

# Why JA?

## Graduation Rates & College Readiness

### The Challenge

According to the **U.S. Department of Education**, the high school graduation rate hit a record high of 82 percent in the 2013-14 school year.<sup>1</sup> Despite this positive news, the overall graduation rate is still off pace to achieve the **GradNation** campaign's goal of 90 percent by 2020. The graduation rates of African-American and Hispanic students are also improving; however, they remain behind those of their white peers.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, once graduating high school, only 59 percent of students enrolling in college complete a four-year degree within six years, according to the **National Center for Education Statistics**.<sup>3</sup>

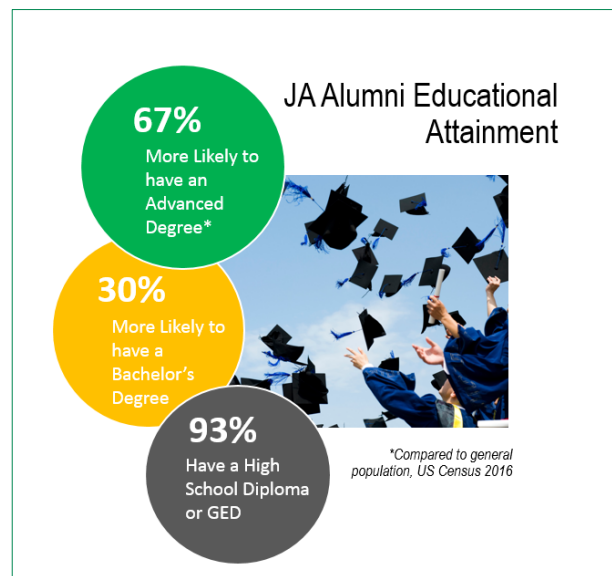
### The Role of JA

The mission of Junior Achievement (JA) is to inspire and prepare young people for success. JA does this by bringing volunteer role models from the community into the classroom to share their experiences with students and to facilitate JA's proven programs. The programs, which cover financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship, help students make the connection between what they learn in school and how it applies to their lives. The JA experience helps students better understand the importance of school as a means to becoming successful adults.

### Proof of Impact

The JA experience has been shown to influence positive behavioral outcomes using scientifically valid evaluation. JA programs increase knowledge and influence attitudes in a way that results in students' increased self-efficacy. This fosters self-belief and sense of purpose which are necessary for students to overcome challenges that might otherwise prevent them from graduating high school or succeeding at higher education. A 2016-17 evaluation shows that JA Alumni have larger high school graduation rates and higher education completion rates than those of the general U.S. population.

Simply said, Junior Achievement works.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-high-school-graduation-rate-hits-new-record-high-0>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/12/high-school-grad-rate-increasing/420660/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40>