Power Move #21
Teacher Loan Forgiveness

Free Virtual Coaching
30-minutes w/ Mr. Norman

Navigating student loans can feel overwhelming, especially with the major policy shifts that happened in 2026, like the **end of the SAVE plan** and the launch of **the new Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP)**. But don't worry—we are going to cut through the clutter and transform these updates into a stress-free, bite-sized strategy. Because you currently cannot count the same years of teaching toward both Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) and Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), making the right choice early is key!

Assess: Weigh Your Balances Against Your Options First, log into StudentAid.gov to take a quick inventory of your federal loan balance and your career goals. You have two incredible tools at your disposal, and your balance will dictate which one you use:

- **Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF)[1]:** This program forgives up to **$17,500** if you are a highly qualified math, science, or special education teacher, or up to **$5,000** for most other subjects, after five consecutive years at a qualifying low-income school.
- **Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)[2]:** This powerful program forgives your *entire remaining Direct Loan balance completely tax-free* after *120* qualifying monthly payments (*usually 10 years*) while working for a public school or qualifying nonprofit. The simple habit*:* Look at your total debt. If your balance is low enough, applying for TLF may significantly reduce your outstanding principal balance. TLF is a fantastic near-term win. If your balance is high (like the average educator with a master's degree), skipping TLF and aiming straight for PSLF is usually the better financial move, as it prevents you from essentially having to pay for 15 years to get both.

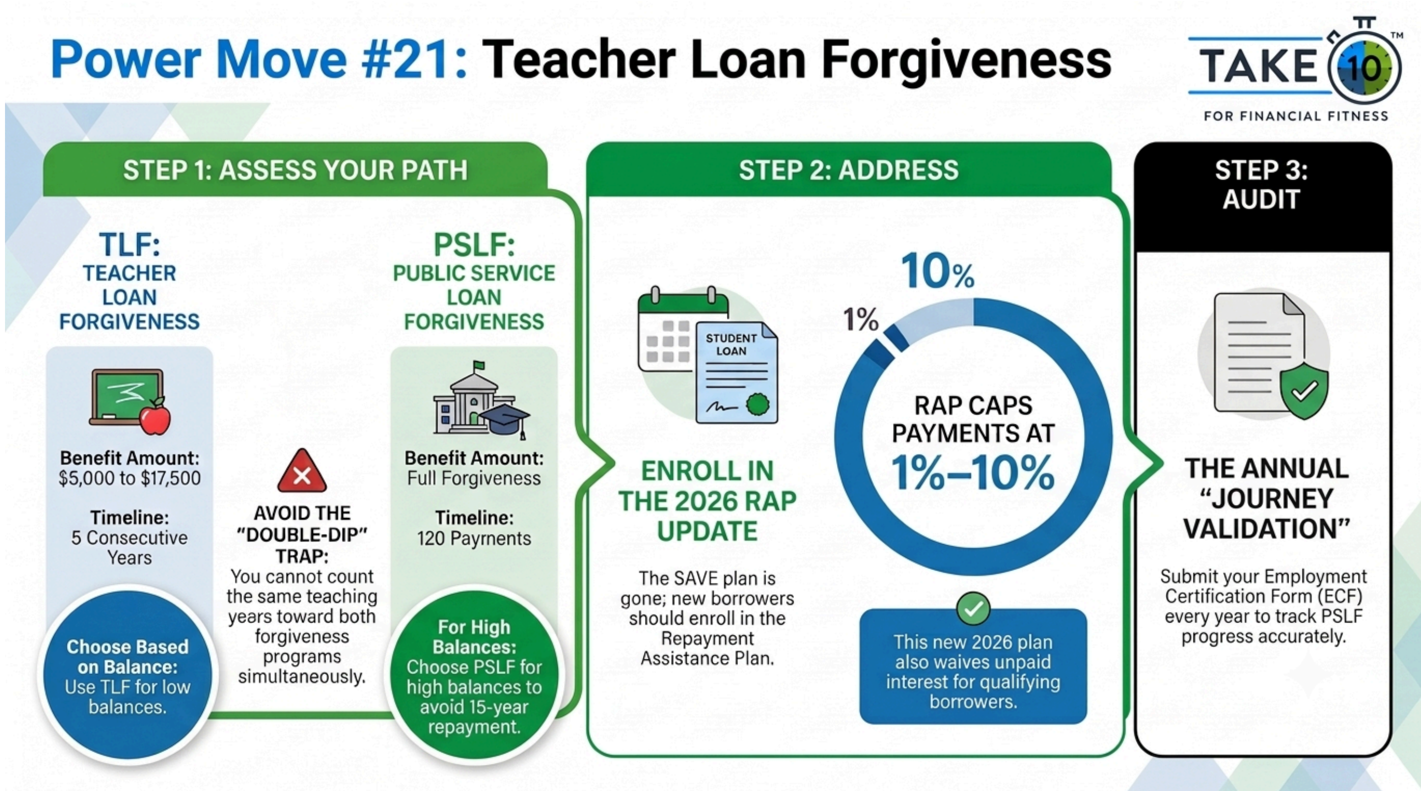
Address: Pick Your Path and Automate Your Repayment Now, let's take practical action based on the 2026 updates. To benefit from PSLF, you must be enrolled in an Income-Driven Repayment (IDR) plan.

- **The 2026 Update:** The SAVE plan was officially eliminated in 2026. If you are a new borrower, you will want to enroll in the newly launched **Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP)**,[3] which caps your payments between 1% and 10% of your income and waives unpaid interest. If you have older loans (disbursed before July 1, 2026), you can also choose to stick with the classic Income-Based Repayment (IBR) plan.
- **Your bite-sized next step***:* Log in, choose either RAP or IBR, and set your monthly payments to auto-pay. Both of these plans legally qualify for PSLF.
- **Need help deciding?** Read: 5 Tips for Choosing Teacher Loan Forgiveness or Public Service Loan Forgiveness. Watch: The Difference Between PSLF and TLF (3:45).

[1] Federal Student Aid: Teacher Loan Forgiveness
[2] Federal Student Aid: 4 Loan Forgiveness Programs for Teachers
[3] Nerd Wallet: What Is the New Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP) for Student Loans?

Audit: Certify Annually and Ignore the Noise To ensure your sustainable habits are working, schedule a quick, once-a-year "Journey Validation" to audit your progress.

- If you choose the PSLF path, submit your Employment Certification Form to your HR department *every single year* rather than waiting until the end of year ten. This ensures your qualifying payments are actively tracked and prevents stressful surprises down the road.
- Finally, audit the noise you let in. You may hear news about 2026 bills proposing to let teachers "double-dip" and use the same five years for both TLF and PSLF. While exciting, *these are currently just proposals sitting in committee.* Practice the art of staying the course and planning your financial wellness around the rules that exist today.



By assessing your path, setting up an automated IDR/RAP plan, and certifying your employment annually, you are taking complete control of your financial future. You do so much for your community—now let these programs do the heavy lifting for you. You've absolutely got this!

Helpful Reources:

- Student Loan Planner: [3 Essential Steps to Completing the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Application](#).
- Step-by-Step Guide 2026: [How to Apply for Student Loan Forgiveness](#) (video: 2:20)

TAKE 10
FOR FINANCIAL FITNESS

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