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Teen Writes

By Cecilia Chang

There is no doubt that Lamorinda holds their students to a high level. From the value of academics, extracurriculars and volunteer work, it may seem almost inevitable that students feel stressed.

Of course, stress is not always a bad thing; it motivates students to stay focused. But as the number of student suicides have been steadily increasing, lowering this stress may be worthwhile to look into.

Using an online survey of roughly 75 students based in the Lamorinda high schools, I asked how stressed they were on a scale of 1-10; the average was around 8. Two of the main factors for this seemed to be homework and lack of sleep. The average amount of homework students are currently receiving totals out to 4.5 hours. The suggested amount of homework for students with seven periods is around 2.3 hours of homework at most.

But this is not the student's main issue with homework. As one student, Devon Ashburn, states, "Most of the homework we receive is busy work. In my opinion, it doesn't help me learn more or gain more insight in the class."

The majority of the students surveyed seem to agree. The prevailing attitude seemed to be while students don't enjoy having lots of homework, they can tolerate it if it inspires them to learn more. Their biggest issue is they feel that teachers are giving massive amounts of tedious work, which doesn't motivate students.

In many cases, the amount of homework doesn't immediately equate to stress: the students want the homework to be useful, and help them understand the concept in class.

The other deciding factor in student stress: sleep. Seventy-nine percent of students surveyed say that they are not getting enough sleep. Additionally, of these students, eighty-nine percent said this directly correlated to poor performance in class.

An anonymous student expresses this concern: "I sleep more than most people I know yet I've dropped to C's on tests because I couldn't possibly keep my eyes open."

The Acalanes Union High School District has been taking measures to lower student stress. In the 2017-18 school year, block scheduling will be put into place, in which the day is spaced out into intervals of four classes, two of which contain a free "academy period" and a late start. The aim of this schedule is explained best by student Erica Wilson: Theoretically, students will have more time to do homework, and be able to sleep more so it should be good. Also, if "academy periods" are utilized wisely by students this could be very helpful.

A one-week test run was put in place, and many people seem to agree that although the block scheduling helps to an extent, it is extremely hard to concentrate in long periods of time, and teachers seem to be more inclined to give out more homework, which quickly builds up.

The students of Lamorinda are the future of Lamorinda. For the sake of our future, it is important to ensure the well-being of our students while they juggle their busy academic, athletic and social lives.

Cecilia Chang, a student attending Campolindo High School, is set to graduate on the year 2020. At Campo, her favorite subjects are the sciences, including Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. In her spare time, she plays multiple instruments, and enjoys a multitude of sports, although not competitively.

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