



PRESS RELEASE

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GROWING NUMBER OF SCHOOLS NATIONWIDE USING MY CLASSROOM ECONOMY TO TEACH BASIC FINANCIAL SKILLS

No time like the present for K-12 teachers to begin using free program

VALLEY FORGE, PA (September 26, 2012)—A fourth grade math student last spring at Stephen A. Decatur Elementary School in Philadelphia knew his teacher would be auctioning off an iPod Shuffle to conclude the class' financial literacy program, My Classroom Economy. He saved and managed the \$10,000 in program money that he earned through class activities and homework bonuses to bid in—and win—the auction, forgoing shorter-term, frivolous program-related purchases he could have made in the meantime. Like many of the other students, he learned basic financial skills, as well as improved his math skills and work ethic as a result of the program.

Even though the new school year is underway, there is still time for K-12 teachers across the country to incorporate My Classroom Economy into their curriculum. It is free, easily adaptable, and experiential, providing the tools for students to routinely practice financial skills. It is also designed to be integrated across subjects and meets many [common core curriculum](#) and [personal finance education](#) standards.

With My Classroom Economy, teachers introduce key financial concepts that students can carry into their adult lives. “Learning how to make good investment decisions is important, but before many people can do that, they need to develop good foundational habits,” said Shannon Nutter-Wiersbitzky, a Vanguard senior manager who led the Vanguard employees who created the program. “Learning those skills when you’re young gives you the chance to practice before you face major financial decisions as an adult.”

My Classroom Economy is a simulated economic system in which students are paid school dollars, earned from classroom jobs and exceptional performance. In addition to using the money to rent their desks, students also have opportunities to spend their money at a class store or auction where grade-appropriate items like markers, small toys, and lunch with the principal are sold, and in the process learn the value of saving, budgeting and delaying gratification. Alternatively, they can choose to save money by not buying at all, or delaying purchases.

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The program, which includes an instructive website, [program guides](#), and [student materials](#), can be downloaded, free of charge, at www.myclassroomeconomy.org. Educators are not required to give their personal information unless they opt for Vanguard to print and send them the materials.

Megan Kauffman is the fourth grade teacher at Stephen A. Decatur School in Philadelphia who participated in the My Classroom Economy pilot during the 2011-2012 school year. “As teachers, we need to find inventive ways to keep the students engaged in and excited about learning. My students took to the program quickly because it was fun and real—they saw that in order to participate in weekly auctions they needed to earn money by completing assignments, classroom jobs, and other activities. I saw them really grasp basic financial concepts and have fun at the same time, with about half of the students showing improvement in their math skills and overall work ethic as a result of the program,” she said.

While Ms. Kauffman purchased the iPod Shuffle and gift cards for the final auction, she auctioned off free prizes like homework passes, computer time, and lunch with the teacher throughout the school year . “The program takes very little time and money to incorporate into the classroom—a great thing for teachers!” she noted.

My Classroom Economy builds on [teaching concepts](#) developed by Los Angeles award-winning teacher [Rafe Esquith](#), who is widely recognized for his innovative and successful teaching techniques. Hundreds of teachers across the country have already used Mr. Esquith’s concepts in their classrooms.

New this year: investment simulator for older students

The program adapts to the increasing sophistication of students as they grow older. In grades 11 and 12, students are introduced to investing and begin to work with an investment simulator to choose an asset mix and watch how their account grows or declines. The simulator reinforces a long-term focus on investment results by showing 32 years of investing in 32 weeks of the school year, based on historical returns of stocks and bonds.

About Vanguard

Vanguard, headquartered in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, is one of the world’s largest investment management companies, and one of the Delaware Valley’s largest employers. Vanguard manages more than \$1.9 trillion in U.S. mutual fund assets, including more than \$220 billion in ETF assets. Vanguard offers more than 170 index and actively managed funds to U.S. investors and more than 60 additional funds in non-U.S. markets. For more information, please visit www.vanguard.com.

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All Vanguard asset figures are as of August 31, 2012, unless otherwise noted.