

School, stress, and study halls

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The National Center for Education Statistics recently reported, “ In fall 2015, some 20. 2 million students are expected to attend American colleges and universities, constituting an increase of about 4. 9 million since fall 2000” (Digest). This makes it more competitive for students to try to get into top tier colleges. Therefore, students are increasing the load of academic classes within their school schedule and thus eliminating necessary free periods to catch up on work or to take a breather from the rigor of intellectual pursuits.

All students deserve the right to have an academically competitive school schedule while still having a designated free period during the school day. All students must have at least a forty minute study hall in their schedule to reduce the significant amount of stress in their lives. The average high school student has an unhealthy amount of stress in their life as a result of school work. The typical high school student often does an extracurricular activity after school, then goes home and starts homework immediately, yielding to nothing except a bladder too filled with coffee which was futilely guzzled to relieve the exhaustion from the night before and the sweet beckoning of much needed slumber. The 2014 survey of the American Psychological Association found that teens reported stress greater than any other age group(Williams). Furthermore, eighty seven percent of teens surveyed reported large amounts of homework as a leading stressor in their lives, a greater percentage than any other stress factor examined(Suldo).

This goes to show, that if students had an extra forty minutes a day to work on their homework, it would possibly eliminate the leading cause of stress in the group of Americans that harbors the greatest amount of stress within their lives. Does a person have to be told that deep pitted stress, burning in

a student's stomach like a hot ball of lead, is bad for a teen's mental and physical health? Also, seventy three percent of students involved in a survey said that lack of time to balance school work, social time, and family time was a main cause of stress in their lives(Suldo). If students had a study hall built into their schedule, then they could get some of their homework done; and therefore, be able to do leisure activities that benefit a teenager's mental health. Everyone, no matter their age, deserves the ability to watch a Christmas movie with their family, play in the yard with their siblings, or have a night with their friends that becomes immune to the corroding advances of time. Some people believe that study halls are not productive, and limit the level of achievement a student can amount to (Boothby). However, I think that the presence of a study hall extends further than just getting schoolwork done.

A study hall creates a necessary reprieve from rigorous academics that allows students to clear their heads in a healthy manner. Even though there are some students who will abuse the privilege to study, the vast majority of students need that rest period to be at their maximum productivity level. So, even though some people say that study halls are inefficient on paper, the mental benefits far outweigh the productivity deficit. If students were to have a study hall built into their schedule, it would allow them to have an academically competitive schedule, while also allowing them to reduce the dangerous amount of stress in their lives. The issue of stress is only going to get worse among students, as educational pressures grow at a breakneck rate.

All administrators and all officials need to take into account the mental health of all of today's budding minds and provide a free period for all students in their school schedule.