

What's New in the K–12 Learning Standards for Financial Education

Overview

The Washington State K–12 Learning Standards for Financial Education (WA FE 2026) learning standards revisions and updates are based on the current National Standards for Personal Financial Education published by the Jump\$tart Coalition and the Council for Economic Education.

The revisions to the 2026 learning standards provide prioritization, consistency, and flexibility for educators, including:

- Prioritized standards that identify a universal set of standards that each and every student should have the opportunity to learn and be able to do.
- Consistent formatting of documents for all content areas. Standards look similar and have Microsoft Word and Excel spreadsheet versions for user flexibility.
- Coding and naming system for standards are also similar across content areas to support usability by educators across a variety of school and district roles.

New WA FE 2026 Domain Structure

WA 2016 Competencies	WA FE 2026 Domains
Employment and Income	Earning an Income
Spending and Saving	Spending
<i>The updated national standards separated these topics due to each requiring a distinct skill set.</i>	Saving
Investing	Investing
Credit and Debt	Credit
Risk Management and Insurance	Managing Risk
Financial Decision-Making	<i>Standards have been integrated into each of the other domains to emphasize their role in all areas of financial education.</i>

Match to the National Standards

The WA FE 2026 learning standards have been carefully constructed to mirror the updated national standards while integrating suggested changes by local educators, administrators, and the public. By doing so, we have made it easier for educators to review financial instructional materials that are aligned with national standards.

Grade Level Structure

Elementary standards are organized into individual grade levels. Middle School and High School standards are organized into grade bands (6–8 and 9–12).



Highlights from the Domains

Earning an Income

- Students learn how people earn income through wages, benefits, entrepreneurship, and investments, and how education and skills affect earning potential.
- Students explore the trade-offs of investing in education or training and how taxes reduce gross income to spendable income.

Spending

- Students learn how budgets help people allocate income to needs, wants, saving, and giving.
- Students explore how personal preferences, financial limits, peers, and advertising influence spending decisions.

Saving

- Students learn why people save money for future needs and how savings accounts provide safety, access, and interest.
- Students explore how interest rates, fees, and compound interest affect the growth of savings over time.

Investing

- Students learn how investing helps individuals achieve long-term financial goals through income and asset growth.
- Students explore how risk, return, diversification, and personal risk tolerance influence investment choices.

Credit

- Students learn how credit allows people to borrow money for goods and services with the promise to repay over time, usually with interest.
- Students explore how interest rates, repayment terms, credit scores, and borrowing behavior affect the total cost of credit and future financial opportunities.

Managing Risk

- Students learn about common personal and financial risks and methods to manage them, including insurance.
- Students explore how insurance costs are determined and how individuals can reduce the risk of identity theft.