

Introduction

This document presents the proposed Personal Financial Literacy (PFL) standards for educator and stakeholder review. The framework expands Maryland's current 6 standards (grades 3–12, adopted 2011) to 8 topic strands across 5 grade bands, beginning at kindergarten. PFL is an integrated program of instruction — every student experiences all eight strands at each grade band, woven across the subjects they already take.

The framework organizes PFL into 8 topic strands across 5 grade bands. Each strand progresses developmentally from kindergarten through grade 12; each strand-grade-band cell carries indicators, three cumulative proficiency descriptors (Developing → Proficient → Distinguished), a family touchpoint, and an assessment approach. Beginning in grade 6, students build a 6-Year Career-Financial Plan.

THE 8 STRANDS (CONTENT STANDARDS):

S1 — Earning & Income. Students understand all forms of income, connect education and credentials to earning potential, and plan strategically for career-based financial security.

S2 — Spending & Consumer Skills. Students make informed spending decisions, understand consumer rights and protections, and build budgets and spending plans that align with values and goals.

S3 — Saving. Students build saving habits, set short- and long-term savings goals, use tax-advantaged savings accounts and emergency funds, and understand how interest grows their savings.

S4 — Investing & Building Wealth. Students evaluate investment options, understand risk and return, and build long-term wealth through informed, diversified strategies.

S5 — Credit & Debt Management. Students evaluate credit as a tool, understand borrowing costs, navigate higher-education financing, and build creditworthiness intentionally.

S6 — Risk Management & Protection. Students understand insurance, access government safety-net programs, and plan for financial resilience and recovery through all life stages.

S7 — Financial Decision-Making & Behavioral Finance. Students understand how cognitive biases, emotions, social pressure, and systemic factors influence financial decisions, and apply metacognitive strategies to make and manage their own financial choices.

S8 — Financial Identity & Digital Safety. Students navigate financial technology, protect personal data, evaluate digital financial products, and build a secure financial identity online.

EACH STANDARD USES THE FOLLOWING NOMENCLATURE:

PFL.S1.GB1.101 =	Abbreviation	Meaning
	PFL	Personal Financial Literacy
	S1	Strand 1
	GB1	Grade Band 1
	101	Indicator 1

S4 — Investing & Building Wealth

Students evaluate investment options, understand risk and return, and build long-term wealth through informed, diversified strategies.

PFL.S4.GB1 — K-2 (Foundations)

- A. PFL.S4.GB1.I01: Recognize that some things can grow in value over time.
- B. PFL.S4.GB1.I02: Give examples of things that grow, including money that is not spent right away.

PFL.S4.GB2 — 3-5 (Building)

- A. PFL.S4.GB2.I01: Explain that money can grow over time through interest.
- B. PFL.S4.GB2.I02: Calculate simple growth on a deposit over multiple years and explain why time is the most powerful factor in growing money.
- C. PFL.S4.GB2.I03: Compare money kept idle vs. money placed where it can grow over time, and explain why people let money grow for long-term goals.

PFL.S4.GB3 — 6-8 (Expanding)

- A. PFL.S4.GB3.I01: Define basic investment types: stocks, bonds, and mutual funds.
- B. PFL.S4.GB3.I02: Explain the relationship between risk and return (higher potential returns carry higher risk).
- C. PFL.S4.GB3.I03: Explain how diversification reduces investment risk.
- D. PFL.S4.GB3.I04: Construct a hypothetical diversified portfolio and explain why young people can typically take more investment risk.

PFL.S4.GB4 — 9-10 (Applying)

- A. PFL.S4.GB4.I01: Compare wealth-building strategies, including index funds vs. individual stocks and dollar-cost averaging.
- B. PFL.S4.GB4.I02: Explain how economic factors (supply and demand, inflation, interest rates) affect investment values, and calculate the cost of waiting to invest.
- C. PFL.S4.GB4.I03: Analyze real investment options (target-date funds, ETFs, bonds) and build a hypothetical long-term investment plan aligned to career-income projections from the 6-Year Plan.
- D. PFL.S4.GB4.I04: Explain tax-advantaged investing, including a Roth IRA for teens with earned income.

PFL.S4.GB5 — 11-12 (Independence)

- A. PFL.S4.GB5.I01: Develop a personal wealth-building strategy that aligns investing to post-graduation income.
- B. PFL.S4.GB5.I02: Explain employer retirement benefits (401(k) match) and Roth IRA mechanics.
- C. PFL.S4.GB5.I03: Compare the tax implications of different investment account types.

- D. PFL.S4.GB5.I04: Open or plan a Roth IRA (if eligible with earned income) and create a 5-year financial plan with specific investment targets and milestones.