

Family Meeting Summary: Education Funding Decision

This summary is designed to guide a family conversation about paying for education. It connects directly to the RetireCoast Education Decision Calculator and helps families make financially literate decisions based on data—not emotion.

1. Who Makes the Final Decision

Parents earned the money and carry the financial risk. While the student's goals and preferences matter, parents must make the final decision because they are responsible for household stability.

2. Education Is an Investment

Education funding is evaluated like any major investment: total cost, expected return, risk, and impact on emergency savings and retirement.

3. Start With the Career Goal

Before choosing a school, define the career goal. If multiple education paths lead to the same outcome, lower-cost options deserve serious consideration.

4. Use Data, Not Assumptions

Degree outcome data, salary statistics, and debt projections must guide the decision. Prestige alone is not a financial strategy.

5. Alternatives Are Valid Paths

Community college transfers, in-state schools, trade programs, apprenticeships, military academies, and grants are legitimate options that often preserve financial stability.

6. Protect Financial Safety

Emergency savings and retirement plans should not be sacrificed. The calculator stress-test helps ensure the plan survives unexpected life events.

7. Maturity and Responsibility

Young adults are still developing financial judgment. Parents must lead with structure, boundaries, and long-term thinking.

8. Goal of This Process

The goal is to support education while preserving independence, flexibility, and long-term security for the entire family.

How This Ties to the RetireCoast Calculator

Families should complete the Education Decision Calculator together before finalizing any commitment. The calculator provides total cost comparisons, funding gaps, ROI estimates, alternative paths, and a 'life happens' stress test to support the principles outlined above.

Calculator Hub: <https://retirecoast.com/calculators-hub/>

Closing Thought: Education should open doors—not quietly close them with debt.