

NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS AROUND COLLEGE PLANNING PROCESS



BOSTON, NOVEMBER 14, 2018 – American Student Assistance® (ASA), a national nonprofit committed to helping students and families make informed decisions about their higher education and career opportunities, today released a new research report outlining parents' perceptions of, experiences with, and goals for their children's higher education planning experience. **American Dream** is the result of a series of focus groups, small discussions and survey research with parents nationwide that seeks to discover the driving forces behind the decision-making process and challenges that many families consider when choosing post-high school education.

This survey delves into the predicament that parents are often faced with – between dreams of their children earning a bachelor's degree and the financial realities of a four-year college.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

FOR 72%
OF PARENTS,

the definition of "college" is a four-year or bachelor's degree.

83%
THINK

that community college is a cheaper and high-quality education alternative, but only **14 percent** think a community college is likely to be the path their child will pursue.

61%
OF PARENTS

would consider themselves parental failures if their children didn't complete any post-high school education/degree.

"All students deserve to pursue educational opportunities that support their growth as learners and empower them to excel as professionals," said **Jean Eddy, President and CEO of ASA**. "ASA is committed to helping students and families find the best path for them to achieve their education and career goals by providing the resources and support to make an informed decision about their future."

The survey found that parents primarily view college as a means of gaining skills for future employment and securing a good paying job. While parents acknowledge the merits of other higher education options, the risk of pursuing a path they don't fully understand often feels too great and they default to a four-year degree. The lack of resources and support around post-secondary options, combined with a narrow definition of college, offers ASA an opportunity to inform and empower students and families to make a decision that is best for them. The U.S. workforce is projected to generate 50 million jobs by 2020, and tens of millions of those can be acquired through pathways other than a bachelor's degree. ASA is dedicated to improving the pipeline to higher education and helping students find a college and career path that is best suited for them. Through the development of this report and analysis of parents' responses, ASA has outlined a series of recommendations to improve the complicated college planning process and establish an environment where students are set up to succeed regardless of their choice in higher education. From increasing the availability and quality of online college planning tools to improving the public perception of career and technical education, American Dream sets a new standard for supporting students who are pursuing higher education.

ABOUT AMERICAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE® (ASA)

American Student Assistance® (ASA) is a national nonprofit committed to helping kids know themselves, know their options, and make informed choices to achieve their education and career goals. ASA has a 60-year legacy of working directly with students to increase their access to higher education through loans and financial education. ASA has turned its experience into impactful solutions for kids in middle, high school, and beyond to help them pursue their dreams. **To learn more about ASA's commitment, visit asa.org.**

