

## Evaluation Results

### JA Really Works Over Time!

The current high stakes accountability movement in American education is causing educators to look at Junior Achievement's programs with a more critical eye than in the past. **Junior Achievement (JA) has a strong commitment to program evaluation to support program improvement and accountability.** The Worldwide Institute for Research and Evaluation (WIRE), in collaboration with the JA Headquarters Education Group, has conducted numerous nationwide evaluation studies over the course of several years in order to assess the cumulative effects and long-term impact on students who participated in JA programs. By utilizing consistent methods and reporting practices, WIRE was able to aggregate the findings from these evaluations and conclude that **JA programs are successful in raising students' school and career aspirations; teaching students economics and finance knowledge; and developing students' job-related skills.**

In a 2001-2002 study, WIRE surveyed 750 JA students when they were in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. These students had participated in JA during the 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and many had participated in JA programs in previous grades as well. When asked to explain **the free enterprise system**, students who had participated in **JA demonstrated a much broader understanding** and provided more sophisticated responses than did students who had not participated in JA. When the JA students were asked about their school and work attitudes, 86 percent of 6<sup>th</sup> graders, 73 percent of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and 40 percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated that **JA had positively influenced their attitudes toward school.** In addition, 79 percent of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade JA students suggested that JA had increased their positive attitudes toward working.

In a 2002-2003 study, WIRE surveyed the same 750 students when they were in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 10<sup>th</sup> grade or first year post-high school. At this time, these students had all completed JA programs two years previously (with some having completed additional programs during the interim). This study compared the JA students to students in general, as represented by data from a nationwide survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education.

The 2002-2003 study compared the JA students to students in general on a number of school performance and success indicators, such as academic honors, computer skills, and taking personal responsibility for their own behavior. **The JA students were more likely to receive academic honors or recognition for good grades** than were same-age students in general. The JA students were also **more likely to rate their computer skills as high.** The more JA experience the students had, the higher they rated their computer skills. In addition, the more JA programs students had experienced, the more likely they were to **report taking personal responsibility for their own behavior**, a characteristics that has been correlated to success in adult life.

The JA 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders and post-high school students responded to questions about their attitudes and aspirations regarding education. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade **JA students**, as compared to students in general, were significantly **more likely to believe that they would graduate from high school, pursue postsecondary education, and graduate college.** Ninety-seven percent of those having more than three JA experiences were very sure that they would graduate from high school, compared to 81 percent of students who had participated in only one JA program. JA students were also much more confident about their ability to complete college. Eight-six percent were very confident, as compared to 12 percent of a comparison group who were very confident about completing college. The post-high school students also reported having benefited from JA experiences, stating that **JA had affected the decisions they were currently making and better prepared them to make future decisions.** JA post-high school students also indicated that **JA had made the transition to college easier**, by encouraging them to work hard (at school and on the job), and **providing them with information that was relevant to their classes and work roles.**

Full evaluation reports may be accessed at [www.ja.org](http://www.ja.org), under the programs tab.