the Seal of Personal Finance connects to the state history and social science standards and how local organizations like ACEE support students who want to obtain the seal.

Making Economics Visible: Question Routines for Inquiry and Discourse

Jill Scott

Elementary - Science Building Room 143

This professional development session highlights how question routines can transform economics from memorization to meaningful inquiry. Educators will explore how routines support sensemaking, encourage student voice, and surface misconceptions in economic thinking. The session emphasizes practical classroom application, with time to plan and refine lessons aligned to existing curriculum.

Experience the Gains from Trade

Kathleen Cusack & Megan Kirts

Advanced Placement - Cactus Wren Room 238

Designed for both on-level economics and AP Macroeconomics classrooms, this session will focus on the magic of trade, particularly trade based on comparative advantage. Attendees will experience a high-impact trade simulation and use the production possibilities curve to see how trade can improve outcomes for both trade partners. Participants will leave with two classroom-ready lesson plans that students will remember.

Who Pays for This? Teaching Economics Through Everyday Digital Life

Brian Flanigan-Arthurs & Danielle Bonfig

College, Career, and AI - Science Building Room 142

Students use free apps, streaming services, AI tools, and digital platforms every day, but rarely ask how they're funded. This session uses familiar examples to teach incentives, advertising, subscriptions, data monetization, taxation, and consumer behavior. Participants will explore classroom activities for grades K–12 and leave with engaging lessons that connect economics and personal finance to students' everyday lives.

Enter the Matrix - the Presidential Decision Matrix!

Debbie Henney

High School - Science Building Room 140

What does economics have to do with the presidency? Everything. This workshop uses economic reasoning to explore why the Constitution created a strong executive while limiting concentrated power. Through the Presidential Decision Matrix simulation, participants step into the role of president during a national crisis, weighing constitutional authority, trade-offs, and the tension between efficiency and liberty. Teachers will leave with an engaging activity that helps students analyze presidential power through both economic and constitutional lenses.

Check out ACEE's Academic Resources!

ACEE Money Minutes

ACEE KINDER - 12TH GRADE INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

ACEE Building Young Entrepreneurs

SJS proudly supports ACEE and Arizona educators!

SJS is pleased to support ACEE's efforts to expand economic and financial literacy and educator development throughout Arizona.

Advisor Austin Grizzell, CFP® and Senior Advisor Jennifer Smiljanich, CFP®

SJS Investment Services

Schedule a Discovery Meeting
sjsinvest.com | 602-682-5344

Serving Clients Across the U.S.
Sylvania | Perrysburg | Scottsdale | Chicago

Plenary Session

10:45am - 12:00pm

Keynote Speaker

Emmett Burnton

2025 AEF Arizona Teacher of the Year

Boulder Creek High School

AP World History & Dual Enrollment US History Teacher

Mr. Emmett Burnton's professional mission is centered on restoring humanism to the classroom and anchoring instruction in the realities of the human condition. Over the last decade at Boulder Creek High School, his pedagogical approach has prioritized authentic student engagement, encouraging critical thinking by integrating philosophy, history, and economics into a classroom grounded in engagement rather than compliance.

A lifelong resident of the Phoenix area, Mr. B's impact on the educational landscape has earned him state and national recognition. In 2025, he was named the Arizona Teacher of the Year and was subsequently awarded an honorary doctorate from Northern Arizona University for his contributions to the field of education. Most recently, he was granted the 2026 Travelers Awardee for Teaching Excellence, reflecting his ongoing commitment to elevating classroom leadership and pedagogy.

Mr. Burnton believes professional development shouldn't be about the type of teacher you want to be. It should be about the person you want to be. If education is about more than a curriculum, then our role as teachers needs to be about more than strategies and procedures.

Event Sponsors

Vanguard®

ECONIFUL
Empowering Economic Thinkers

CHASSE
BUILDING TEAM

Plenary Session

10:45am - 12:00pm

ACEE Teacher of the Year Panel

College, Career, and AI - Cactus Wren 240/242

Heidi Bonfante

Zel Fowler

Vicki Schomaker

Susan Spigelmire

What does great teaching look like in action? Hear from past ACEE Teachers of the Year as they share the strategies, lessons, and approaches that have made a difference in their classrooms. Panelists will offer practical ideas for engaging students, making economics and personal finance relevant, and creating meaningful learning experiences. Come ready to be inspired and leave with ideas you can put into practice in your own classroom.

Check out ACEE's Signature Programs!

ACEE Poster Contest

ACEE Financial Fitness in Action

ACEE Family Night

ACEE EconReads

ACEE ECONOMICS CHALLENGE

ACEE PERSONAL FINANCE CHALLENGE

Session 3

1:10pm - 2:00pm

School Participatory Budgeting: Experiential Civic and Economic Education

K - 12 - Science Building Room 143

Sabrina Estrada, Jackson Roberts, and Lisa Schwalger

Explore how School Participatory Budgeting (SPB) combines civic education, financial literacy, and economics through authentic student decision-making. Students propose, debate, and vote on how to spend part of their school's budget while developing leadership and critical thinking skills. Using Arizona implementation examples, including Chandler High School, participants will learn how SPB strengthens economics and government instruction and leave with practical strategies for bringing this model to their own schools.

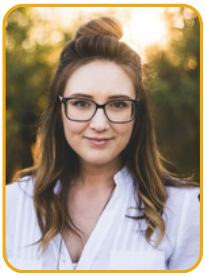
No Textbook, No Budget, No Problem: Teaching Macro with FRED

Kenneth Zarda

Advanced Placement - Science Building Room 142

Using the Federal Reserve's latest Beige Book, participants will explore how the Fed uses the discount rate, reserve requirements, and open market operations to influence the money supply. Attendees will role-play as leaders of one of the 12 Federal Reserve districts, recommend policy based on real economic conditions, then compare their decisions to the Fed's actual actions. This engaging simulation helps make monetary policy concrete and relevant for students.

From Classroom to Career: Introducing Students to Finance Pathways



Melissa Potts

High School - Science Building Room 140

Help students connect economics to careers in finance through a ready-to-use career pathway project. Participants will experience a student-centered worksheet exploring careers in banking, investing, financial planning, and fintech, while examining the education, skills, and economic concepts each requires. Teachers will leave with implementation strategies and a flexible project that can be integrated into existing economics units or used as a stand-alone activity.

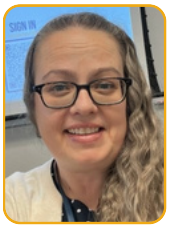
The Messy Economics of College Sports

Christi Carlson

High School - Cactus Wren 238

Want help teaching complex topics like monopsony, cartels, game theory, labor economics, and unintended consequences? Use college sports! The dramatic changes in college athletics—including NIL deals, revenue sharing, media contracts, and the recruiting "arms race"—provide engaging, real-world examples of supply and demand, market structures, workers' rights, and opportunity cost. Connect economics to the teams your students already follow.

AI Productivity for K-12 Educators: Tips and Tricks with Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini



Dr. Nan Williams & Rae Mask

College, Career, and AI - Cactus Wren Room 236

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have rapidly become powerful assistants that can transform the efficiency and creativity of K-12 educators. This hands-on workshop is designed to move beyond the fear and hype, offering practical, ethical, and effective strategies for integrating large language models like Claude, ChatGPT, and Gemini into your daily professional workflow.

Session 4

2:10pm - 3:00pm

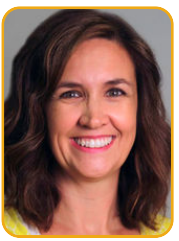
From Classroom Jobs to Postsecondary Careers: Creating a K–12 Classroom Economy

Vanessa Goolsby

Elementary - Cactus Wren Room 238

This professional development will equip K–12 educators with the tools and strategies to implement a classroom-based economic system using My Classroom Economy. Teachers will learn how to integrate financial literacy into daily instruction through authentic, hands-on experiences that promote responsibility, budgeting, and long-term planning.

M.A.P.S.: Bridging Social Studies with College & Career Pathways



Cheryl Jannuzzi & Maggie Fountain

College, Career, and AI - Science Building Room 142

How can districts connect social studies to postsecondary success? Learn how our district designed and implemented M.A.P.S. (Making A Plan for Success), a scalable model that integrates college, career, civic, and financial readiness into Government and Economics courses. Discover how real-world workshops and community partnerships increased FAFSA completion, strengthened postsecondary planning, and empowered students to take ownership of their futures.

Market Equilibrium - A Classroom Simulation

Aimee Jensen

High School - Science Building Room 141

Participants will be assigned roles as buyers and sellers as they enter the room. As with a real market, buyers will be looking to buy at the lowest possible price, while sellers will be trying to sell for the highest possible price. Both groups will interact and everyone will compete to make the most money. This will allow us to see how the interaction of individual interests shapes the equilibrium price for a good in a market.

Your Money Relationship: Conversations on Financial Wellness, Freedom, and Confidence

Melissa Woodforlk-Whyte

High School - Science Building Room 140

Your Money Relationship is a conversation-driven workshop that explores the emotional, cultural, and behavioral forces behind financial decisions. Based on Melissa's trauma-informed framework from The Different Relationships With Money, participants identify their dominant Money Relationship and learn practical strategies to build confidence, reduce financial stress, and make more intentional decisions. Through guided reflection and discussion, attendees gain greater self-awareness in a supportive, judgment-free environment.

Lessons Exploring AI and Economic Growth

Kathleen Cusack & Megan Kirts

High School - Cactus Wren 236

Help students explore how new technologies drive economic growth—and who benefits or is harmed along the way. Participants will experience two classroom-ready lessons: a card sort on the determinants of national wealth and an AI simulation where students analyze the costs and benefits of technological change from the perspectives of businesses and workers. Teachers will leave with engaging activities that help students evaluate innovation and economic trade-offs.

Vocabulary in Action: Engaging Activities that Deepen Understanding

Robin Palmer

Elementary - Science Building Room 143

This interactive session features a variety of hands-on vocabulary activities designed to help students build deeper understanding of key concepts for any content. Participants will experience engaging individual and collaborative activities that promote active learning, strengthen academic language, and support long-term retention. Walk away with ready-to-use resources and adaptable ideas that make vocabulary instruction more meaningful, engaging, and accessible for learners across grade levels.

FT SCHOOLS

FREE FT ACCESS FOR SECONDARY / HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Find out more

The Financial Times, in partnership with Nomura, is proud to offer schools teaching 16-19 year old students free access to FT.com.

Over 85,000 students at 6,500 schools already have free access to FT.com.

Join them by registering at ft.com/schoolsarefree

Supported by

NOMURA

Arizona Economic Education Teacher of the Year Finalists

Elementary/Middle School Division

Cinnamon Conrad

Alice Vail Middle School

"When students understand how math applies outside the classroom, they become more engaged and confident."

Lori Glover

Mountain Sky Junior High

"Financial literacy empowers students to manage their well-being effectively and attain long-term objectives."

Arizona Economic Education Teacher of the Year Finalists

High School Division

Albie Ettinger

Corona del Sol High School

"This knowledge leads to financial empowerment and will allow our students to make confident career and financial decisions as they enter the workforce."

Lisa Jahn

Kofa High School

"By equipping students with economic and financial literacy skills, education becomes a powerful tool to break cycles of poverty."

Mitch Pinda

Valley Vista High School

"Financial literacy empowers students to take ownership of their futures and focuses on building their confidence and financial goals."

Jeffrey Vetnar

Boulder Creek High School

"Teaching students how to budget, save, invest, and make informed economic decisions is no longer optional. It is essential for long-term success and stability."

ACEE

Sharing success with you

Members. Community. Team.

We are proud to support **Arizona Council on Economic Education** as part of our mission to strengthen our communities and empower financial well-being.

desertFINANCIAL™

DesertFinancial.com/SharingSuccess

Federally insured by NCUA | Equal Housing Opportunity

Professional Development Programs

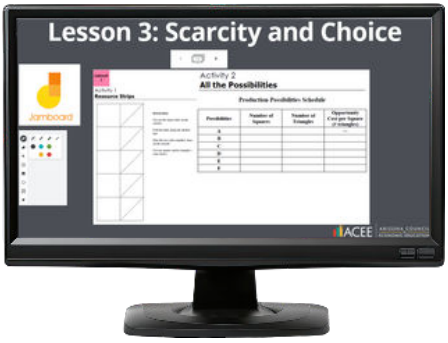
Arizona Standards-Aligned PD for K-12 Teachers in Economics, Finance, Math & Entrepreneurship.

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.

In-Person Workshops



Online Workshops

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!

- The ACEE Staff

Elena Zee

Sarah Grado

Kathy Pondy

Donna Dempsey

Teojia Williamson

Robin Palmer

Jen Senatore

Jamiela Jones

ACEE | ARIZONA COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION

SHARE

Our impact grows through personal referrals.

Invite a teacher, principal, district administrator, or community partner to connect with us on social media.