



Power Move #11 The Educator's FOO

The Lesson Plan for Your Money Flow

Have you received an unexpected cash boost—like a tax refund, a raise, a salary step increase, extra duty pay, an inheritance, or a one-time bonus—and aren't sure how to handle the funds beyond your regular monthly expenses?

Are you feeling "Pension Tension"—that nagging worry that your state retirement plan might not be quite enough. It's time to apply a little logic to your loot.

We've given the **Financial Order of Operations** (FOO) an educator-friendly makeover so that you can assign every "extra" dollar a job, rather than wonder where it went.

"If it can be solved with money it is not a problem, it's an expense."

What to do with your next dollar?

The Educators FOO: **Clear Plan. Smart Flow. Financial Fitness.**

- 1. The Hall Pass: Build an "Uh-Oh" fund of \$2,000** in a high-yield savings account ([HYSA](#)). It's for when life throws a pop-quiz at you, e.g. visit to the ER, refrigerator goes out, or unexpected car repair.
- 2. The Free Lunch: The Employer Match.** For public educators, the state already contributes to your pension, so you move to the front of the line. Help loved ones claim their employer 401k match.
- 3. Debt Detention High-interest debt (7%+)** is like a student who won't stop talking—it distracts from everything else. Put your credit cards in detention and pay them off aggressively. Consult an advisor on [Public Student Loan Forgiveness](#) before paying off this debt.
- 4. Educator Emergency Fund Beef up your Buffer** to cover your highest deductible plus 3 months of living expenses. It's your safety net if you ever need to find a new "classroom."
- 5. Tax-Free Treasures Contribute to your retirement accounts** (e.g. 403b, 457b, 401k, IRA).
Roth versions of the above are the "Extra Credit" of investing— your future self pays no taxes on them!
Compound interest—let it do the work in the background over time while you enjoy your rich life today!
- 6. The Honor Roll Save/Invest 20%** of your gross income (start at x%, raise savings rate 1% each year), max out retirement accounts; build up a taxable brokerage account. Asset "location" vs. asset "allocation."
- 7. Future Field Trips:** Now you can fund 529 plans for the kids and create "sinking funds" in HYSA. You can borrow for college, you cannot borrow for your retirement. Put the mask on yourself first.
- 8. The Final Bell Mortgage Mastery.** Pay down that low-interest mortgage in your final stages of creating the calming silence of a debt-free future.



Aggregations of Marginal Gains

Improve your financial fitness by just 1% weekly using *Power Moves* to compound intentional, often automated behaviors. This can help to reduce financial stress and create space for better teaching and better living! Need help? Support is available through the [Take10™ for Financial Fitness](#).

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