Fidelity INVESTMENTS

2025 Massachusetts College Savings & Student Debt Study

Fidelity Investments'® 2025 College Savings & Student Debt study explores the evolving attitudes and behaviors of high school students and their parents, and finds economic uncertainty across the country may be driving a surge in interest in non-traditional higher education paths and a sharper focus on return on investment when it comes to going to college.

Massachusetts high school students are most likely to consider private colleges or universities after graduation

By contrast, most parents expect their children to consider a public in-state college or university

High school students

Type of college	
Private college or university	46%
Public in-state college or university	22%
Unsure	6%

High school parents

Type of college	
Public in-state college or university	43%
Private college or university	26%
Mix of public and private	8%

Massachusetts parents are 3X more likely than students to say their child is most likely to consider vocational/technical school

PARENTS 6% Vs. STUDENTS 2%

When choosing where to go to college, college-bound students in Massachusetts are prioritizing their chosen field of study

What factors do you expect to prioritize when choosing where to go for college/higher education?

41%	Degree/program of interest
30%	Reputation
30%	Campus facilities

52% More than half of college-bound students in Massachusetts say cost is most important when choosing where or how to pursue higher education

Massachusetts' students top three goals for pursuing college

High school students are prioritizing career prospects and long-term financial goals

Getting a job that pays well enough to support me and my long-term goals	51%
Setting myself up for a solid/stable career	49%
Getting a job in a field I'm interested in/passionate about	47%

The top financial priorities for Massachusetts high school students are achieving financial security and being able to enjoy life

Financial security for myself and/or my family

66%

Enjoying life with what money can buy (vacations, outings with friends/family, etc.)

18%

Economic uncertainty is the leading life experience shaping Massachusetts students' views on the role of higher education

What life experiences shaped how you view the role of higher education?

44%	Living through recent times of economic uncertainty
39%	Living through difficult family situations
38%	Living through the COVID-19 pandemic

79% of Massachusetts parents are closely monitoring the market

While two thirds of Massachusetts parents say recent market volatility hasn't change how they're saving for college, nationally, those who have made changes to their approach are reducing savings, rebalancing investments, and saving outside of 529 plans:

45%	Still saving, but reduced the amount
31%	Rebalanced or reallocated investments to manage risk
29%	Started using other savings methods in addition to a 529
22%	Put college savings on hold to divert money to emergency savings

The majority of Massachusetts students and parents have discussed how they'll finance higher education

	Yes	No
High school students	61%	36%
Parents	84%	14%

67% of Massachusetts parents are concerned about market uncertainty affecting their ability to pay for their child's college education

75% of Massachusetts parents currently use a 529 to save for their child's higher education or plan to in the future

Among the 25% who don't save in a 529 and have no plans to, the top reasons include:

1. I'm not sure my child will use all the funds
2. I want to save in an account that's more flexible
3. I'm worried about how market fluctuations could impact the funds

How does having money saved in a dedicated college savings account make you feel as college gets closer?*

	Students	Parents
Grateful, to have saved some money towards college	67%	69%
Optimistic, that I / my child will be able to pursue higher education thanks to the savings	54%	56%
Accomplished, to have set a savings goal and partially or fully met it	33%	54%

*Based on national sample

Massachusetts parents have higher estimates than students for how much their family will owe after graduation

	Students	Parents
Average Total Student Debt	$15,336	$19,394
Average Total Parent Debt	$13,633	$20,052

43% of students and 50% of parents say they used their own best guess to come up with this estimate

When you (or your child) finish college, how much do you expect to pay per month towards student loans?

Massachusetts high school students and their parents have different expectations for how much they'll have to pay per month toward their loans

High school students
Average expected monthly payment: **$363**

High school parents
Average expected monthly payment: **$746**

After you (or your child) graduate from college, how long do you expect it to take to pay off student loans?

On average, Massachusetts high school students and their parents expect it will take up to 10 years to fully repay student and parent loans

Student loans

Students

9.1 years

Parents

10.7 years

Parent loans

Students

7.5 years

Parents

8.4 years

About Fidelity's 2025 College Savings & Student Debt Study

This study presents findings of an online survey among a sample of 304 respondents in Massachusetts (2,008 nationally) who are 15 years of age or older and either a current high school student in grades 10-12 (N=151) or a parent of a current high school student in grades 10-12 (N=153). Fielding for this survey was completed between May 22-June 4, 2025, by Big Village, which is not affiliated with Fidelity Investments.

About Fidelity Investments

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