



# Expanding the Accounting Profession Pipeline

2024 Update

April 2025



**CAQ**

# About the Center for Audit Quality

The Center for Audit Quality (CAQ) is a nonpartisan public policy organization serving as the voice of U.S. public company auditors and matters related to the audits of public companies. The CAQ promotes high-quality performance by U.S. public company auditors; convenes capital market stakeholders to advance the discussion of critical issues affecting audit quality, U.S. public company reporting, and investor trust in the capital markets; and using independent research and analyses, champions policies and standards that bolster and support the effectiveness and responsiveness of U.S. public company auditors and audits to dynamic market conditions.

## About EDGE Research

Edge Research is a small, woman-owned marketing research firm based in Arlington, VA celebrating our 25th anniversary this year. We provide customized, full-service marketing and product development research across a range of industries including education, non-profits, and trade and professional associations. Our education practice encompasses early childhood, K-12 curriculum products and education policy; higher education marketing, branding and program development; and career, technical and adult learning products. For non-profits and associations, we lead research on member acquisition and retention, program development, and member services and advocacy.

Please note that this publication is intended as general information and should not be relied on as being definitive or all-inclusive. As with all other CAQ resources, this publication is not authoritative, and readers are urged to refer to relevant rules and standards. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. The CAQ makes no representations, warranties, or guarantees about, and assumes no responsibility for, the content or application of the material contained herein. The CAQ expressly disclaims all liability for any damages arising out of the use of, reference to, or reliance on this material. This publication does not represent an official position of the CAQ, its board, or its members.

# Contents

4

Introduction

4

Research Methodologies

5

The College and Career Journey

7

Career Field Preferences

12

Effectiveness of Messaging

14

Influencers and Touchpoints

17

Key Implications and Opportunities

18

Conclusion

# Introduction



In 2022 the Center for Audit Quality (CAQ), in collaboration with major employers and institutions in the accounting profession, launched a nationwide campaign to raise awareness and dispel outdated, though deeply ingrained, perceptions of what it means to be an accountant. The problem? An aging workforce nearing retirement and a generation of young people who lacked meaningful connections to the accounting profession. The accounting talent pipeline was suffering from a brand image problem that added to the growing gap between the demand for accountants and the number of accountants entering the workforce. To change the narrative Accounting+ launched with the goal of opening high school and early college students to the many exciting, diverse and lucrative career options that accounting offers. While the past several years have brought increased momentum in addressing persistent gaps in the talent pipeline, sustained commitment and innovative approaches are still

needed to attract, develop, and retain diverse talent for the future of accounting.

Building on [research](#) commissioned by the CAQ in 2021–2022, Edge Research conducted a comprehensive follow-up study in 2024 to assess progress, identify persistent challenges, and uncover new opportunities to attract diverse talent to the accounting profession. The research specifically focused on Black and Hispanic student populations, where the pipeline shortage has been most significant, while also gathering insights from Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) and White students for comparison.

This update aims to understand the evolving student mindset, track changes in perceptions about accounting, and identify effective messaging strategies that could lead to an increase in a more diverse talent pool entering the profession.

## Research Methodologies



Edge Research employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gain comprehensive insights into students' perceptions of accounting careers. The quantitative component consisted of an online survey conducted from November 12 to December 3, 2024, with 3,487 high school and college students across the United States, including substantial samples of Black/African American (1,044), Hispanic (1,020), AAPI (403), and White students (960). This survey tracked key metrics against baseline data from 2021 to 2022 and examined college and career decision journeys, accounting perceptions, barriers to entry, and messaging effectiveness across various educational levels.

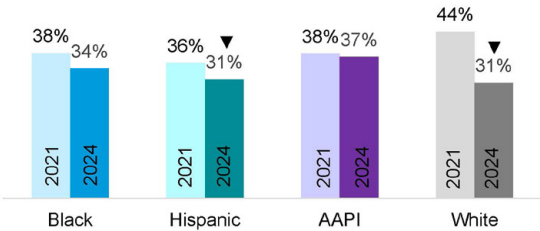
After this broad data collection, Edge Research conducted four virtual focus groups in January 2025 with Black and Hispanic high school students (divided between freshmen and sophomores and juniors and seniors) to explore these themes in greater depth. All focus group participants were college bound and open to business careers, with diverse representation across gender, region, and school types. This complementary qualitative research provided contextual understanding and richer insights into the quantitative findings, particularly regarding how messaging and career information resonate with untapped student audiences the accounting profession aims to attract.

# The College and Career Journey

## REACHING STUDENTS EARLIER

High school is a crucial window of opportunity to engage students about the possibility of a career in accounting, according to the research. The findings reveal two important trends in the timing of students' major selection. First, there has been an overall decline in high school students deciding on their college major, primarily driven by decreased certainty among male students. However, among those students who do decide on a major during high school, approximately 44% are now making this decision during their freshman and sophomore years (up from 1 in 3 in 2021). This trend toward earlier decision making among decided students is consistent across all demographic groups studied. These insights emphasize that outreach efforts promoting accounting as a career path must target students earlier in their high school journey, particularly during freshman and sophomore years, when they are actively forming their academic and career identities and making decisions that will shape their future educational paths.

**% Set on a Major in High School**  
*High School Students Only*



**When Decided on Major**  
*Among High School Students Set on a Major*

	Black		Hispanic		AAPI		White	
	2021 (n=242)	2024 (n=212)	2021 (n=234)	2024 (n=191)	2021 (n=70)	2024 (n=93)	2021 (n=175)	2024 (n=181)
Before HS	32%	33%	31%	29%	31%	29%	33%	30%
Freshman/ Sophomore Year	35%	44%▲	35%	44%▲	31%	41%	31%	44%▲
Junior/ Senior Year	28%	20%▼	30%	25%	31%	28%	33%	25%



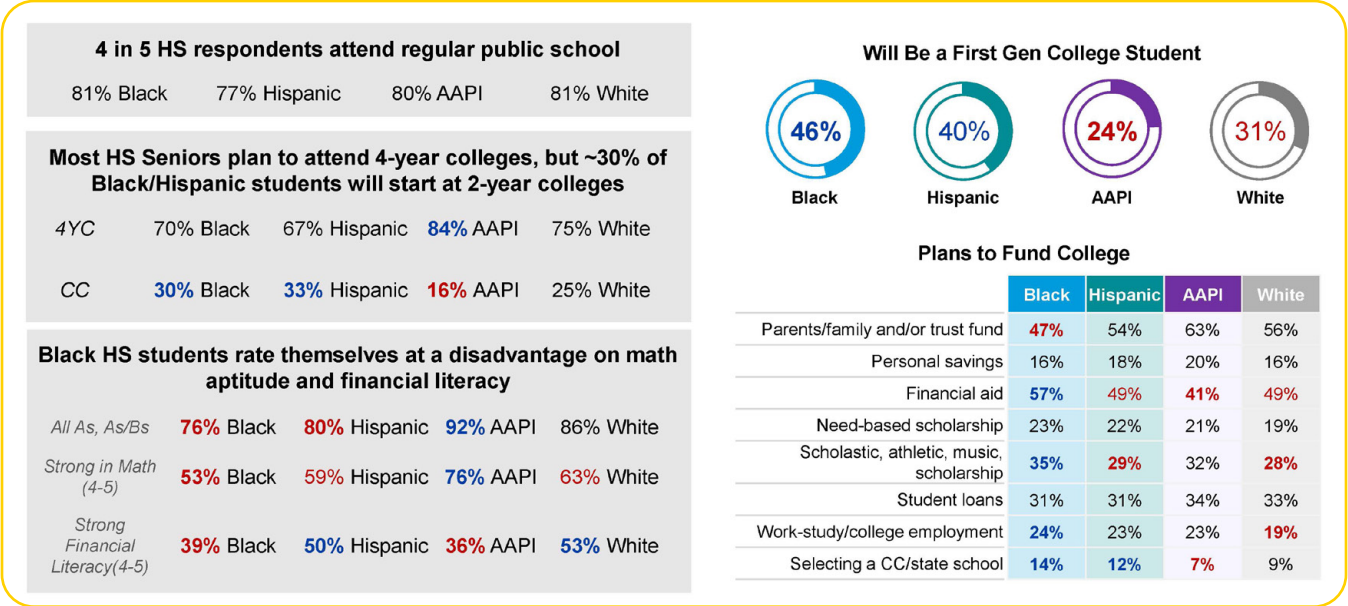
# A TALE OF TWO EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS



The landscape of higher education reveals distinct pathways for students often shaped by socioeconomic status and race. Research illuminates how Black and Hispanic students navigate distinctly different educational pathways, with nearly half (46%) of Black students and 40% of Hispanic students poised to become first-generation college graduates—significantly higher than their AAPI (24%) and White (31%) peers. This educational journey often begins at community colleges, with approximately one-third of Black and Hispanic high school seniors planning to start their higher education at two-year institutions. Financial considerations weigh heavily in these decisions, with 57% of Black high school students depending on financial aid to fund their college aspirations. Distinct from the structural challenges facing first-generation college students when applying to and funding higher education is the self-perception gaps in academic readiness, particularly in mathematics. In the research, 53% of Black students report strong math skills compared with 76% of AAPI students. This confidence gap extends across all student groups regarding financial literacy, suggesting a universal need for economic education. These self-assessments not only influence immediate career trajectories but also present meaningful opportunities for targeted interventions that could help level the playing field through customized support systems and empowering messaging.

I’ve been doing community college through my high school for the past two years, so I almost have my associate’s degree.... I’m just gonna do another year there and then transfer to another business school.

Hispanic/Latino 12th Grader



# Career Field Preferences

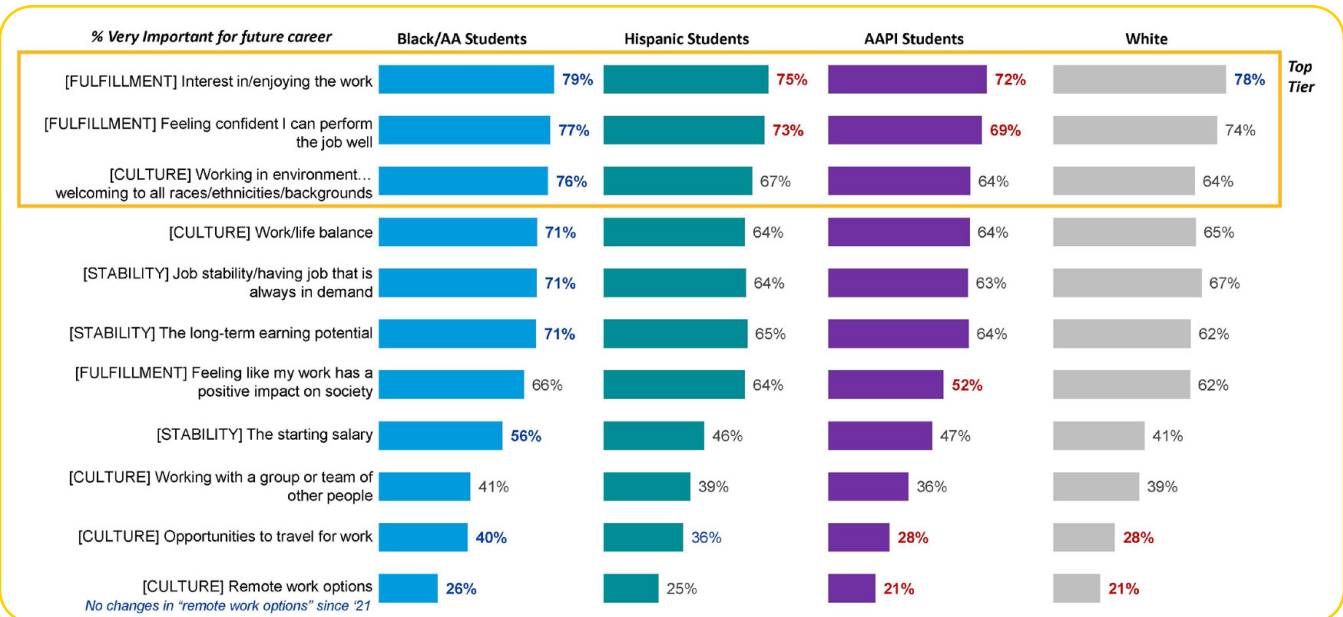
## ECONOMIC PRIORITIES ON THE RISE

Edge Research confirms that today's students continue to prioritize fulfillment, stability, and culture when considering their future careers. Consistent with findings from the 2022 study, working in an inclusive environment remains paramount for this generation of students. However, since 2021, starting salaries and long-term earning potential have become even more important career priorities for students, particularly for Black students. This shift likely reflects growing economic uncertainty, increasing costs of college education, and concerns about student debt burden. While enjoyment of work remains the number one career priority across all student groups (cited by approximately 75% of respondents), economic considerations have gained prominence. These findings suggest that messaging focusing on the financial rewards of accounting has become particularly relevant in the current economic climate.



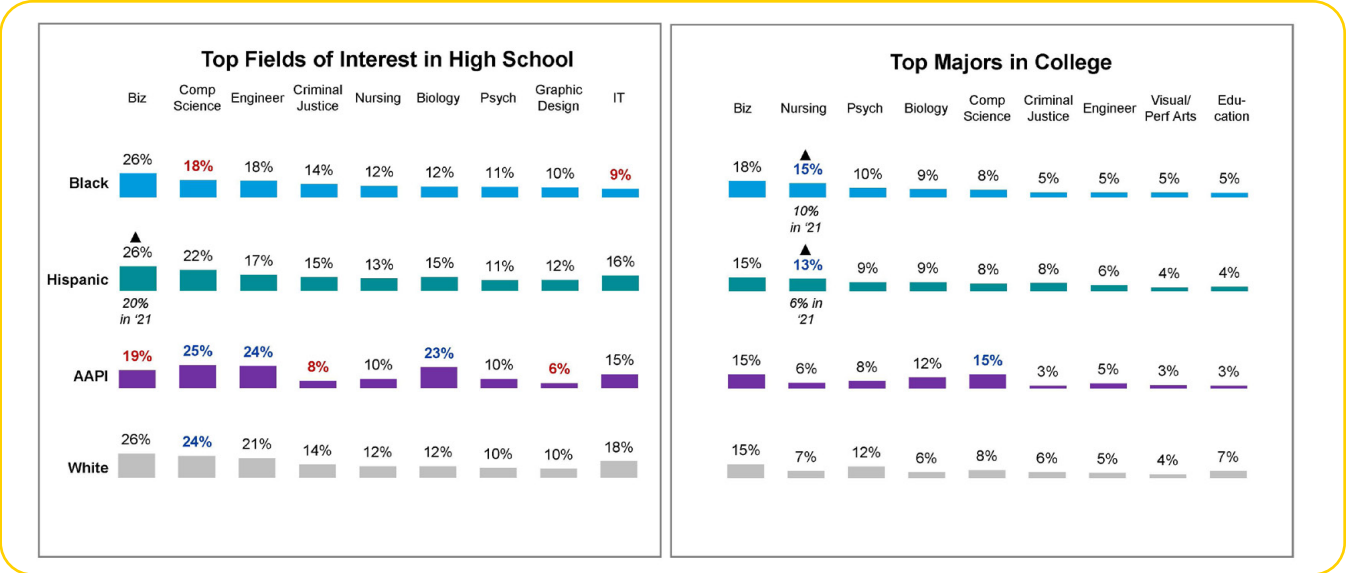
I'd really just like to make enough to support myself and anybody I have around me since, you know... the housing crisis that's going on, and I assume it'll get worse, so I want a stable job.

Black 9th/10th Grader



Business remains a top field of interest across all student groups, although its popularity has shifted. Since 2021, interest in business has grown among Hispanic high school students (from 20% to 26%) but has remained relatively stable for other groups.

When examining industry preferences, health care and technology emerge as the top choices across all groups, followed by entertainment and finance. Interestingly, the order of preference shifts from high school to college: While technology is the most preferred industry in high school, health care takes the top position among early college students for all groups except AAPI.



## OPENNESS TO ACCOUNTING

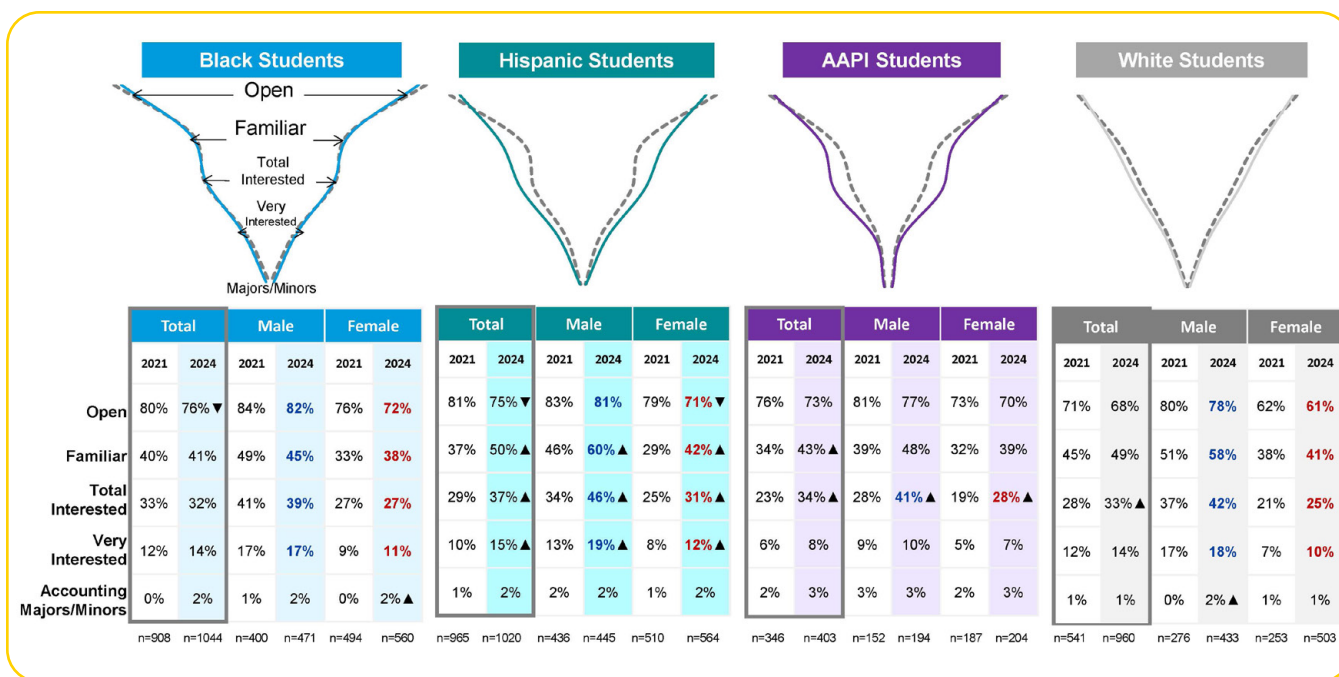
The research reveals both opportunities and challenges in attracting diverse students to accounting. The accounting funnel—tracking students from initial openness to the profession through to major selection—shows varied movement across demographic groups since 2021, and while Black students are the most open to accounting, they remain the least familiar.

## SHIFTING INTEREST PATTERNS

Hispanic students have shown the most significant positive movement in the accounting funnel over the tracking period. Their familiarity with accounting increased dramatically (from 37% to 50%), and total interest grew from 29% to 37%. In contrast, Black students have been the hardest group to move, with only marginal changes in most metrics despite maintaining relatively high openness to the field.

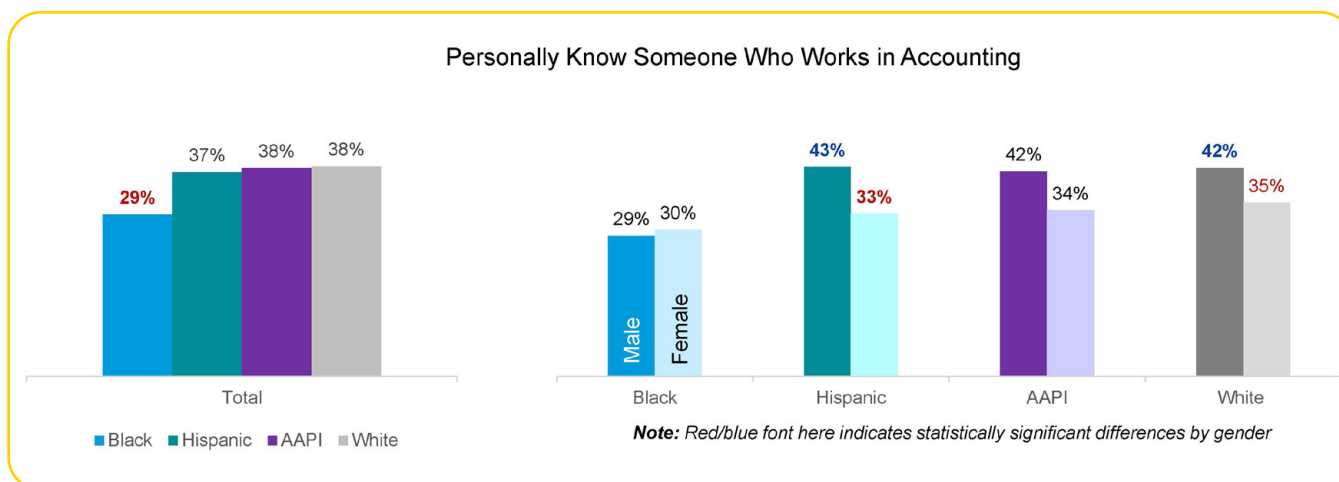
The gender gap in accounting interest remains pronounced, with male students showing higher levels of interest and familiarity with accounting across all demographic groups. This may be partly explained by the finding that females are less likely than their male counterparts to personally know an accountant, highlighting the importance of representation and personal connections.



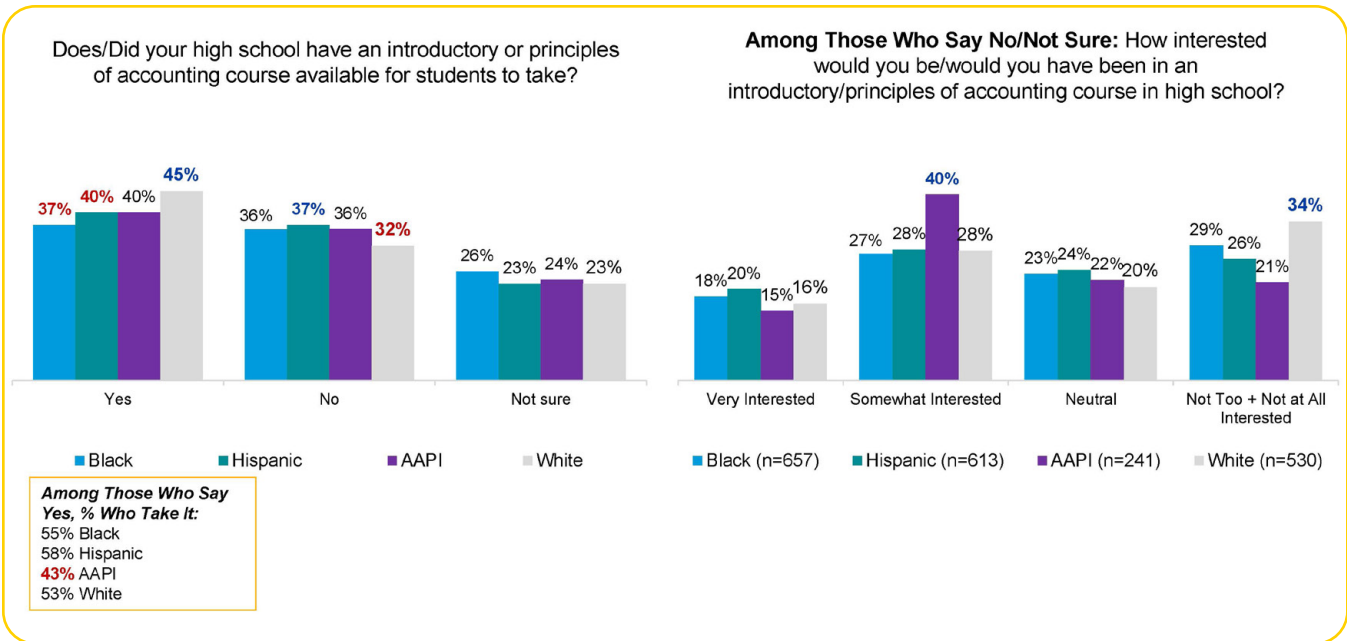


## EXPOSURE TO ACCOUNTING

Personal exposure to the accounting profession continues to be a significant factor in student interest. The research found that Black students are the least likely to know an accountant personally (29% compared to 37% to 38% for other groups), which may partially explain the challenges in moving this demographic through the accounting funnel.



Access to accounting courses also varies by demographic group. Black and Hispanic students have less access to high school accounting courses but show equal interest in such courses when they are available. When examining high school accounting course availability, 37% of Black students, 40% of Hispanic students, 40% of AAPI students, and 45% of White students reported having an introductory accounting course available.



## CHANGES IN PERCEPTION

Despite differences in how students move through the educational pipeline toward accounting careers, an encouraging shift has been occurring in how the profession is perceived across all student groups since the 2021 research. The data reveals improvements across all student populations, with particularly notable transformations in how students view accounting's value proposition, long-term earning potential, and work-life balance. Where students once might have viewed the profession as merely processing numbers, more now see accounting as a field where they can make substantial contributions, with gains in this perception across all groups.

Financial perceptions have evolved positively as well. Although initial salaries remain a sticking point, students across all backgrounds are taking the long view, with significant increases in those who recognize accounting's potential for substantial earnings over time. This suggests a growing awareness of career progression possibilities in the field. Perhaps most significantly, the perception of accounting as demanding endless hours of grueling work appears to be fading across all groups, with substantial increases in students who now believe that the profession can offer the work-life balance many of today's students prioritize.

### Perceptions of Accounting

% Agree Very/Somewhat Strongly

Sorted by 2024 data among Black students in Descending Order

	Black		Hispanic		AAPI		White	
	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024
Accountants help business leaders make important decisions	-	73%	-	73%	-	71%	-	73%
Accounting is a field where you can add real value at a company/organization	59%	68% ▲	56%	68% ▲	53%	65% ▲	57%	67% ▲
Careers in accounting offer good long-term earning potential	58%	68% ▲	59%	65% ▲	58%	68% ▲	64%	72% ▲
Majoring in accounting is a good first step if you want to start your own business	-	67%	-	65%	-	67%	-	69%
Careers in accounting are stable/always in-demand	56%	63% ▲	60%	68% ▲	59%	63%	62%	69% ▲
Accountants have a positive impact on society	49%	59% ▲	49%	60% ▲	47%	60% ▲	51%	63% ▲
Accounting majors have a variety of career paths to choose from	-	60%	-	58%	-	55%	-	58%
You can be successful in accounting with basic math skills	-	61% +7 '23	-	57%	-	59%	-	56%
Accountants have a lot of variety in their day-to-day work	41%	52% ▲	37%	49% ▲	30%	43% ▲	32%	42% ▲
Accountants have a good work/life balance	40%	51% ▲	41%	50% ▲	42%	54% ▲	39%	52% ▲
I see people like me represented in the accounting profession	-	47%	-	46% +11 '22	-	48%	-	50%

Unchanged for Black students, but positively shifted since '22 for Hispanic students (AAPI and White not surveyed in '22)

For all this progress in shifting perceptions, significant hurdles remain on the path to diversifying the accounting profession. Starting compensation continues to cast a shadow over recruitment efforts, particularly among Black students who have shown a marked increase in dissatisfaction with entry-level salaries since 2022. This trend is especially concerning as it represents a reversal of earlier gains. Beyond financial considerations, a fundamental lack of interest in accounting persists as a major obstacle across demographic groups, though not equally—Black students consistently report facing the highest barriers to entry while AAPI students encounter fewer deterrents. This uneven landscape suggests that while the accounting profession has made strides in how it's perceived, more targeted efforts may be needed to address specific concerns that prevent underrepresented students from seeing themselves in accounting roles.

### Accounting Barriers

% Agree Very/Somewhat Strongly

Sorted by '24/Black Students in Descending Order

	Black		Hispanic		AAPI		White		
	2022*	2024	2022*	2024	2022*	2024	2022*	2024	
I don't have interest or passion for accounting	33%	36%	35%	34%	NA	32%	NA	38%	% Strongly Agree
	55%	57%	58%	57%	NA	59%	NA	60%	Strongly + Somewhat
Can make a higher starting salary with a major/concentration other than accounting	25%	31% ▲	23%	27%	NA	25%	NA	22%	% Strongly Agree
	58%	60%	60%	60%	NA	59%	NA	56%	Strongly + Somewhat
I don't fully understand what accountants actually do	NA	24%	NA	20%	NA	16%	NA	16%	% Strongly Agree
	NA	51%	NA	50%	NA	51%	NA	45%	Strongly + Somewhat
I'm not interested in the type of jobs accounting majors can get	NA	27%	NA	24%	NA	21%	NA	28%	% Strongly Agree
	NA	50%	NA	50%	NA	49%	NA	53%	Strongly + Somewhat
I don't think I'm good enough at math to become an accountant	23%	24%	24%	23%	NA	17%	NA	23%	% Strongly Agree
	41%	41%	46%	43%	NA	34%	NA	42%	Strongly + Somewhat
I think accounting courses are too difficult	18%	19%	14%	17%	NA	13%	NA	16%	% Strongly Agree
	41%	39%	41%	40%	NA	33%	NA	38%	Strongly + Somewhat

\*Note: barriers not asked in a comparable way in 2021

# Effectiveness of Messaging

To understand what truly resonates with today's students, Edge Research conducted a deep dive into messaging resonance, testing eight distinct approaches designed to spark interest in accounting careers. The results paint a clear picture of student priorities in this economic climate. Rather than appeals to making a difference in society or changing the world, students across all demographic backgrounds were consistently drawn to messages highlighting how accounting could benefit them personally.

Three messaging themes emerged as particularly powerful. The Numbers That Count theme struck the strongest chord, with students responding enthusiastically to straightforward information about accounting's financial rewards. This approach generated an impressive 15% increase in interest, confirming that salary potential remains a compelling driver of career choices. A close second message that resonated was Choose Your Own Adventure, a message that emphasized the surprising flexibility of accounting careers. Students who previously might have imagined accountants locked into narrow roles responded to stories of professionals who had charted diverse paths aligned with their personal interests, resulting in a 14% rise in interest. Completing the top three was Accounting is Always in Demand, a message that resonated with students' desire for security in an uncertain job market, lifting interest by 13%.

The common thread running through these successful messages reveals a pragmatic generation focused on tangible personal benefits—good pay, career adaptability, and job security—rather than abstract promises of societal impact. This inward focus mirrors broader findings showing students' economic priorities have intensified since 2021, likely reflecting their awareness of challenging economic realities.

“

I think I like the salary and how accounting is always in demand... If I worked in social media with AI and all this stuff that's coming in, I feel like accounting... everyone will always need it. So, I like how it's always a need and it can't really get replaced.

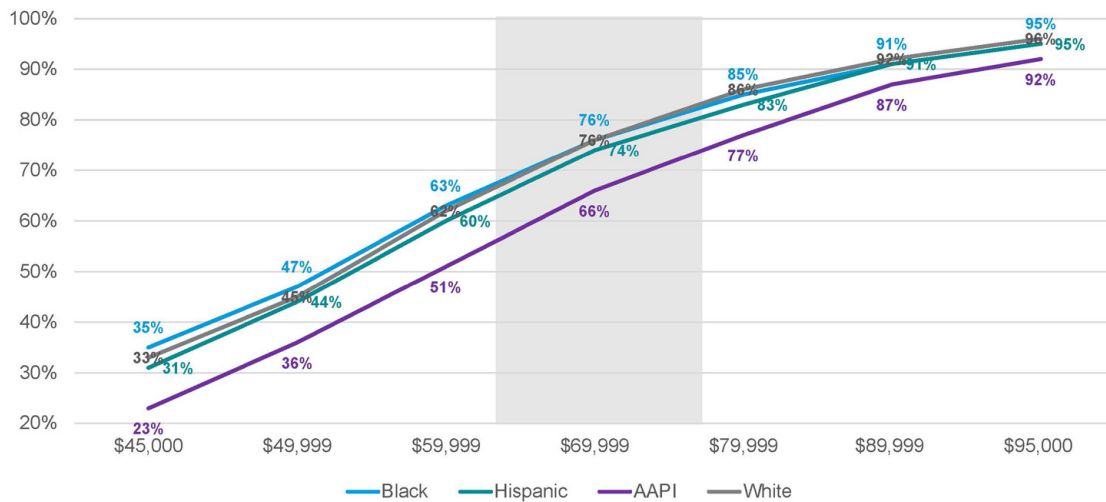
Black 9th/10th Grader

		Black Students		Hispanic Students		AAPI Students		White	
Messages Tested/Total Sample (Shading=top 2 scoring messages for each metric)		% Makes You Interested	% Ranked Most Appealing	% Makes You Interested	% Ranked Most Appealing	% Makes You Interested	% Ranked Most Appealing	% Makes You Interested	% Ranked Most Appealing
Top Tier	The Numbers That Count	57%	15%	56%	13%	64%	19%	56%	15%
	Choose Your Own Adventure	56%	18%	58%	17%	56%	20%	54%	18%
	Accounting is Always in Demand	53%	13%	52%	14%	48%	15%	49%	15%
Bottom Tier	Accounting Makes a Difference	53%	8%	52%	9%	47%	9%	46%	10%
	Your Time to Shine	50%	10%	53%	11%	46%	7%	51%	9%
	Accounting+ is Your Loyal Friend	47%	7%	51%	8%	43%	2%	46%	6%
	Accountants Hold Brands Accountable	46%	9%	50%	8%	47%	8%	54%	9%
	Beyond the Numbers	45%	7%	48%	10%	49%	9%	49%	9%

Messages Rank Ordered by % "Makes you Interested" for Black Students

Also revealing was students' response when presented with concrete salary information. After exposure to accounting-focused messaging, two-thirds to three-fourths of students across every demographic group indicated they would accept an entry-level position offering \$69,999 annually. This remarkably consistent response suggests that clear, salary-focused communication could be a powerful tool for attracting diverse talent to the accounting profession, helping overcome one of the primary barriers identified in previous research.

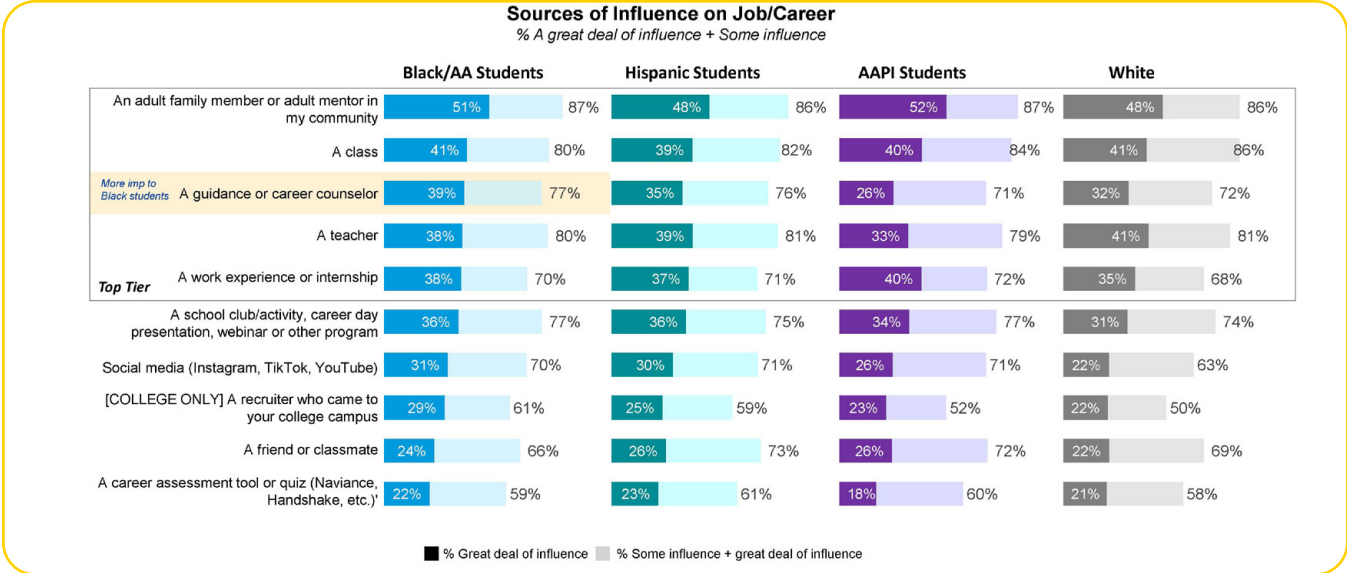
**Gabor Granger Salary Methodology:** How likely would you be to accept a job with a starting salary of: [\$45,000 / \$49,000 / \$59,999 / \$69,999 / \$79,999 / \$89,999 / \$95,000]?





# Influencers and Touchpoints

The research confirms that family members, work experiences, and classes remain the most influential factors in students' career decisions, consistent with the 2021 findings. Adult family members have the largest impact, followed by classes, guidance counselors, and work experiences.



The journey from student to professional is shaped not just by what information students receive but by who delivers it and how they access it. When Edge Research dug into students' preferences for career guidance, a clear desire for authentic, relatable voices emerged.

Across all demographic groups, students expressed a strong preference for hearing directly from those already working in their fields of interest. While Black and Hispanic students showed the strongest preference for hearing from experienced practitioners who could potentially be their future bosses (54% and 53% respectively), AAPI and White students also highly valued this perspective (48% and 52%). This suggests students are seeking not just information but also realistic previews of what their professional relationships might look like.

Consistent with the 2021 research is students' hunger for representation—to see themselves reflected in the profession they're considering. Fifty percent of Black students and 48% of Hispanic students prioritized hearing from professionals who share similar backgrounds, indicating that relatability and cultural understanding remain powerful factors in career decision-making. Age relevance was also significant, with students across all demographics valuing insights from recent graduates who could offer fresh, relevant perspectives on the transition from education to career.

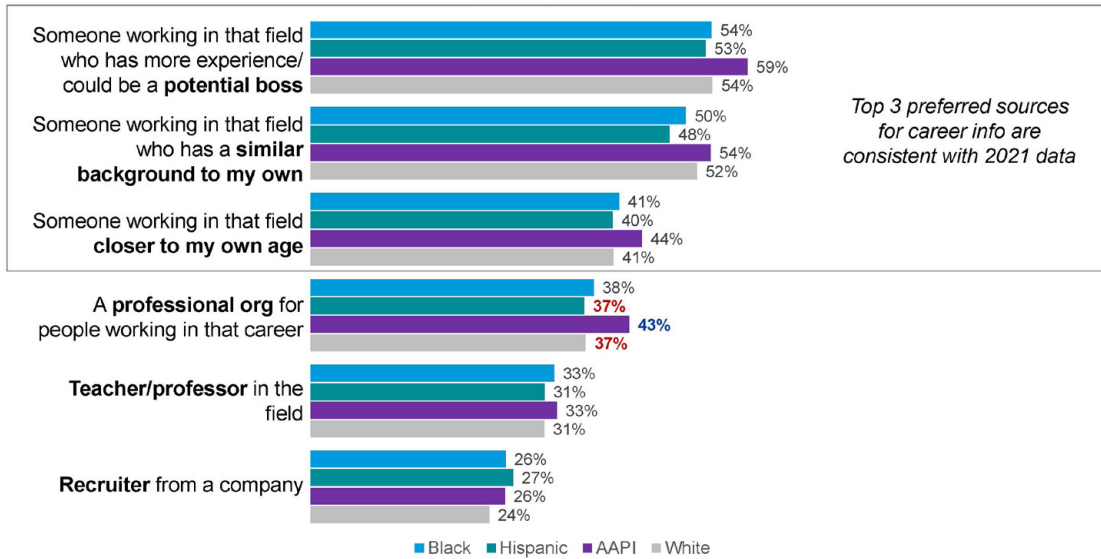
“  
I would need a real-life person who majors in that and does accounting to tell me what it's really about and the difficulty level so that I would know if that's like a backup plan or something else I would like to major in.

**Black 9th/10th Grader**



### WHO You Most Want to Get Career Info From

Select all that apply



When it comes to how students access career information, digital platforms dominate the landscape, with preferences holding relatively steady year-over-year. YouTube continues its reign as the premier channel, with 52% of students turning to video content for career insights. Not far behind are Instagram and traditional search engines (around 45%) and TikTok, which has quickly established itself as a significant information source for the current generation and is even more popular with Black and Hispanic students.

### Social Media Platforms Students Would Use to Get Info on College and Career

Select all that apply

	Black	Hispanic	AAPI	White	
YouTube	52%	52%	53%	46%	YouTube was the top social media channel in 2021 as well
Instagram	46%	45%	41%	38%	
Search Engines (e.g., Google, Bing)	46%	45%	46%	55%	
TikTok	44%	43%	32%	33%	
Facebook	27%	30%	21%	36%	
LinkedIn	19%	23%	27%	27%	
Twitter / X	18%	22%	12%	20%	
Snapchat	17%	18%	11%	18%	
Reddit	13%	18%	20%	21%	
Pinterest	12%	13%	8%	13%	
WhatsApp	6%	12%	10%	10%	
Threads	6%	5%	3%	5%	
Bluesky	1%	2%	1%	2%	
Other, specify:	1%	1%	1%	1%	
Would not use social media	6%	6%	7%	9%	

**High School Only: College/Career Planning Tools Used**  
Select all that apply

	Black		Hispanic		AAPI		White	
	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024	2021	2024
College Board website	43%	32% ▼	40%	40%	53%	44%	37%	39%
Newspaper rankings	14%	11%	14%	18%	19%	16%	16%	19%
Naviance	20%	9% ▼	16%	11% ▼	34%	18% ▼	25%	9% ▼
Handshake	9%	7%	11%	8% ▼	7%	8%	11%	7% ▼
Avid.org	4%	5%	6%	6%	3%	4%	5%	5%
EVIT career program	3%	3%	4%	5%	2%	2%	5%	4%
Xello	5%	3% ▼	6%	7%	4%	6%	9%	5% ▼
Other, specify:	1%	1%	1%	0% ▼	2%	1%	2%	1%
None of the above	37%	54% ▲	39%	41%	22%	38% ▲	37%	47% ▲

Interestingly, amid this digital ecosystem, the College Board website maintains its position as the most frequently used resource among high school students for educational and career planning. However, researchers noted a concerning trend: a significant decline in the overall use of planning tools among Black, AAPI, and White students since 2021. This drop suggests potential gaps in how students are structuring their approach to career exploration—a finding that merits attention from educators and advisors alike as they work to guide the next generation toward fulfilling professional paths.



Me wanting to be in that field, I think it really came from social media, since I don't really know that many people in my family or just in general who are veterinarians. [Social media is] where my inspiration for wanting to be a vet came from.

**Black 9th/10th Grader**

# Key Implications and Opportunities

Based on the research findings, 10 strategic implications and opportunities emerge for increasing the accounting profession pipeline:

- 1. Economic messaging resonance.** With increased student focus on financial security and stability, messaging about accounting's salary potential and job stability has become even more relevant and impactful. The most effective messaging frames accounting as a career with strong long-term earning potential, especially given today's uncertain economic climate.
- 2. Industry alignment.** Highlighting how accounting intersects with students' top industries of interest—health care, technology, entertainment, and finance—can help students see accounting as relevant to their broader career interests. Creating content that showcases accountants working in these diverse fields demonstrates versatility of an accounting career.
- 3. Targeted outreach to Black students.** The research shows opportunity to increase interest in accounting among Black students, who show the least movement in the funnel despite reasonable openness to the field. This includes addressing the lack of organic exposure to accounting in Black communities, where students are least likely to know an accountant personally.
- 4. Focus on gender parity.** Given the persistent gender gap in interest in accounting, specific initiatives to attract female students can help diversify the pipeline further. The data show males consistently display wider funnels and higher interest in accounting across all demographics.
- 5. Emphasis on personal connection.** Since knowing an accountant personally strongly correlates with interest in the field, creating more opportunities for students to connect with accounting professionals who share their backgrounds can be particularly effective. Mentorship programs and speaker series featuring diverse groups of accountants should be prioritized.
- 6. Barrier reduction.** Continuing to address misconceptions about accounting, particularly regarding mathematical skills required and showcasing the true variety in accountants' day-to-day work, remains crucial for overcoming persistent barriers. The data on shifts in perception show progress, but more work is needed.
- 7. Early exposure.** The research demonstrates high school students are making major decisions earlier, with a significant shift toward freshman and sophomore years. Increasing access to accounting courses at the high school level, particularly in schools serving Black and Hispanic students, represents an important opportunity to build early interest.
- 8. Digital-first engagement.** YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok have emerged as primary information sources for students. Creating engaging, authentic content on these platforms featuring relatable accounting professionals meets students where they are. The [Accounting+](#) initiative provides an excellent framework for the profession to develop and distribute this digital-first content, leveraging its collaborative network of major employers and institutions, to create consistent, high-quality messaging that resonates with today's digitally native students.
- 9. Parent and counselor education.** Given the strong influence of family members and guidance counselors, developing resources specifically for these key influencers can help create an additional source of accurate information about accounting careers.
- 10. Salary transparency.** The research shows that clear messaging about accounting's salary potential creates significant shifts in interest. Being transparent about both starting salaries and career progression opportunities will address one of the most persistent barriers.

# Conclusion



This 2024 research demonstrates both encouraging progress and persistent challenges in increasing the accounting profession pipeline. While perceptions of accounting have improved across all student groups, translating this improvement into increased enrollment in accounting programs and entry into the profession remains difficult.

The most effective strategic approach must be multifaceted—combining compelling economic messaging with increased representation, enhanced personal connections to the profession, and greater early exposure through education and work experiences. By addressing both the perceptual barriers and structural challenges identified in this research, the accounting profession has an opportunity to build a more resilient pipeline that better reflects the communities it serves.

As economic uncertainty continues to affect student mindsets and priorities, the accounting profession's traditional strengths—stability, good compensation, and career flexibility—are increasingly aligned with what students seek. Three key messages resonated most strongly across all demographic groups: The Numbers That Count (salary potential), Choose Your Own Adventure (career flexibility), and Accounting is Always in Demand (job security). These internal-

facing messages that focus on personal benefit consistently outperformed messages about societal impact or abstract benefits.

To maximize impact, the accounting profession should concentrate resources on reaching students earlier in their educational journey, particularly during high school freshman and sophomore years when major decisions are increasingly being made. Black and Hispanic students, who are more likely to be first-generation college students and navigate different educational pathways, would benefit from targeted support addressing their specific barriers and concerns.

By implementing a comprehensive strategy that addresses the findings in this research, the accounting profession can make meaningful progress toward developing a pipeline that is not only stronger but also representative of our society that the accounting profession serves.

Edge's full research report is available to our Accounting+ partners. If you are interested in learning more about becoming an Accounting+ partner, please contact Elizabeth Blockman at [EBlockman@thecaq.org](mailto:EBlockman@thecaq.org).

# CAQ

[www.thecaq.org](http://www.thecaq.org)

**We welcome  
your feedback!**

Please send your comments or  
questions to [hello@thecaq.org](mailto:hello@thecaq.org)