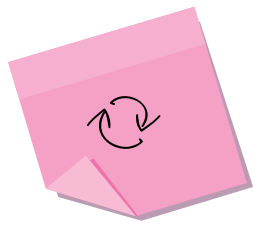


School Programs That Make Sense

Products geared toward students help build financial loyalty and commitment
By Rebecca Wessler

Credit unions across the county are showing their school spirit in several ways. From low-rate student loans to school-themed credit cards, from checking and savings accounts developed to help students save money to programs staffed by young members, credit unions are making smart money management easy for everyone. With the variety of programs available, it is impossible to choose and rank the best, so here is just a sampling of credit unions that are making the grade.



PROGRAMS THAT GIVE BACK

Mission Federal Credit Union (\$2B, San Diego, CA) gives new members a chance to support local education through its Mission 4 R School program.

THE GIST

- » Mission deposits \$25 into the new member's Mission Fed checking account and donates \$25 to the member's school of choice.
- » Checking account must remain open a minimum of 90 days.
- » Within the first 90 days, the account must receive a direct deposit of at least \$100 or three qualified transactions, i.e. bill pay or signature-based check card.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Donations can go to local elementary, middle or high schools as well as colleges and universities.
- » Funds can be used to support academic and physical fitness programs.
- » Members must be 18 years old and not a current signor on a Mission Fed checking account.

TBA Credit Union (\$130M, Traverse City, MI) offers several programs that benefit its local educators and educational institutions.

THE GIST: Educator's Choice Checking

- » Free checking account with no minimum balance requirement and unlimited Spirit Checks (see below).
- » Free online banking and bill pay.
- » Overdraft line of credit.

NOTABLE FEATURES:

- » "Hall Pass" returns one non sufficient fund fee per school year.
- » Educator's Choice Perk Card comes with special offers for local businesses.
- » Discounts on select loans, bonuses on CDs and premium rates on deferred compensation accounts.

THE GIST: Classroom Grants

- » School employees within a five-county area can apply for up to \$500.
- » Open to public, private, charter and parochial institutions.
- » Grants can be used to fund a variety of projects, from field trips to textbooks.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » TBA donates \$25 to the grant program when a member opens an Educator's Choice checking account.
- » Applicants must specify how the grant will benefit students and impact their future.
- » Grants must relate to classroom instruction and serve the interests and needs of students.

THE GIST: Spirit Checks

- » Members show school pride with checks imprinted with their school's logo.
- » For every box of school checks ordered, TBA donates \$2 to that school.
- » Checks cost approximately \$20 for a box of 175.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Any member can use spirit checks: parents, faculty, administrators, students... anyone.
- » Logos for 14 schools are available.
- » Adding a school is an easy process. The credit union asks for the logo and a signed authorization from a school administrator.

THE GIST: Deferred Compensation

- » Retirement savings plan exclusively for school employees.
- » No minimum balance required to open.
- » No annual maintenance fees.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Educators who defer a portion of wages each pay period may lower their taxable income.
- » No taxes on contributions or earnings until funds are withdrawn.



FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

Alternatives Federal Credit Union (\$64M, Ithaca, NY) teaches its youngest community members about the importance of developing good savings habits through its Student Credit Unions program, a financial experience designed exclusively for members younger than 19 and staffed by school-aged volunteers.

THE GIST

- » Students can open an account with a \$1 deposit and a \$2 membership fee.
- » No minimum balance, no monthly fee checking accounts require a co-signer for students younger than 18.
- » Dollars for Dreams (for elementary and middle school students) has five

school branch locations; student Credit Union (for high school students) has two school branch locations.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Student savings accounts earn a higher interest rate than the credit union's regular savings accounts.
- » Personal loans are available up to \$500. Co-signers are required for students younger than 18.
- » A student credit card with no annual fee is available by application.



STUDENT CHECKING/SAVINGS

Apple Federal Credit Union (\$1.2B, Fairfax, VA) teaches its young members to be fiscally conscious by providing competitive interest rates on savings and credit accounts and rewards for checking accounts.

THE GIST

- » Student savings account pays 4.00 APY% on balances up to \$1,500.
- » No annual fee and a credit line up to \$1,500 with student Visa. Fixed 9.90% APR until the card holder turns 25.
- » Student checking requires no minimum balance or monthly fees.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Every dollar spent using Apples' student checking earns rewards points.
- » Free online bill pay with student checking.
- » No balance transfer fee on the student Visa.

Carolina Collegiate Federal Credit Union's (\$73M, Columbia, SC) Stress Free Student Checking offers a range of e-services to make account information easily accessible.

THE GIST

- » No minimum balance.
- » No monthly service charge fees.
- » No per check charge.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Use text messaging to find an ATM within the 25,000 no surcharge network.
- » Facebook access to CFCU's My Money service.
- » Free e-bill pay service.

Oklahoma Employees Credit Union (\$299M, Oklahoma City, OK) gives its student members incentives to open a student account.

THE GIST

- » Accounts opened with a \$25 deposit receive an iTunes gift card.
- » No monthly service charge.
- » No minimum balance.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Unlimited surcharge-free ATM withdrawals.
- » Eligibility for a \$1,000 scholarship.
- » Free subscription to brass, a lifestyle money magazine written for young adults by young adults.

Student Federal Credit Union at the University of Pennsylvania (\$5.1M, Philadelphia, PA) gives students a chance to flash their school pride as they access their money.

THE GIST

- » Competitive interest rates on savings and checking accounts.
- » Debit card comes free with the student checking account.
- » Free online banking, e-statements, direct deposit and bill pay.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » SFCU can link student checking accounts and PennCards (student ID).
- » Free checking withdrawal using a PennCard from select on-campus ATMs.
- » Free checking withdrawal from a network of more than 32,000 ATMs.

STUDENT LOAN PROGRAMS



Alliant Credit Union (\$6.7B, Chicago, IL) offers a student loan that can be used for tuition and expenses at secondary as well as primary educational institutions.

THE GIST

- » As low as 3.75% APR
- » Up to \$75,000 available
- » Can stretch repayment over 12 years

NOTABLE FEATURES

- » Loan can be used for college, graduate and private K-12 programs
- » Variable rate starts at prime +.5%
- » Terms are based on credit, not need

HOLISTIC PROGRAMS

Holistic Programs Meet the Needs of ALL Members

By Rebecca Wessler

Students aren't the only ones who need a bit of budgeting advice. Educators can often find themselves tightening their belt during the summer months when schools – and paychecks – are on hiatus. SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union (\$7.8B Santa Ana, CA) offers a holistic program that embraces the needs of the entire spectrum. It caters to students through a bundle of savings, checking and loan options for members up to 17 years old without neglecting the financial difficulties for educators who are on a 10- or 11-month pay schedule.

THE GIST

Junior Varsity (up to 12 years old) and Varsity (13-17 years old) savings accounts.

- » \$5 opening deposit required for savings accounts.
- » Free checking available to Varsity members 16 or older; \$25 minimum opening deposit required.
- » Daily ATM withdrawal amounts are limited by member's age.

Educators Paycheck Planner (for public school employees)

- » Account funds automatically deposited through direct deposit only.
- » No withdrawals allowed.
- » Additional deposit of \$3,000 allowed once per year.

Educators Summer Saver (for all school employees)

- » Account funds automatically deposited through payroll deduction or direct deposit, \$50-2,000.
- » Penalty-free withdrawals available year round.
- » Account funds automatically transferred to share account on any date from June 1-August 31.

NOTEABLE FEATURES

- » For educators, loans specifically tailored to cover the costs of classroom supplies, computer upgrades and/or replacement and continuing education are available.
- » For students, share secured loans are available for members up to 12 years old with a qualified co-borrower; personal loans are available for 13- to 17-year-old members with a qualified co-borrower.

American Eagle Federal Credit Union (\$1.5B, East Hartford, CT) offers a student loan program framed by the Credit Union League of Connecticut that is designed for students who either do not qualify for traditional loans or have exhausted their resources.

THE GIST

- » Program is offered as a personal loan with a preferred rate
- » Rate capped at 6% (for deferred payments) and 5.75% (for non-deferred payment)
- » Open to students who live or go to school in Connecticut.

NOTEABLE FEATURES

- » Program is available for one year only (extension is possible).
- » Connecticut Health & Education Facilities Authority guarantees 20% of the loan.
- » Although it is a group program, individual credit unions determine policy and procedure.

NASA Federal Credit Union (\$1.1B, Bowie, MD) partners with other credit unions to offer the Student Choice Loan Program, which helps fill the gaps left by federal aid.

THE GIST

- » Interest rates as low as 6.0 APR.
- » Up to \$75,000 line of credit available.
- » Deferred and flexible repayment options; terms up to 25 years.

NOTEABLE FEATURES

- » No origination fees
- » Students can apply online or over the phone
- » NASA Federal urges students to apply for scholarships, complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and fully maximum the Federal Stafford Loan program. ▲

