



"Children should be educated and instructed in the principles of freedom."

— John Adams, Founding Father



In the blink of an eye, January is behind us, and with it comes the realization that our children grow up quickly—bringing post-graduation decisions closer than we may expect! Freedom in Education is highlighting post-high school pathways and what meaningful college and career readiness looks like for today's students.

Rather than promoting a single destination after graduation, this conversation centers on understanding the full range of options available and helping students pursue paths that align with their strengths, interests, and long-term goals. Parents can encourage exploration of interests, aptitudes, and learning styles. Trades, apprenticeships, military service, entrepreneurship, certifications, community college, and four-year degrees all offer valuable opportunities—there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Parents can also help their students by leading the conversation to look beyond labels and focus on outcomes. Ask practical questions:

Does this path lead to real-world skills?

What are the costs and potential return on investment?

Does it allow flexibility if interests change?

What does success look like five or ten years down the road?

Involving students in the decision-making process early can make a meaningful difference. Job shadowing, internships, dual enrollment, career assessments, and conversations with professionals in the field provide clarity and confidence for students. When young people understand their options, they are empowered to make informed choices—and that is the heart of true educational freedom.

At Freedom in Education, we believe readiness means preparing students for life, not just a diploma. Supporting alternative pathways honors both parental rights and student potential, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive through informed and intentional choices.

**Courage
(Fortitude):**

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

the ability to face fear, difficulty, danger, pain, or uncertainty despite feeling afraid or vulnerable.

It doesn't mean the absence of fear, but rather the choice to act in alignment with one's values, responsibilities, or goals even when fear is present.

virtues

Let's not forget one of the most important steps is helping students identify who they are before deciding where they're going. Education is about more than academics—it is about developing strong character. Throughout 2026, we will highlight one core virtue each month that supports personal responsibility, resilience, and lifelong learning. These virtues provide students, parents and families with a shared language to navigate challenges, make thoughtful decisions, and grow into confident, engaged citizens.

We begin with **Courage**, one of the four cardinal virtues that serve as the foundation for strong character. Cardinal virtues are considered “hinge” virtues—qualities upon which all other virtues depend. **Courage** is essential because it enables students to act on what they know is right, even when doing so is difficult or unpopular.

In education, **courage** empowers students to ask questions, face challenges, learn from mistakes, and stand by their values with confidence. It strengthens resilience, supports independent thinking, and gives students the moral clarity to navigate academic and personal decisions. By cultivating **courage**, we equip students not only to succeed in learning, but to lead with integrity throughout their lives.

GET INFORMED.



[Turning Lemons Into Lemonade—and Skilled Workers](#) –Beanie Geoghegan

The [surge](#) in young people choosing to pursue Career and Technical Education (CTE) rather than attend a four-year college or university is one of the silver linings from government school closures during the COVID pandemic. Middle and high school students who had been programmed since kindergarten to believe college was the next obligatory step after high school graduation suddenly found themselves questioning what they’d always been told and seeking alternatives.



POLICY BRIEF: This month’s brief examines how artificial intelligence (AI) is being integrated into K-12 and higher education amid evolving policy, rising state leadership, and ongoing debates around ethics, academic integrity, and human oversight. It highlights the contrast between emerging international frameworks and the still-fragmented U.S. approach, where federal guidance remains limited and states are stepping in with their own policies. It remains to be seen how this month’s Executive Order will affect AI in education.

[California Leads the Way: New Law Protects Children from AI Chatbot Risks](#)

–Natasha Jaspersen



Founder's Podcast features [Chris Woods](#)

In this podcast, Beanie speaks with Chris Woods, teacher, author, speaker, and host of DailySTEM Podcast about how DailySTEM helps all students, but especially those considering CTE and trades. Chris created “DailySTEM” to provide educators and families with simple STEM resources that connect the real world to learning.

[Resource: https://dailystem.com/](https://dailystem.com/)

Parents should know:

[Press Release](#): The U.S. Department of Education has determined that the California Department of Education is out of compliance with federal student privacy law (FERPA) by encouraging school practices that limit parental access to certain student records. The investigation found that some information directly related to students was maintained outside of standard education files, preventing parents from exercising their legal right to review their child's records. Federal officials clarified that state guidance cannot override federal law and reminded districts that parents are entitled to full transparency regarding their minor children's education. This decision affirms a core Freedom in Education principle: families are essential partners in education, and informed parents are necessary for student success.

TAKE ACTION!



Freedom in Education is seeking Ambassadors across America to bring our SOLUTIONS to more states! Ambassadors could be parents, teachers, or community members who share our vision and mission. Be a part of a solutions-driven organization focused on results in the classroom and restoring excellence in K-12 Education.

Learn more about the solutions we champion at freedomined.org.

Invest in Freedom.

States now turn to Freedom in Education for:

Standards • Frameworks • Lesson Plans • Professional Development

Your support is helping rebuild the foundation of American education

—one classroom, one teacher, and one child at a time.

Your financial contribution supports:

- Rigorous K-12 Academic Standards and Framework Development
- K-12 Franklin Science Standards
- K-12 Archimedes Math Standards
- K-12 English Language Arts Standards
- Content-Rich K-12 Lesson Plans and Professional Development
- Parental Resources and Support
- Freedom of Information Requests (Open Records)
- Teacher Coalition and Engagement

DONATE

Your story matters.

If you've experienced challenges or victories in your child's education, we want to hear from you! [Share your story](#) with Freedom in Education and help inspire others to stand up, speak out, and make a difference in their schools and communities.

Courage is contagious!

[SHARE YOUR STORY](#)



Freedom in Education is a 501(c)(3), 501(h) non-profit organization. We rely on donations to fund our mission, expand our reach and offer viable solutions to all communities. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible in the USA.

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