In your experience, what is the most effective way of dealing with parents who have unrealistic expectations about their child’s college choice? Is it best to intervene or remain impartial?

Many parents may have unrealistic college expectations for their child simply because the college application process is a new experience for them and they arrive with preconceived ideas and a list of well known schools. The college application process is an emotional (and not always rational) experience since it may involve so many expectations, life-long dreams, and aspirations. Communication and education about the process, along with advocating for the student, are key to working with parents. I think it is in the best interest of both parents and the student to intervene by communicating the importance of researching schools to find the right match between the student and the college. My role is that of an advocate for the students’ interests in making sure the decision-making process is in their hands with the support of their parents. When parents realise their child’s wellbeing and success at college depend on the right match, they are more receptive to a broader range of schools. If unrealistic choices are still on the list, at least there will be other appropriate schools included to insure the student has options when the results arrive.

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