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Introduction

Are high school students being equipped to make important financial life decisions? High school is a time of life when decision making can significantly impact future trajectory. Since goal setting usually involves financial considerations, financial literacy is crucial. Understanding of basic financial concepts such as annual percentage rates, building wealth, yield, and future value of investment is associated with the ability to make decisions that can positively impact financial security. Guidance counselors are well acquainted with the educational content of school courses, extra-curricular activities, and continuing educational opportunities in the communities. They also ascertain students' preparedness for life beyond high school.

Sample Survey Questions

Indicate strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, no opinion:
 "In my professional opinion and based on my student interactions, by the end of grade 12:

- Students are taking steps to save money
- Students demonstrate understanding of the correlation between life goals and the money needed to achieve those goals, and plan accordingly
- Students would benefit from ongoing, supplementary personal finance education during or after high school"

Methods

Guidance counselors (N=61) from 30 high schools were surveyed. They were asked to use their professional opinion to rate their level of agreement with statements concerning students' ability to take basic financial actions and the need vs. demand for additional financial education on nine different financial topics, such as borrowing money, saving, or financing college. [m](#)

Objectives

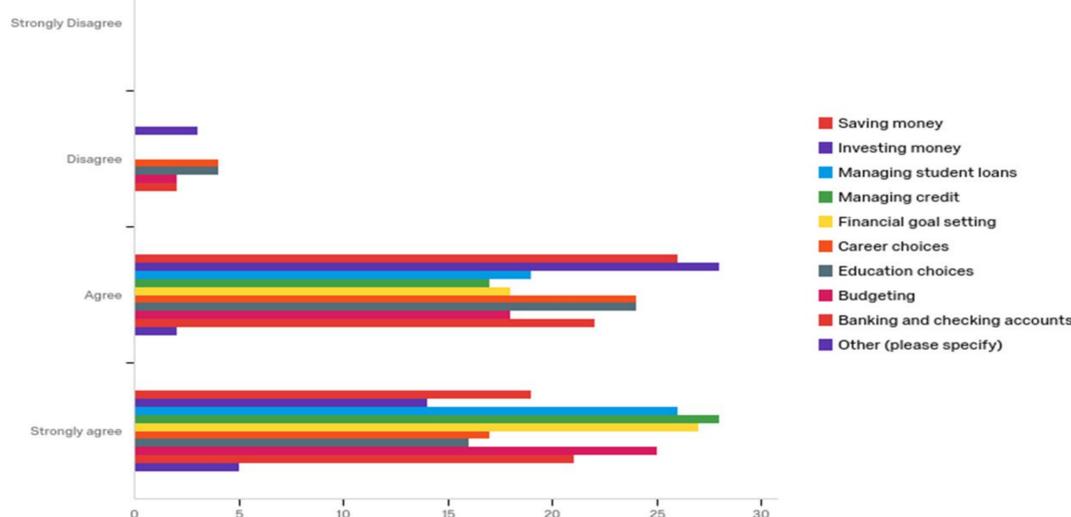
This project has three objectives:

- to gain insight into high school students' readiness to make wise financial decisions as they enter adulthood
- to determine areas where Extension can support educators to provide targeted financial education
- to test demand for financial education

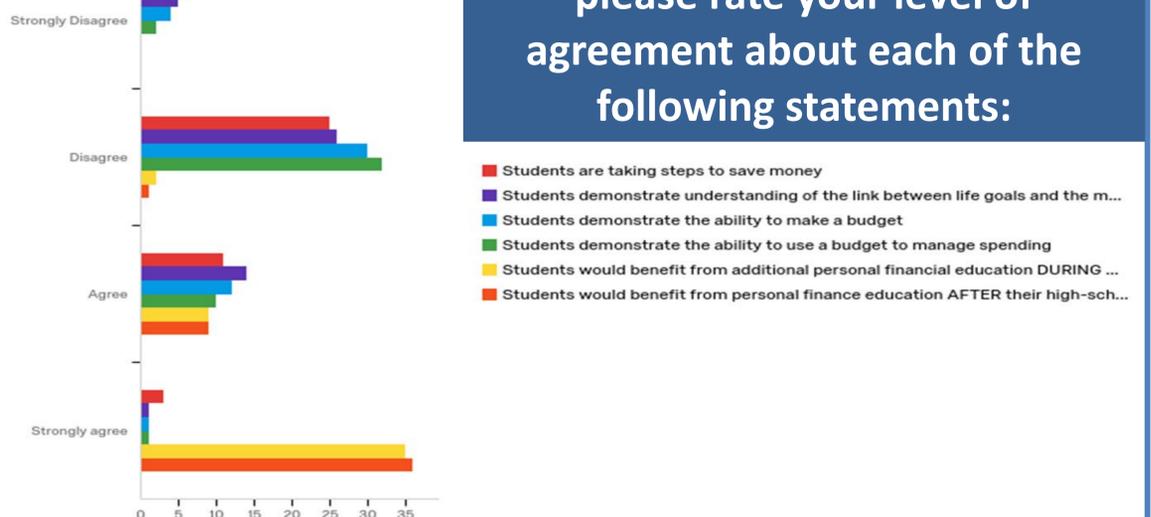
Conclusion

Counselors almost unanimously agreed or agreed strongly (99%) that students would benefit from more financial education, and that there was need for additional education in all nine areas given. However, percentages were lower when asked if there was a demand for more education, indicating a gap. The greatest demand was for instruction on borrowing and student debt. Next steps and future research will center developing programming on paying for college and understanding credit.

There is a NEED for after-school programs for students and families about the following topics:



Using your professional opinion, please rate your level of agreement about each of the following statements:



Contact

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Reference

George-Jackson, C., & Gast, M. J. (2015). Addressing information gaps: Disparities in financial awareness and preparedness on the road to college. *Journal of Student Financial Aid*, 44(3), 3.