The fatal flaw of the education system

Business

As a high school senior, one thing has become increasingly clear to me throughout my career as a student; the educational system is flawed. From an early age, students are told that the grades they receive are more important than their mental and physical health.

I can remember the first time that I took an SOL in third grade. Third grade! I wasn't more than 9 years old, but the importance that was placed on the test was extreme. I felt a lot of pressure from my fellow classmates to get a good grade. I felt as if the grade I received would define the rest of my life. Decide my future career. Even determine what college I would get into.

That's right, I was taught to think about college before I could probably even spell it with an e instead of an a. My stomach hurt because of nerves and my eye developed a twitch, but I went into the test determined to show my teacher, friends, and family that I was a smart, capable individual. I ended up passing with flying colors and was very proud of myself. However, today, I can't help but think about the damage that must have been done to the children who did not pass the test. At 9 years old, they were already told by the educational system that they weren't good enough, not smart enough to succeed.

Since then, I have been the kid that hasn't passed the test more than one time, and can honestly say, it feels terrible. Seeing all your friends walk around the classroom, showing off their A's and B's and then looking down at your D or F is a hard hit. The times that this happened, I felt inferior because even though I'm a kind, generous, and creative young woman, none of these things mattered to the education system when I got a bad grade. By instilling

exceedingly high standards in students, the education system sets many on the path to failure. Success is trying your hardest, not being better than everyone else, but the system often ignores this.

Often, tests do not even define what you really know about a topic. They're like memory quizzes. So even though I could tell you all about Alexander Hamilton and his accomplishments, I couldn't quite pin down the exact number of the federalist paper(s) that he wrote about factions if asked on an exam. I write this as modestly as possible; I know a lot of information. I'm a smart woman. But when I have to stay up till 12: 00 at night to study for a test or finish a project, I don't feel that way, and I'm not able to perform at my best the next day.

When report cards come out and I don't have all A's, I feel bad about myself. The anxiety that consumes me when a teacher is giving back test papers is ridiculous, and the education system is flawed because of that. It values knowledge over health and measures it through exams with ridiculously hard questions. The students of today should be taught that kindness, honesty, friendship, generosity, and trustworthiness are more important than any number on a paper. Who cares that I am number 68 out of 399 seniors based on my grades. It shouldn't matter that I'm not in the top 5% of my grade.

Because, guess what? I still got into college. And it's an amazing one at that; George Mason University. I'm still kind and respectful, even though I got a bad grade on a math test. I'm still more than any number or letter grade, and that's what the education system needs to start showing students because when I'm 100 years old, I'm going to be looking back upon the

friendships I made, the good memories I have, the positive influence I had on others, not the 60% I got on a test my sophomore year.