

# So much work, so little time

Business



Imagine being a sophomore at a prestigious high school before finals week. You spend seven hours Monday through Friday reviewing old classwork, asking questions, and practically relearning every bit of information you have acquired throughout the school year. After school, you head off to sports practice, rehearsal, or whichever commitment you have made for the day. Then you finally get to go home, where you study and do more schoolwork for a few more hours before you finally fall asleep.

That time asleep is the only true break you encounter; without it, getting through the day is impossible. Now, imagine your life without that glorious rest. The days start running together, the line between one day and the next is blurred, you are never really awake, and you are never really asleep. Once that week of finals rolls around, you have only gotten five hours of sleep the week before. As you are handed that first test, your uneasy and inconsistent state of consciousness reassures you of the certain doom you are about to face.

The panic piles on, and there seems to be nothing you can do to relieve it. If only you could sleep. Some of the main causes of insomnia, a sleeping disorder that makes it difficult to fall or stay asleep, are anxiety and stress-issues that many of us high school students have to deal with daily. Unfortunately, parents, teachers, and administrators are unknowingly causing much of these problems, because the pressure they put on students to do well is immense. Those who cannot handle the pressure sometimes fall into horrible states of being, such as depression or insomnia. And in truth, the constant emphasis on excellence may be perceived to be in the student's best interest, but it may also be what causes some to fall.

Walk through the halls of any high school, and you will find the quarterback begging his teacher to accept his late assignment so he can play in the upcoming game, or the girl frantically searching her locker and backpack for the essay that she most likely left on her desk at home. If you don't blink, maybe you will be able to see the student running to his next class, notecards in hand, so he can have a few extra minutes to cram for his test before it starts. And these students have one goal in mind: to do well. To do better than well; to be flawless. Why? Because flaws won't get them into an ivy league. But perfection of this kind is a myth, it's a Phoenix in the sky.

And chasing after the golden bird eventually wears you out. Many argue that this chase is what leads students to work harder, eventually becoming a new and improved " SuperStudent". But the pressure does not always build an all-mighty android, it can create a breakdown. As for the quarterback, he has a lot on his plate. He must continually bring his A-game while playing in front of college scouts and try to lead his team to victory.

Yet after the game, he must go home to study for the test scheduled for the next day. He is the ultimate multitasker, because he puts effort into multiple aspects of his high school career. Not only do colleges want those with perfect grades, they look for those with talent and stamina; those who participate in sports and extra curricular activities. But if colleges truly want the smartest students with the best GPAs, why is it necessary to stress the other things too? It takes away from effort and focus students could be putting into their schoolwork. Of course, colleges are in search of the best. They want students who can do all of these things, and who can balance them well.

However, not everyone can handle this labor as a teenager. If colleges only truly seek out those who juggle multiple tasks with ease, those who cannot would be seriously deprived. Contrary to popular belief, it is entirely possible to be highly successful without being a perfect student. Albert Einstein, for example, was a below average student who most likely suffered from a type of autism. However, he is an esteemed scientist, probably most famous for his contribution to physics. If Einstein can do it, so can anyone else.

It is not necessary to be perfect to succeed in life, so the image of perfection branded into student's minds is useless. So then why is it being done?

Perhaps adults want to push their kids and challenge them to become their best, and glorifying perfection is the only way they know how to do it. But putting great importance on superiority is not what is needed; because in fact, those students who want to push themselves will do so on their own.

The idea of the perfect "student"; one with a 4.0, successful sports career, and an intimidating amount of determination, has become the new standard in school, and we are cracking under the pressure.

It certainly is not easy to rise up to the bar that has been set excruciatingly high for us. The disappointing reality is that we are not perfect; we will not always receive above average grades, nor will we always study for three hours the night before a test. Honestly, half of the time we forget that a test is even scheduled! As young yet maturing adults, we discover along the way what works for us; and more importantly, what doesn't. We discover that we assume total responsibility over our own lives, and we no longer have to fulfill the requirements of those around us. We shall set our own goals and create our own standards.

And we will do so without losing a wink of sleep.