

State of Tennessee
David H. Lillard, Jr., State Treasurer

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Tennessee Takes Lead in Financial Literacy Education

Thanks to the work of the General Assembly, State Treasurer David H. Lillard, Jr. said Tennessee has become a national leader in financial literacy education almost overnight.

The General Assembly approved legislation, supported by the Treasury Department, which puts Tennessee on a path that will lead it to become the first state in the country to take significant steps to increase financial literacy in elementary school.

The legislation, which was recently signed into law by Gov. Bill Haslam, will require the State Board of Education to develop guidelines for teaching about personal finance - with input from the Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission. The Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation administratively attached to the Tennessee Treasury Department.

The law also directs the Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission to study how teachers can incorporate personal finance standards into reading, language arts and math classes for grades K-8. The commission could then use the results of such a study to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and Department of Education for consideration of statewide applicability.

The Tennessee Financial Literacy Commission will also have the ability to report to the State Board of Education and the Department of Education a process by which to include financial literacy concepts in standardized achievement testing for grades five and eight. These basic concepts would include: decision making, earning income, saving and spending, use of credit and budgeting.

“This is an extremely important development for the future of education in our state,” Treasurer Lillard said. “It is crucial for people to begin developing financial literacy skills while they are still young in order to make wise choices when they reach adulthood. This legislation ensures financial literacy will be part of the elementary school curriculum, as it should be. I want to thank the members of the General Assembly for their foresight in approving this legislation and in particular the primary sponsors, Sen. Doug Overbey and Rep. Jim Coley, for their work in shepherding their bill through the legislative process.”

“Financial literacy education is critical for our students and I applaud efforts taken by the State Treasurer and General Assembly to assure this will take place in elementary school through high school,” said Sen. Doug Overbey. “In a state that ranks near the top in personal bankruptcy filings, financial literacy education will work proactively and hopefully help all students in handling of their personal finances.”

“I believe this new law is a significant step to increase financial literacy in Tennessee,” Rep. Coley said. “This law puts Tennessee at the forefront nationally of financial literacy education. It is also a foundation from which we can adopt further reforms in the future.”

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