



**Junior  
Achievement™**



**JA FINANCE PARK®**

**VIRTUAL ADVANCED SIMULATION  
2021 - 2022**

# Executive Summary

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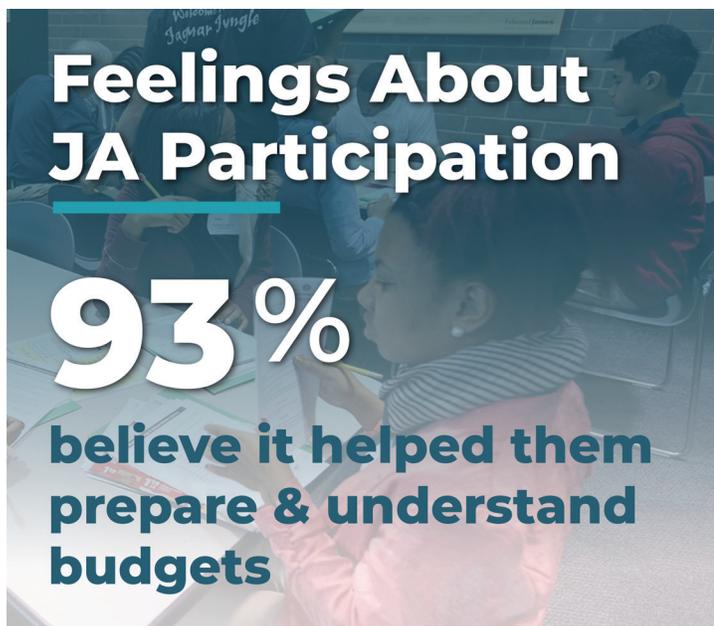
Junior Achievement (JA) is the nation's largest non-profit organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their futures, and make smart academic and economic choices. Spanning the U.S. in 103 locations in 42 states, volunteers 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® Advanced* is the capstone program for high 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 budget based on the life stage, career, lifestyle, and financial goals selected. Students who take part in the *JA Finance Park Virtual Advanced* simulation receive a simulated life profile based on the responses they provide to the various career and lifestyle questions asked. Students are taught to recognize the impact of credit history on budget planning and purchasing options.

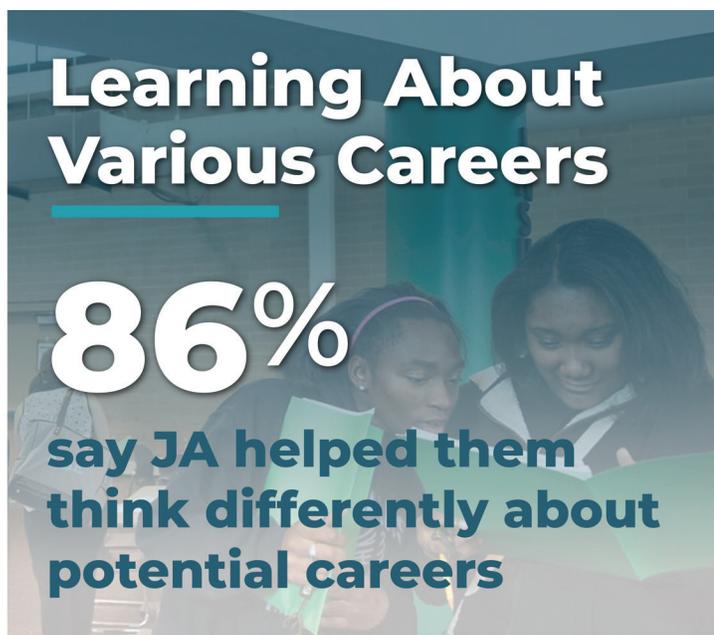
During the 2021-22 academic school year, students from many JA Areas across the U.S. participated in the *JA Finance Park® Advanced* capstone program. The in-class curriculum focuses on personal financial planning and career exploration with a personal focus. At the culmination of the program, students participate in a virtual experience in which they practice what they have learned by developing and committing to a personal budget during simulation in which they select their career and define their future lifestyle and financial goals. The simulation allows students to see the long-term impact of their education, savings, and credit decisions. 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 participating in the simulation.

This executive summary provides findings from attitudinal questions asked of *JA Finance Park® Virtual Advanced* 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.



## Key Findings

- » After the simulation, the majority (93.2%) 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 (85.5%) of students responded that learning about the various career clusters helped them to think differently about potential careers and 82.9% of students said the simulation motivated them to spend more time considering and exploring those careers.



### Learning About Various Careers

# 86%

say JA helped them think differently about potential careers



### Confidence About Budgets

# 87%

believe the simulation prepared them for future budgeting



- » 87% percent of students who responded they were not confident in their ability to budget prior to the *JA Finance Park® Virtual Advanced* simulation indicated that they believed the simulation prepared them for future budgeting challenges.
- » 77.2% 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.
- » Seven out of 10 students (71.4%) who responded that budgeting was not important prior to the simulation indicated that the simulation prepared them for future budgeting challenges.

# Methodology

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## Data Collection and Questions

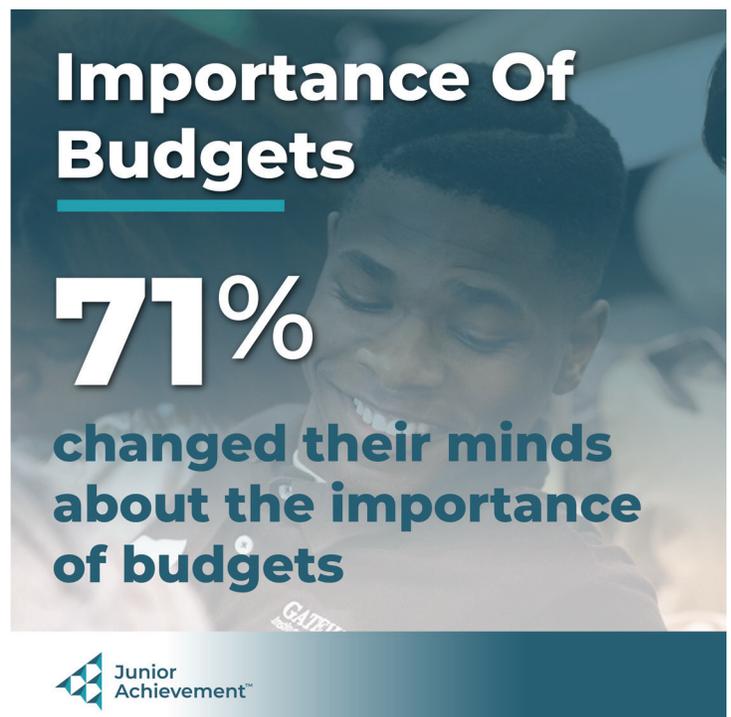
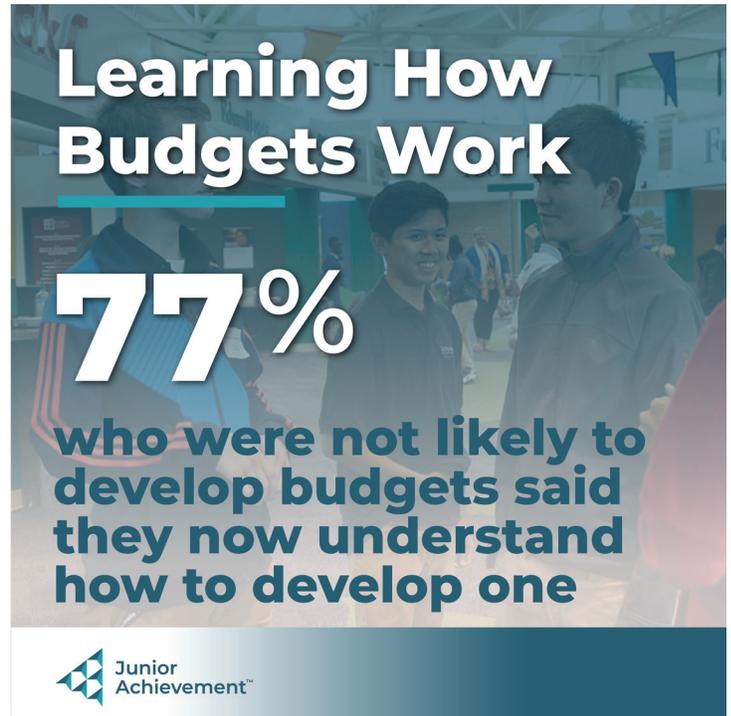
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Questions are coded into the *JA Finance Park® Virtual Advanced* simulation and data were collected and stored in a data repository while the students were participating in the simulation. Three attitudinal questions were asked of program participants before they engaged in the simulation, one knowledge question was asked in the middle of the simulation depending upon the life stage selected, and six attitudinal questions were asked upon completion of the simulation. Participation rates of students among the JA Areas varied.

## Analysis Plan

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Descriptive statistical methods were conducted to gain an understanding of students' attitudes before and after participating in the simulation. Because the questions asked before and after the simulation were not identical, attitude change could not be accurately measured. However, many of the pre- and post-simulation questions were semantically related to one another so conclusions could be drawn from a comparison of the related responses. Only a single knowledge question was asked in the middle of the simulation depending upon the life stage selected in the simulation; consequently, no information about the change in fund of knowledge could be determined. As a proxy for knowledge, the percentage of students selecting each of the options was calculated and reported for each knowledge item.





*JA Finance Park® Virtual Advanced Simulation*  
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