

# your \$<sup>TM</sup>

## Sarah's garden

### of financial knowledge

Sarah sows seeds of financial wisdom in the classroom to help her students cultivate financial independence

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Individual financial consultations are for everyone

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Let's get social!



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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

## DAVE KIJEK

### Grow your financial knowledge with us



As we continue to celebrate 50 years of serving you and your families, this spring we visit again with member Sarah Campbell. Sarah was featured back in our Summer 2009 issue where

she was planting seeds of financial literacy with her students and hoping something good would germinate from her efforts.

Today, Sarah is still committed to financial literacy—deepening her knowledge, keeping up with technology, and helping students understand the mindset they need as they prepare to

graduate into adulthood. It's an important role that she continues to cultivate. Get inspired and pick up some resources for your classroom and for yourself.

We are very pleased to offer a fresh set of financial planning services to better meet your needs—from do-it-yourself planning to topics such as investment allocation, college savings, and retirement planning. See page 10 for details. We're here during your career and all through your retirement to help you make educated choices when it comes to your financial health and well-being.

Did you know we also have a group of retired educators ready to help you with a quick check-in of your financial questions? Learn more on page 8.

Part of being financially literate is being

wise with your insurance coverage. Explore our guidelines on page 6 for what to consider and how insurance fits into your financial security.

In our kiosk, we also have exciting news about our 7th Annual Student Art Contest and announce a new endowment that will help keep it going for years to come. Also learn more about how WEA Member Benefits Foundation—with major funding from WEA Trust—is providing challenge grants for school-based mental health programs.

Spring is in the air and with it a sense of continued growth at Member Benefits. Stick with us as your go-to place for financial education and support. We're glad to have you with us.



# YOUR ACCOUNT

## IRA and 403(b) news

### Your privacy is important to us

Protection of your nonpublic personal financial information is a priority. Access the privacy notice for your 403(b) and IRA accounts online at [weabenefits.com/privacy](http://weabenefits.com/privacy) to view our policies regarding your personal information. If you have questions, call us at 1-800-279-4030.

### Have you changed banks or your address recently?

Make sure your electronic contributions to your WEA Member Benefits IRA and/or personal insurance premium payments continue without interruption by notifying us if you have changed where you bank or if your routing or account information has changed. Likewise, if you have moved, please contact us with your new address to ensure timely delivery of important information.

### IRA 5498 forms are on their way

Form 5498 is an informational tax form sent at the end of May to all Traditional and/or Roth IRA account holders. The form reports the December 31, 2021, fair market value as well as any contributions, rollovers, conversions, and/or recharacterizations received in the account for tax year 2021.

### Want to change your tax withholding?

Don't forget—you can change your federal and state tax withholding at any time. If you would like to make a change, call one of our Member Service Representatives at 1-800-279-4030, Extension 8567.

### Go paperless with your retirement account statements

Enjoy the convenience of receiving your retirement account statements online instead of by mail—just choose the option in *yourMONEY*. If you're not convinced, here are a few great reasons to make the switch:

- **Get your statements sooner.** Quarterly statements are available online *before* you would receive a mailed paper statement and are available 24/7.
- **You'll receive less mail!**
- **It's safer.** Digital records have protections and safety features that paper documents don't. If you want your own copy, you can save a PDF statement from your online account instead of adding to paper clutter.
- **Environmentally friendly.** Electronic statements = less paper + saving trees + using less chemicals + saving water.

If you have any questions about going paperless, give us a call at 1-800-279-4030.

Information current as of 04/01/22, see [weabenefits.com](http://weabenefits.com) for updates. This magazine is for informational purposes only and is not intended to constitute individualized investment, legal, financial, or tax advice. Certain recommendations or guidelines may not be appropriate for everyone. Consult your personal advisor or attorney for advice specific to your unique circumstances before taking action.

The Trustee Custodian for the WEA Member Benefits IRA accounts is Newport Trust Company. Certain state residency requirements may apply.

The 403(b) retirement program is offered by the WEA TSA Trust. TSA and IRA program registered representatives are licensed through WEA Investment Services, Inc., member FINRA. If you choose to invest in the 403(b) or IRA programs, fees will apply. Consider all expenses before investing. Mutual fund management and redemption fees may apply.

## Help us keep in touch



Any time you have a change of name, address, phone number, etc., please contact us as soon as possible so we can continue to give you important information regarding your accounts. Ensuring your personal information is up to date helps us accurately and efficiently administer your retirement plan, provide you with important insurance information, and minimize errors.

If you have an account with us, please use your **personal email** rather than your district email. Due to potential spam filters used by your employer, our email may not reach your inbox. Plus, if you change districts or retire, we will still be able to get in touch with you.

Give us a call at 1-800-279-4030 or update your personal information online at your convenience.

**Retirement accounts** (*yourMONEY*)  
[weabenefits.com/yourmoney](http://weabenefits.com/yourmoney)

**Insurance policies** (*yourINSURANCE*)  
[weabenefits.com/yourinsurance](http://weabenefits.com/yourinsurance)

## Easy account management

Managing your retirement accounts and insurance policies online through the *yourMONEY* and *yourINSURANCE* portals provides you with helpful options such as:

- Detailed rate of return features on your retirement investments.
- Retirement target calculators.
- Insurance cards, billing management, and online payment options.
- Opt-in to go paperless to receive your insurance policy information and other important notifications via email.

If you don't have an online account, sign up today! For assistance, give us a call at 1-800-279-4030.

# Sarah's garden of financial knowledge



**Sarah sows seeds of financial wisdom in the classroom to help her students cultivate financial independence and take control of their financial futures.**

**S**arah Campbell has been sowing seeds since 2009. She has watched those seeds sprout, grow, and in some cases, produce. The seeds Sarah sows are the seeds of financial literacy.

Her passion for financial literacy sprouted in her second year of teaching when she made discoveries about how to cultivate enthusiasm for this important topic in her students. She struggled her first year, teaching content straight out of the textbook. “The kids didn’t care,” she told us.

But after taking courses at the National Institute for Financial and Economic Literacy during summer break, everything changed. The experience showed her how to engage students by making the information personal and real.

**“Regardless of how financially literate you are, the end game is financial independence.”**

Over the last 13 years her methods have changed—going deeper and broader—to reflect the needs of students and to keep up with advancements in technology and the financial world. But she is still teaching Personal Finance at Wisconsin Dells High School (WDHS) with great determination, and her responsibilities have grown, giving her more opportunities to promote financial literacy. But what does financial literacy mean?

### Digging deep

For Sarah, it’s not enough to simply understand financial concepts and best practices. It’s much bigger than that. Being financially literate, she says, is about looking at your financial life from many angles—like how you fit into the economy, understanding your role in managing your finances, what your decisions mean to you and those around you, and taking a hard look at what you want your life to be and understanding how finances play into your ability to achieve goals. Sarah likes the term *financial independence*—it plays like a drum beat in her classes. “It’s

the ultimate goal. Regardless of how financially literate you are, the end game is financial independence.”

But Sarah digs deeper still, helping her students look inward at their financial beliefs and why they hold those beliefs. “Understanding the financial mindset that drives decisions, even those that don’t seem financial at the time, can be really useful and necessary.”

If it sounds a little philosophic, that’s because it is. Taking responsibility for your own financial position has been her emphasis from the start, telling students to ‘own’ their future. Her message was and still is, “It’s up to you to determine what you want your life to be like and how you are going to make it happen. No one else can do that for you.”

To incorporate her philosophy in the classroom, Sarah created characters they follow through the units. “I give them a variety of back stories and future plans to reflect the diversity in my class. We analyze their situations, create solutions, discuss back-up plans, and plot out future plans for them.”

And she says a change in scheduling has played to her advantage. Back in 2009, Sarah's personal finance class lasted nine weeks. Not a lot of time to cover so much ground. That changed to 18 weeks after the district moved away from a block schedule. "I still have around 65 hours, but now it's spread out into shorter chunks. For me, it's a win. The longer time frame allows for more time for students to process the information and practice self-observation, and I have more time to build trusting relationships," she explains.

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**"Understanding the financial mindset that drives decisions, even those that don't seem financial at the time, can be really useful and necessary."**

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### Born to sow

"Without a doubt, imparting financial knowledge is what drives me in the classroom, and not just in the Personal Finance course. I incorporate a lot of financial literacy into my other classes AND my academic support period." Her additional responsibilities give her plenty of opportunities. She serves as the MATC Dual-Credit Instructor for Accounting and Microsoft Office. Dual-credit courses, she explains, allow eligible students to complete their high school graduation requirements while earning college credits at no cost to the student. "But becoming the Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator was the biggest change to my duties. This program integrates school-based and work-based learning to instruct students in employability and occupational skills." In essence, students get to "try on" possible career paths without the expense of post-high school courses. Sarah sees it as a time of discovery with very real financial implications.

"I had a student work for two years as an auto mechanic, and during his last semester realized he wasn't happy. He was relieved that he didn't waste two years of time and money after high school only to learn it wasn't for him. Another student, interested in business, was able to complete an accounting program at MATC in a year and a half

weabenefits.com

and begin working. It saved him both time and money," she adds.

### WDHS gives students a head start

Wisconsin Dells is one of just 800 school districts in the nation where a one-semester personal finance course is required for graduation. Currently, just one in six students across the nation graduate with a decent financial literacy education, and only 10 states guarantee at least a one semester course in personal finance before graduation. Wisconsin

is not among them—leaving it up to the district to decide if and how they want to do it.

"High school is really the best time to get it into their head," Sarah explains, "while they are on the cusp of major decisions that could determine the trajectory of their lives."

Data supports Sarah's hypothesis. Studies show that graduates of high schools with guaranteed financial education are 21% less likely to carry a balance on a credit card while in college<sup>1</sup> and are less likely to fall prey to high-cost predatory loans (such as payday loans) than their peers without guaranteed financial education.<sup>2</sup>

Statistics like these, financial literacy advocates say, show that providing financial education offers a great return on investment.

### Reaping the harvest

Sarah also has a lot of personal examples where the seeds she sows yield good results.

"Just last summer a student stopped by on her way to college, literally packed up in her new (used) vehicle purchase. She was excited to tell me that although the dealer encouraged her to take a six-year loan to reduce monthly payments as a college student, she was adamant on a four-year loan because she did NOT

want to have the loan follow her after college. She was so proud of herself," Sarah shares.

Another time, she saw a student at a baseball game. "Always the jokester—he told me he bought a brand-new truck and stretched out the loan to seven years! But then he began laughing and said, 'just kidding, I knew better than that.' In reality, he purchased a used truck for a price that fit into his budget with a four-year loan." Then his friend jumped in. "He said he got his first credit card and likes to max it out, then make only the minimum payments when he remembers. He broke out laughing too, and assured me he only uses it for gas and pays it off every month. They knew these things were the exact opposite of what I taught them and they didn't want to disappoint me. Not only did they apply the concepts to make responsible choices, but they wanted me to know it, too. And, they

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### More from Sarah Campbell

**Personally:** Sarah bought a house just blocks from where she grew up and says it was the best financial decision she has made in the last 12 years.

**Favorite resource:** Her favorite go-to resource for teaching aids comes from Next Gen Personal Finance (ngpf.org).

# YOUR INSURANCE



Are you

WISELY  
protected?

## How are you spending your home and auto insurance dollar?

While nearly everyone THINKS they are wisely protected, few actually are. Don't risk leaving yourself (and your family) exposed to financial loss or purchase coverages you don't need. Here are some tips on how to get wise with insurance.



### WISE IDEA #1: BUY VALUE, NOT PRICE

When you think about buying auto insurance, do you only think about price? If so, you may risk not being appropriately covered for your needs.

For example, when you're in the market to buy a car, you don't just think about price—you consider safety ratings, technical features, gas mileage, and so much more. You make a decision based on *value*. The same should go for your insurance.

Say you find a company online that could save you \$400 a year. That looks good at first glance, but it's important to consider the value of the policy, just like you do for a car. Ask questions: Does it have enough liability coverage to protect my assets? Will a low liability limit make me ineligible for umbrella insurance? As your car is a significant financial investment, would it have enough collision and comprehensive coverage to protect you from financial hardship if your car is seriously damaged? Once you have the answers, you may decide that saving \$33 per month wouldn't really be any savings at all.

To find the right balance between cost and protection, we recommend buying auto insurance using three general principles:

- Buy the right amount of protection for your situation.
- Buy more liability protection rather than less.
- Choose the highest deductible amount that you can comfortably afford.

In a recent survey, **68%** said they have purchased insurance policies not fully understanding what they are paying for.\* Let our Personal Insurance Consultants help you evaluate your insurance needs.

**Your insurance needs are not the same throughout your life nor are they the same as your neighbors',** which is why we recommend doing an annual insurance review. Member Benefits' Personal Insurance Consultants can help you evaluate your options.

For example, if you've gotten married, you may qualify for a discount on your auto insurance and also need to update your home insurance. If you have a baby,

you may need more coverage to keep your family secure and explore your life insurance needs as well. And if you've made major improvements to your home, such as a bathroom or kitchen remodel, you risk being underinsured if you don't report the changes to your insurance company. Don't forget to count new furniture, appliances, etc., into your new coverage needs.

## WISE IDEA #2: MAXIMIZE YOUR INSURANCE DOLLAR



If you're going to spend money on insurance, get the most you can get for your dollar.

Let's say you have \$130 to spend on insurance. You have two choices:

- Use the \$130 to cover the possible loss of **\$150-\$400**, or;
- Use the \$130 to cover a possible loss of **\$150,000**.

Obviously B is the better value. But in reality, most people do A. Why? People tend to think about risks they have experience with or can conceive of, like the fender bender or losing your mobile phone.

The risk of catastrophic events is often dismissed because they happen less frequently. However, they can be far more financially devastating.



### The wisely protected...

- ✓ Purchases insurance coverage based on needs and value rather than simply the lowest price.
- ✓ Maximizes their insurance dollar by optimizing coverage and deductible options to create a good balance between protection and cost.
- ✓ Regularly re-evaluates their situation and policy to ensure appropriate protection for all they've worked hard for.

## WISE IDEA #3: INSURE FOR THE CATASTROPHIC



It's the real reason we have insurance.

**Umbrella insurance** is overlooked by a lot of people, yet most financial planners consider it a must-have. Many people think it's only for the wealthy and that it's expensive insurance to carry, but it's actually very affordable.

Do you have a car? Teenage driver? Watercraft? Use the Internet? These are four of the biggest causes of liability losses. You don't have to do crazy things to be at risk—and you don't have to be a millionaire to be sued like one. And keep in mind, scheduling items like electronics, collectibles, and jewelry isn't a bad thing, but if you are doing that at the expense of coverage for the catastrophic loss, it isn't the best use of your insurance dollar.



In a recent survey, **76%** agreed that the experience of living through the COVID-19 pandemic has made them more concerned with protecting the things that are important to them.\* *Part of being financially secure is making sure you have the right protection for yourself and for your family.*

Many people don't include insurance in their financial planning, but in fact, **having the right insurance protection is an important part of your overall financial health and well-being.**



### Not sure if you're WISELY PROTECTED?

Let us take a look at your needs and your existing coverage. If you're already wisely protected, we'll tell you! If not, we'll recommend changes and coach you to be a better insurance consumer.

**1-800-279-4030**  
**[weabenefits.com/consults](https://weabenefits.com/consults)**

\*Survey from *The Company We Keep: 2021 Insurance Purchasing & Buying Trends* (bindable.com) | Source: Insurance Information Institute.

Property and casualty insurance programs are underwritten by WEA Property & Casualty Insurance Company. The terms and conditions of your coverage are exclusively controlled by your written policy. Please refer to your policy for details. Certain policy exclusions and limitations may apply.

# YOUR CONSULTANTS

## Spring into action with Individual Financial Consultations

We know you have questions. Our Member Benefit Consultants (MBCs) are here to help you answer them.

### Who are MBCs?

As retired educators and financial sector employees, our MBCs know the importance of saving for the future. They've spent years in education and have made the decision to give back and support those who work in public schools with their financial journeys.

MBCs are part-time employees who are available for a quick check-in with Wisconsin public school employees for individual financial consultations (ICONS). (For more in-depth help, explore our Financial Planning options at [weabenefits.com/fps](http://weabenefits.com/fps) or see page 10.)

### What is an ICON?

ICONS are for everyone, whether you're a first year teacher or months away from retirement.

ICONS are a time for you to meet with one of our MBCs and get your specific questions answered related to your financial journey.

### Meet Vicki

Vicki joined our MBC team in 2017.

She likes working with members to help simplify the process of planning for retirement to create happy future selves.

She also enjoys hiking, biking, kayaking on SLOW water, reading, and visiting family.



MBCs can walk through your questions on topics such as 403(b)/IRA enrollment, the importance of saving for the future, or tips for purchasing auto and home insurance. They can also help you review or consolidate your current retirement accounts.

### How do I schedule an ICON?

Our staff manages their availability on a scheduling platform called Calendly. This allows anyone who wants to meet with one of our MBCs to pop on the scheduling link, find the times that work for them, and schedule their ICON. Easy as that!

If you have a current MBC you're working with but need their Calendly link, please reach out to them directly. If you haven't met with anyone from our MBC team yet, visit [weabenefits.com/consults](http://weabenefits.com/consults) (or scan the QR code) to schedule your ICON. We even offer evening and weekend appointments.



### Where can I find additional resources?

Our website has great financial resources. Start by checking out our Learning Center, full of articles, resources, and calculators.

Where do I start saving for the future?

How do I open a retirement savings account?

Am I on the right track?

### Meet Mark

Mark joined our MBC team in 2014.

As a retired educator from Ripon, serving public school employees is in his DNA. He enjoys working with members along their financial journey to and through retirement.

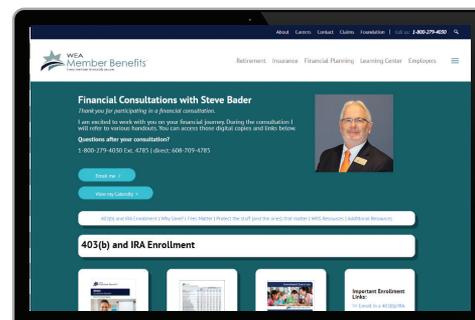
He also likes spending time with family, attending concerts, and grilling for family and friends.



Once you schedule an ICON, you will also receive an email with a link to a resource page (example below) to use before, during, and after your consultation.

### Interested in joining our MBC team?

We are always looking for new MBCs to help us better serve public school employees. Visit [weabenefits.com/careers](http://weabenefits.com/careers) to check out the job description and learn more. We'd love to chat with you about this amazing opportunity!



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enjoyed hassling me a little,” Sarah chuckles.

### In her own backyard

Sarah’s ultimate goal of financial independence for her students is also something she strives for personally and teaches in her home.

In 2009, when her daughter was just three years old, Sarah was intentional about financial literacy—using real life experiences as teaching moments such as the act of using cash in the grocery store to demonstrate the value of money in a transaction. And the financial lessons continued over the last 12 years.

“Because it has always been just the two of us, we have a lot of discussions about opportunity cost—not necessarily using economic terms, but instead ideas. ‘If we did this, got this, spent this—then what would we be willing to give up.’”

When her daughter turned 15 last spring, she started her first part-time job at a local greenhouse. “She loves getting her email alert on paydays. She examines the hours, the taxes, and the amount sent to her savings account. She’s had a savings account for a long time, but now she can see how her actions affect the balance.”

Her daughter has also dabbled in buying stocks with the help of her uncle. “They decided on an amount to invest five or six years ago. She looked for businesses she believed in and purchased a handful of shares in several.

She watches them and has seen the ups and downs in performance.”

### Sarah’s perennial practice

As for Sarah, she continues to practice what she preaches “maybe to a fault,” she admits. “Sometimes I am a little too frugal. I do love a good garage sale!” Giving herself permission to splurge sometimes is maybe her greatest financial challenge. “I probably could loosen up and enjoy some spending, but my mindset has always been focused on the financial security side of life.”

Sarah set her path when she was a teenager, taking some of her earnings from summer jobs to open an IRA. Then, she opened a 403(b) when she started teaching and has continued to invest and increase her contributions over the years. Saving is second nature for her. “I feel a great sense of security when I open my statements, knowing that the money is growing and will eventually meet me when I need it.”

Her parents, who retired shortly after the 2009 interview after a combined 78 years of teaching, inspire her. “It is encouraging to see them enjoy a comfortable retirement because of their commitment to saving and investing for their future. It motivates me to stay on track.”

Sarah points to the purchase of her home as the most important financial decision she has made since we last talked. “I was able to buy a home in the neighborhood where I grew up. I’m proud that I managed a 15-year

mortgage so it will be paid off in five more years.”

### Looking to future seasons

This hard-line approach isn’t for everyone but it works for Sarah. As for her future? She will continue to sow financial literacy seeds at WDHS in and out of the classroom. “I want to grow the Youth Apprenticeship program to reach more students and allow for more opportunities in all career paths,” she says. This school year she doubled enrollment in the program and looks to continue that trend.

“Personally, the next big step for me will be helping my daughter take her next steps in education.” The contributions Sarah has been making to her 529 college savings plan will help with the cost, but you can be sure her daughter will be involved in the financial aspects of her higher education. It’s just how Sarah helps good things grow.

## Financial literacy resources

In 2021, a Junior Achievement survey found that 95% of teens believe education plays an important role in equality, but just 38% had some sort of financial literacy class in school.

April is **Financial Literacy Month** and a great time to talk about the importance of financial literacy to your students...and learn more yourself. Here are a few resources.

### Don’t Be Jack Game—Student Edition

Our financial learning game for the classroom is available at no cost to Wisconsin public educators. [weabenefits.com/dbjstudent](http://weabenefits.com/dbjstudent)

### Jump\$tart Coalition

[jumpstart.org](http://jumpstart.org)

### Money Management International

[moneymangement.org](http://moneymangement.org)

### Edutopia

[edutopia.org/financial-literacy-resources-guide](http://edutopia.org/financial-literacy-resources-guide)

### Get more of the story!

Read the original story about Sarah and how she promoted financial literacy in the classroom and at home. Visit [weabenefits.com/yours](http://weabenefits.com/yours) or scan the QR code to view the Summer 2009 magazine.

### We’re here for you

Learn more about Member Benefits’ programs and services by visiting our website or calling 1-800-279-4030. [weabenefits.com](http://weabenefits.com)



<sup>1</sup> Stoddard, C. and Urban, C. (2018). The Effects of K-12 Financial Education Mandates on Student Postsecondary Education Outcomes.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey, M. (2019) Impact of Financial Education Mandates on Younger Consumers’ Use of Alternative Financial Services. *The Journal of Consumer Affairs*.

# YOUR KIOSK

## Fresh financial planning services

We've updated our financial planning service options to better serve you

Recent research has found that Americans who have a financial plan enjoy increased savings, better asset allocation, more confidence in financial decision-making, and more balanced portfolios. And written plans may be especially important for those with low- and moderate-income levels.\* Have you taken advantage of Member Benefits' financial planning services? Now is a great time, because we have even more options to meet your needs!

Member Benefits is very pleased to offer you a more flexible set of financial planning options to help you meet your financial goals. Our Financial Planning Advice options remain the same, but we've added an online do-it-yourself option as well as a new variety of assisted options. Our updated financial planning program goes beyond retirement planning and is designed to help you explore the financial goals that best meet where you are in your career. Here is an overview.

### Do It Yourself Financial Planning

For those who have a 403(b) account with Member Benefits, we offer a free interactive wealth management tool called eMoney. It provides holistic planning with a personal website and 24-hour access. You can monitor your budget, get investment updates, store important documents, receive strategic advice from our financial advisors via the portal, and much more.

### Financial Coaching

If you're new to investing and retirement saving or need guidance on a different financial topic, we have three new options available based on what you want to explore. Topics range from investment allocation to debt reduction to the Wisconsin Retirement System to college savings to initial estate planning—and more.

All financial advisory services are offered through WEA Financial Advisors, Inc., an SEC registered investment advisor.  
\*Source: PLANSPONSOR, "Having a Written Financial Plan Improves Savings and Asset Allocation."

### Financial Planning Advice

Our traditional financial planning options to explore your retirement readiness are still available. These are fee-based options that can help you evaluate your current investment portfolio or explore if you're on track for retirement. Discounts may be available for some participants.

### Get started

These services offer more in-depth assistance than our individual financial consultations (see page 8). For more information or to schedule a financial planning service, please visit our website or contact us. We look forward to serving you now and in the years to come.

[weabenefits.com/fps](https://weabenefits.com/fps)  
1-800-279-4030, Ext. 6730  
[weafa@weabenefits.com](mailto:weafa@weabenefits.com)

## Planning for the effects of inflation in your retirement plan

Inflation is top of mind lately for many of us, especially if you're retired. In 2021, inflation increased by 7%—its highest point since 1982 (Bureau of Labor Statistics). So \$1 at the beginning of last year was worth around \$0.93 at the end.

While inflation is an important consideration, it's just one of several risks you need to manage in retirement. Protecting yourself in retirement consists of:

- Creating an income plan that factors in inflation over the course of many years.
- Adjusting for inflation spikes that may affect your short-term budget.

While it's not time to panic, you shouldn't ignore it, either.

Here are a few steps to consider to help protect your savings.

**Save where you can.** Even modest steps can add up. Being flexible about your travel or where you live can also help.

**Continue investing.** Consider keeping some of your savings in stocks for long-term growth.

**Pay off debt.** Eliminating debt should be a top priority in retirement.

**Consider working.** Every dollar you earn in retirement is a dollar you don't have to withdraw. Go part-time or explore a second career as a buffer. It may be an interesting opportunity you hadn't considered.

If this has you feeling a bit anxious, keep this in mind: Having WRS

as a public school employee is a great advantage for you, along with Social Security's built-in cost of living increases and your personal retirement savings.

### Need some guidance?

Explore our financial planning options (see above). Our expanded services give you even more choices to meet your individual needs. We're here to help.

The above content is not a recommendation to invest. Please consult your financial planner to determine the path best for your financial well-being. Sources: Kiplinger, Forbes Advisor.



Life is full of magical  
**Moments**

**Hey, Student Artists! This one is for you.**

**Announcing our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Art Contest and new endowment**

Now in its seventh year, the WEA Member Benefits annual Student Art Contest, sponsored by WEA Member Benefits and WEA Member Benefits Foundation, Inc., is underway.

First, we have some exciting news to share! In honor of the late Loeymae Lange who taught art at Cooper Elementary School in Burlington, Wisconsin, for 30 years, an endowment has been established by Dr. Paul and June Lange to help support the Student Art Contest for years to come. This generous endowment is in memory of Paul's sister, Loeymae. Her love for the arts and all she did to inspire students will live on through this wonderful gift. We thank the Langes for the additional financial support to our art contest and hope other individuals will join in donating to the Foundation to help fund future opportunities for budding artists.

For this year's contest, monetary prizes will be awarded to 11 individual student winners, and the "Loeymae Lange Memorial Best in Show Award" will be given to one student artist whose art exemplifies originality, expression, use of artistic elements, principals of design, overall presentation of artwork, and message.

The contest runs through May 6. More information about the art contest, including contest rules, eligibility, and art entry information is available at [weabenefits.com/studentartcontest](http://weabenefits.com/studentartcontest). **Or scan here**



**Foundation seeks funders to meet new challenge grants our student mental health initiative**

As part of a pilot project to test a funding model for expanding private philanthropic support for school-based mental health programs throughout Wisconsin, WEA



Member Benefits Foundation, Inc., with major funding from its sister organization—WEA Trust—is providing challenge grants to four K–12 school districts as part of the pilot: Appleton (\$40,000), Racine (\$40,000), Sun Prairie (\$30,000), and Watertown (\$30,000). The Foundation will help these districts approach potential funders in their local communities to meet their challenge grant, potentially doubling the total for each district.

"We are delighted to have been chosen as a partner for the pilot," said Watertown Unified School District Superintendent Cassandra Schug. Janet Thomas, Associate Director of Student Services at Sun Prairie Area School District is "thrilled to be one of the recipients of this unrestricted grant," and added that the district will use the grant to "strengthen and expand our current school-based mental health priorities."

Initial funding for the pilot has come from a variety of companies and organizations. The Foundation is very pleased to support these school districts and invites funders in their communities to join in this challenge grant opportunity.

More information can be found at [weafoundation.org/news](http://weafoundation.org/news).

**Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)**



Did you know you can choose to give up to \$100,000 to a qualified charity from your IRA (other than an ongoing SEP or SIMPLE IRA) without counting it as taxable income when you are over 70½ years old? This type of gift is called a qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

A QCD will count towards your required minimum distribution (RMD). However, you can't claim a charitable contribution deduction for any QCD not included in your income.

Our financial advisors can help you calculate how much you may want to rollover to a Traditional IRA that will generate a QCD equal to the amount you intend to gift each year. You will still have an RMD from your 403(b), but it will be a smaller amount. Give us a call at 1-800-279-4030, Extension 6730 or visit [weabenefits.com/fps](http://weabenefits.com/fps) to learn more about QCDs.

P.S. Would you consider using all or part of your QCD to give to WEA Member Benefits Foundation? See the article on this page to learn about our new initiatives that support our public school teachers and students.

**Life insurance fast facts**

According to a LIMRA study:

- In 2020, 41 million people said they need life coverage, but do not have it.
- Half of the U.S. population estimates the cost of life insurance at more than three-times the actual cost.

**Get the facts**

Life insurance offers a variety of policy options to fit your financial needs. Visit [weabenefits.com/life](http://weabenefits.com/life) for a no-obligation quote.

Source: Insurance Information Institute. The life insurance program is offered and administered by Associates of Clifton Park. Life insurance products are underwritten by multiple life insurance carriers.

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