

SASSE ST. YOUTH SURVEY

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



MARCH 2025

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Executive Summary

The Sasse St. Youth Survey was conducted to assess the financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of youth aged 11-18 in the Clarksdale community. The primary goal was to inform the development of a community strategic wealth plan that addresses the needs and aspirations of young people. The survey engaged 293 respondents from five local schools, including Clarksdale Collegiate Public Charter School, Clarksdale High School, Coahoma County Junior-Senior High School, JW Stampley, and W.A. Higgins Middle School Academy.

Key Findings

- **Financial Education:** While 94% of respondents reported learning about money at home, only 54% indicated receiving financial education at school. There is strong interest in learning about budgeting, investing, saving, and entrepreneurship.
- **Financial Behaviors:** Only 38% of respondents have a checking or savings account, while 86% use financial apps like CashApp and PayPal. Many students struggle to balance saving with spending on desired items.
- **Concerns About Money:** Financial anxiety is widespread, with 76% worrying about money to some degree and 30% worrying “a lot.” Key concerns include paying for college, supporting their families, and meeting basic needs.
- **Future Plans:** Over 70% of respondents plan to attend college, 29% are interested in starting a business, and 13% plan to go to trade school. Many have entrepreneurial aspirations in fields like beauty, food, fashion, and technology.
- **Community Engagement:** About 54% of respondents would consider staying in Clarksdale if there were better job opportunities, affordable housing, and improved schools or training programs.

Youth Perspectives

Respondents expressed a desire for greater financial education, more job opportunities, and a better quality of life in their community. They want to learn practical financial skills and feel misunderstood by adults regarding their financial needs and pressures.

Recommendations

1. **Expand Financial Education:** Develop comprehensive financial literacy programs that cover saving, budgeting, investing, and entrepreneurship.
2. **Support Financial Stability:** Provide resources to help youth manage financial concerns, particularly related to college expenses and family support.
3. **Create Job Opportunities:** Partner with local businesses to create youth employment opportunities, especially in high-interest sectors.

4. **Enhance Community Resources:** Improve community infrastructure, including affordable housing and educational/training programs.
5. **Encourage Entrepreneurship:** Offer mentorship, funding, and resources to support youth in launching their own businesses.

This report lays the groundwork for a community strategic wealth plan that prioritizes youth development, financial education, and economic opportunities to secure a brighter financial future for the next generation.

Background and Objectives

The survey was conducted to gather data on the financial knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of youth in the community. The primary objective was to inform the development of a community strategic wealth plan that addresses the needs and aspirations of young people. The survey aimed to:

- Assess the level of financial education received by youth.
- Understand their financial behaviors, such as saving and spending habits.
- Identify their concerns and worries about money.
- Explore their future plans and aspirations.
- Determine factors that would encourage them to stay in the community after high school.

Methodology

The survey was conducted among 293 youth aged 11-18 from various schools in the community, including Clarksdale Collegiate Public Charter School, Clarksdale High School, Coahoma County Junior-Senior High School, JW Stampley, and W.A. Higgins Middle School Academy. The survey collected data on:

- Age and grade level
- Financial education at home and school
- Use of financial tools like bank accounts and apps
- Concerns about money
- Feelings about the future and plans after high school

Questions included multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Data was analyzed using pivot tables and supplementary analysis to compare responses by age and school.

Results

Demographics

- **Age Groups**
 - **11-13 years:** 103 respondents (35%)
 - **14-15 years:** 76 respondents (26%)
 - **16-18 years:** 114 respondents (39%)
- **Grade Levels**
 - **6th-8th grade:** 156 respondents (53%)
 - **9th-10th grade:** 43 respondents (15%)

- **11th-12th grade:** 91 respondents (31%)
- **Other/Not Provided:** 3 respondents (1%)
- **Schools**
 - **Clarksdale Collegiate Public Charter School:** 34%
 - **Clarksdale High School:** 27%
 - **Coahoma County Junior-Senior High School:** 37%
 - **JW Stampley:** 1%
 - **W.A. Higgins Middle School Academy:** .5%
 - **Not Provided:** .5%

Financial Education and Knowledge

- **Home and School Financial Education:** Almost all of the respondents (approximately 94%) reported learning about money and finances at home, with 46% indicating they receive "a lot" of financial education. Significantly fewer respondents (54%) said their school provides financial education, primarily through classes.

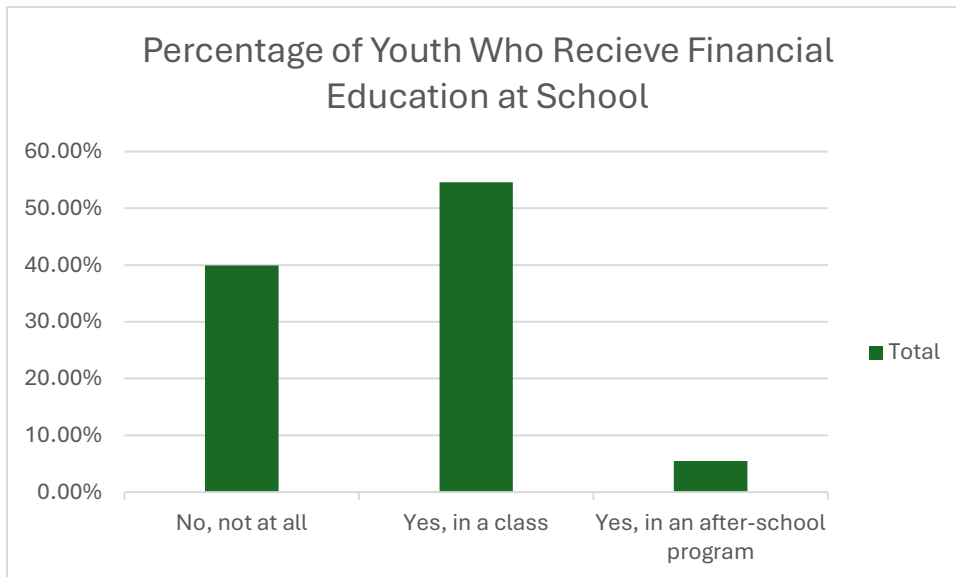


Figure 1. Percentage of Youth Who Receive Financial Education at School.

- **Desired Financial Education:** Respondents expressed a strong interest in investing, budgeting, saving money, and starting a business, with many wanting to learn about multiple topics simultaneously. Planning for college costs and using a bank account are also common areas of interest, reflecting concerns about education expenses and basic financial management. A few respondents mention reselling, buying a house, and taxes, indicating a desire for more specialized financial knowledge.

Financial Behaviors and Practices

- **Bank Accounts and Apps:** Only 38% of respondents reported having a checking or savings account, while 86% of respondents use financial apps like PayPal, CashApp, or Venmo.

- **Perspectives on Spending vs. Saving:** While some kids admit they like to spend money on things they want (like clothes, food, or toys), others emphasize that they also think about saving for important things.

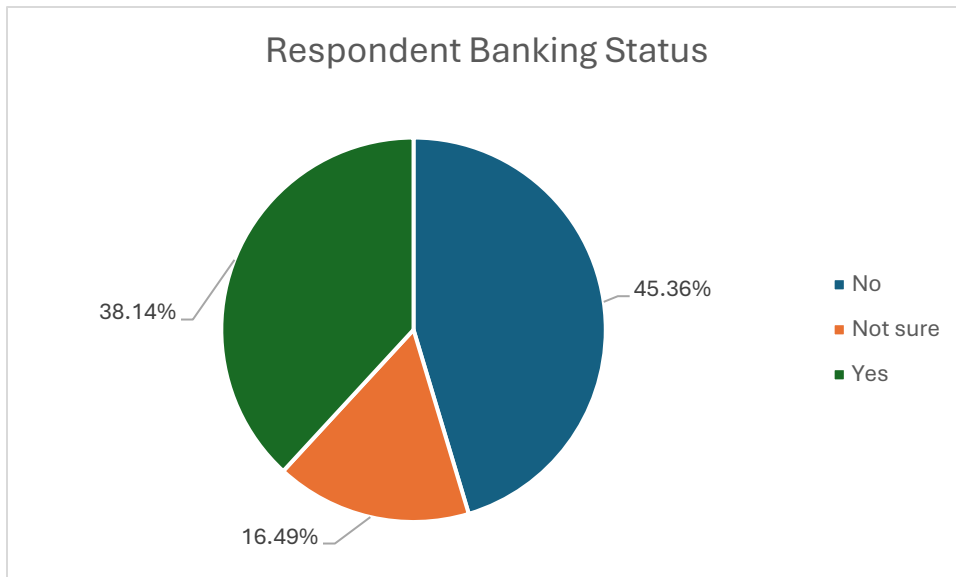


Figure 2. Respondents' banking status by percentage.

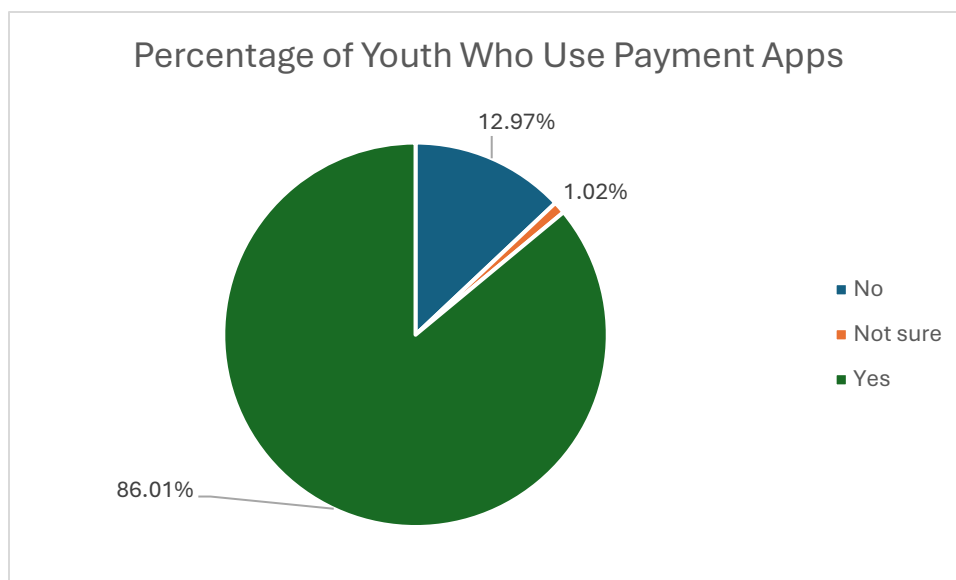


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who use payment apps.

Concerns and Worries About Money

- **Widespread Anxieties:** 76% of respondents indicated they worried about money at least some of the time, with 30% responding that they worried about money “a lot.” When asked how they felt about their future, however, 56% indicated that they were “very hopeful.”

- **Primary Concerns:** The most common worries about money included paying for college or training after high school, helping their families financially, and having enough money for basic needs like clothes and food. Some respondents indicated anxiety about keeping up with their peers, as well as about inflation and rising costs.
- **Ways to Reduce Worry:** The responses reveal that employment, financial education, and saving are the most common solutions to reducing financial worries among respondents. Many students feel that having a steady income and learning how to manage money would significantly reduce their stress. Additionally, concerns about rising costs and the need for community support are recurring themes. Some respondents express uncertainty about how to address financial stress, indicating a need for more guidance and resources.

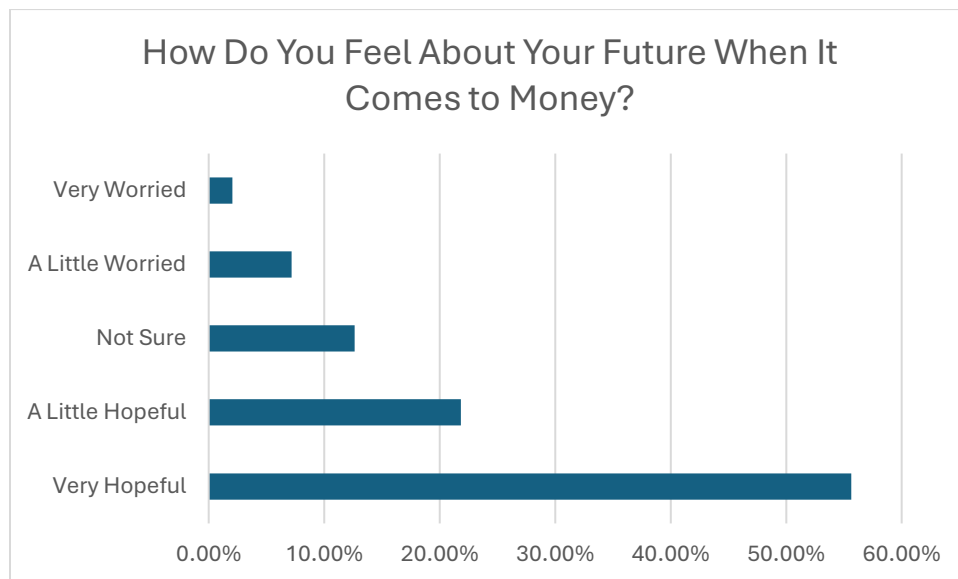


Figure 4. Respondents rate their feelings about the future when it comes to money.

Future Plans and Aspirations

- **Post-High School Plans:** The majority of respondents (over 70%) plan to attend college after high school, while others are interested in starting their own businesses (29%) or going to trade school (13%).
- **Business Ideas:** The responses reveal a diverse range of entrepreneurial aspirations, with beauty and personal care, food and beverage, and fashion and clothing being the most popular industries. Many respondents are interested in creative and artistic ventures, as well as technology and gaming businesses. Some are drawn to automotive, child care, and health-related businesses.

Community Engagement and Retention

- **Staying in the Community:** About 54% of respondents said they would consider staying in their community after high school if there were better job opportunities, affordable housing, and improved schools or training programs; 33% of respondents indicated a desire to leave.

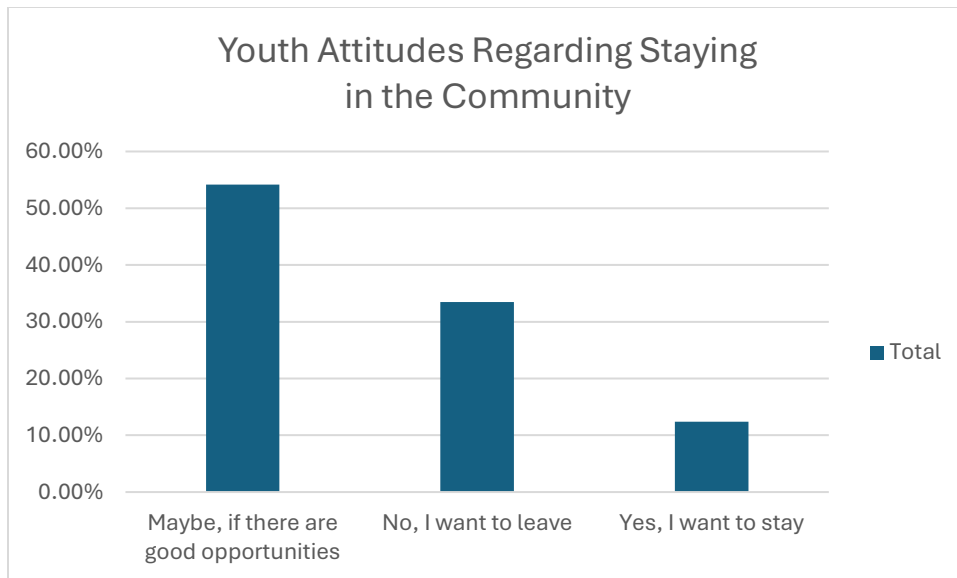


Figure 5. Respondents' attitudes regarding staying in their community.

- Factors to Encourage Retention:** The responses indicate that economic opportunities (jobs and entrepreneurship) are the most critical factor in encouraging individuals to stay in their community after high school. Affordable housing and better education/training programs are also significant factors. Additionally, respondents desire improved community amenities (including parks), reduced crime, and a better quality of life. However, some respondents express frustration with their current community and do not see themselves staying unless significant changes are made. Overall, the data suggests that a combination of economic, social, and infrastructural improvements would be necessary to retain young people in the community after high school.

In Their Own Words: What They Want Adults to Know

- They Want to Learn How to Manage Money**
 - "I wish adults knew how important money is to kids, even if it seems like we're not 'mature enough' to handle it. It's better to start learning early."
 - "Teaching children about money at an early age is crucial as it lays the foundation for their financial literacy and responsible money management throughout life."
- They Feel Misunderstood**
 - "I wish adults knew that kids don't just spend money on anything. We use it for a lot of things like clothes, cases, online shopping, and food. Sometimes kids save for things they really want."
 - "I wish adults knew that kids can't save money because of technology and online shopping."
- They Worry About Money**
 - "Kids worry about money just like adults. Especially kids who grow up in Clarksdale who are most likely impoverished."
 - "Inflation is making the price of the things we want and need higher. We still need them and we still want to be happy though."

- **They Want More Financial Education**
 - "We need a better understanding of how to invest, set a budget, etc."
 - "Many kids may want to save but don't know how and need advice."
- **They Want to Be Trusted with Money**
 - "I wish adults knew that even though we're their children, we take our money very seriously. We would mind if one of them took our money or stole it behind our back."
 - "I wish they knew that we know how to save money and don't just go spend it every time they give it to us."
- **They Want to Save for the Future**
 - "I wish adults knew some kids are ready to get financially stable and independent young, so by the time we're 21, we can be able to get a house on our pay salary or a car without having a co-signer."
 - "I want money to save up for college, get my own house, my own car, maybe start a small business."
- **They Feel Pressure to Keep Up with Trends**
 - "I wish that adults knew that kids actually try to save but want to keep up with trends."
 - "Kids often feel pressure about money, worry about family finances, and feel anxious about not having the same financial status as their peers."
- **They Want to Help Their Families**
 - "One thing I wish adults knew is that we try to save as much as we need to help around if our family needs it. It's not just about snacks or candy; it's about being able to help our parents because they work hard for us."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The survey results highlight the importance of financial education for youth in the community. While many respondents receive some form of financial education at home or school, there is a clear demand for more comprehensive programs that cover topics like saving, budgeting, investing, and starting a business. Concerns about money, particularly around college expenses and family support, are prevalent, and many respondents are hopeful about their future but express a need for more opportunities in their community.

Recommendations

1. **Expand Financial Education Programs:** Develop and implement more comprehensive financial literacy programs in schools, covering topics like saving, budgeting, investing, and entrepreneurship.
2. **Address Financial Concerns:** Provide resources and support for youth to help them manage concerns about college expenses and family financial support.

3. **Create Job Opportunities:** Work with local businesses and organizations to create more job opportunities for youth, particularly in areas of interest like technology, food, and beauty.
4. **Improve Community Infrastructure:** Invest in affordable housing and improve schools and training programs to encourage youth to stay in the community after high school.
5. **Encourage Entrepreneurship:** Support youth in starting their own businesses by providing mentorship, funding, and resources.

This report provides a foundation for developing a community strategic wealth plan that addresses the needs and aspirations of youth, ensuring a brighter financial future for the next generation.

Special Thanks and Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to the individuals whose support made this community engagement process possible. Special thanks to Courtney Jones of the Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center and volunteer Josephine Rhymes for their extraordinary efforts to collect and input the survey data. We also thank the participating schools for partnering with us.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Money Matters: Clarksdale Youth Survey

Hi there!

We want to learn about how middle and high school students think about money, their future, and their community. Your answers will help us create programs to support you and other students in the Sasse Street community. This survey is private, and you won't be asked for your name. Thank you for helping us!

Section 1: About You

1. How old are you?
 - ☐ 11–13
 - ☐ 14–15
 - ☐ 16–18
2. What grade are you in?
 - ☐ 6th–8th grade
 - ☐ 9th–10th grade
 - ☐ 11th–12th grade
 - ☐ Other
3. Where do you go to school?
 - ☐ W.A. Higgins Middle School Academy
 - ☐ Oakhurst Intermediate Academy
 - ☐ Clarksdale High School
 - ☐ Coahoma County Junior-Senior High School
 - ☐ Coahoma Early College High School
 - ☐ Lee Academy
 - ☐ Presbyterian Day School
 - ☐ St. Elizabeth Catholic School
 - ☐ Clarksdale Collegiate Public Charter School
 - ☐ Homeschool
 - ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Section 2: Financial Education

4. Do you learn about money and finances (like budgeting, saving, or credit) at home?
 - ☐ Yes, a lot
 - ☐ A little
 - ☐ Not at all
5. Does your school teach you about money or finances?
 - ☐ Yes, in a class
 - ☐ Yes, in an after-school program
 - ☐ No, not at all
6. Have you learned about money from other places (like a club, church, or online)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
7. What kinds of financial education would you like to learn about? (Choose all that apply)
 - ☐ How to save money
 - ☐ How to make a budget
 - ☐ How to use a bank account
 - ☐ How to invest money (like stocks)
 - ☐ How to start a business
 - ☐ How to plan for college costs
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
8. Do you have a checking or savings account?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure
9. Do you use apps like PayPal, CashApp or Venmo?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Not sure

Section 3: Current Financial Worries

10. Do you ever feel worried about money?

- ☐ Yes, a lot
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ No

11. What do you worry about when it comes to money? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Having enough money for things I need (like clothes or food)
- ☐ Helping my family with money
- ☐ Paying for college or training after high school
- ☐ Not being able to get a job
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

12. What do you think could help you feel less worried about money? (Write your answer)

Section 4: Thinking About the Future

13. How do you feel about your future when it comes to money?

- ☐ Very hopeful
- ☐ A little hopeful
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ A little worried
- ☐ Very worried

14. What do you want to do after high school? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Go to college
- ☐ Go to a trade school (like for plumbing, carpentry, or other skills)
- ☐ Join the military
- ☐ Start working at a job
- ☐ Start my own business
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

15. If you want to start a business, what kind of business would you start?

16. Do you think you might stay in your community after high school?

- Yes, I want to stay
- Maybe, if there are good opportunities
- No, I want to leave

17. What would help you stay in your community after high school? (Choose all that apply)

- More job opportunities
- Better schools or training programs
- Affordable housing
- A chance to start my business
- Other (please specify): _____

Section 5: Your Ideas

18. What's one thing you wish adults knew about how kids think about money? (Write your answer)

19. Is there anything else you'd like to share about money, your future, or your community?
(Write your answer)

Thank You!

Thank you for sharing your thoughts! Your answers will help us create programs and opportunities for students like you.

For more information, visit www.sassestreetwealth.org.

Appendix B: Financial Education Responses By School

