

Parents have a say, too

WHEN DECIDING ON A SCHOOL, REACH OUT TO THOSE WHO KNOW YOU BEST

By Anne Chaconas



Every year, at thousands of dinner tables and living room couches, a silent war of wits wages. You may even be engaged in it right now. The battle lines are drawn: Who gets to pick the college? Is it you, the student who will be attending? Is it your parents, who are likely footing the bill? Should both have a say? Should one have more input than the other?

Your parents, naturally, believe they should have the most say. After all, they feel they have the best grasp on what's most beneficial for you. You, on the other hand, feel your input should be the most valid. You're the one attending, after all! Sure, your parents may be footing the bill, but they're not the ones who have to literally live with the decision—you do!

So, who should have a say, and who should butt out? As it turns out, both sides have valid points and opinions to share and, working together, can come up with the best solution—not only for your parents, but for you, too.

Parents have five very good reasons for why they should be involved in the college selection process:

1 They know you well.

Your parents probably know you better than anyone else. That's their strong suit. They've watched you grow up, and they know your personality, your wants and your needs. You may not realize it, but

they've spent a great deal of their time simply observing you, cataloguing your likes and dislikes and sharing in your dreams. They may not know the name of your secret crush, or they may have forgotten (as they serve it for dinner for the 100th time) that you hate broccoli but, ultimately, they know you at your deepest core, and can give you guidance based on this knowledge. In fact, parents are often a better source of insight than your best friend or significant other, because they can use their years of observation, coupled with their own experience, to give you the most thorough advice. Take advantage of it!

2 They want what's best for you.

Sure, they may not know the coolest fashions (or be willing to buy them for you), and their idea of a fun evening might bore you to tears (Scrabble? Really?), but when it comes to what will place you in the strongest position professionally and academically, they want what's best for you.

In fact, they want it so much that, in many cases, they're willing to go into huge debt for it. Don't forget, your parents want you to succeed—not only because they'll be able to brag about you to their neighbors, but also because they know that in academic success lies a bright professional future. And a bright professional

future creates many wonderful lifelong opportunities.

3 They've been there before.

We often tend to forget that our parents have been where we are now: At the brink of high school completion, with the whole future ahead of us, and with all the uncertainty and excitement that comes along with it. Your parents have gone down that path, and they know what they would have done the same and what they would have done differently. Ask them for advice! You may not always agree with what they say, or be willing to follow it, but you can at least get another take on a school or city that will make your decision that much easier. Even more importantly, you can avoid the mistakes they made (even if you may make new ones!).

4 They can offer an adult third-party perspective.

Perhaps parents' most useful insight stems from the fact that they are adults. They know what the "grown-up" world is looking for from a college graduate and can give you that information without holding back. Even more importantly, your parents will always be honest with you. A guidance counselor may spin things in a positive light, and a potential employer or college admissions counselor may sometimes

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sugarcoat a situation. Your parents will never do that. They'll be straightforward and upfront with just about anything you ask them—and, when it comes to the college selection process, that's exactly the kind of guidance and advice you need.

5 They may be paying for it.

Like it or not, if your parents are paying for your schooling, they should have some say about where you should go. They shouldn't dictate or demand that you attend a certain school, and the decision should always be a collaborative one, but they still deserve to have their say, and their words should carry considerable weight in your mind.

But what about what you want?

Of course, it's not all about your parents—nor should it be. You'll be

the one attending and, ultimately, you should be the one who is happiest with your choice. However, when making your final selections, don't rely on simply your own opinions—sometimes, when you're so focused on all the little details differentiating one school from another, you can lose sight of the bigger picture.

Let your parents give you guidance, and use their support to make the best decision. 🗑️

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admissions counseling for PowerScore Test Preparation (www.powerscore.com),

answers countless questions about college admissions and helps many students get into their top choice schools.



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