

Tackling the Student Stress Dilemma

Independent School Executive
Forum

Managing Your Audio



Use Telephone

The screenshot shows a window titled 'Audio' with a minus sign icon in the top left corner. Under the heading 'Audio Mode:', there are two radio button options: 'Use Telephone' (which is selected with a green dot) and 'Use Mic & Speakers' (which is unselected). Below these options, the text 'Dial: +1 800 555 1212' is displayed, followed by 'Access Code: 141-607-114' and '(and additional numbers ..)' in parentheses. At the bottom, a green message states 'You are connected to audio'.

If you select the “use telephone” option, please dial in with the phone number and access code provided.

Use Microphone and Speakers

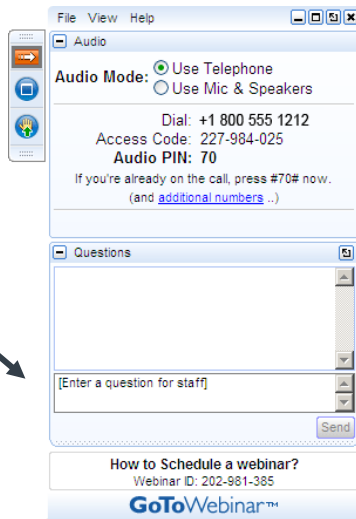
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If you select the “mic & speakers” option, please be sure that your speakers/headphones are connected.

Questions:

To ask the presenter a question, please type into the question panel and press send.

Questions panel



The screenshot shows the GoToWebinar interface with the following elements:

- Audio Section:**
 - Buttons: File, View, Help
 - Audio Mode: ☒ Use Telephone, ☐ Use Mic & Speakers
 - Dial: +1 800 555 1212
 - Access Code: 227-984-025
 - Audio PIN: 70
 - Text: If you're already on the call, press #70# now. (and [additional numbers ...](#))
- Questions Section:**
 - A large text input area.
 - A label: [Enter a question for staff]
 - A Send button.
- Footer:**
 - How to Schedule a webinar?
 - Webinar ID: 202-981-385
 - GoToWebinar™ logo

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Evidence of Poor Student Well-being at Every Turn

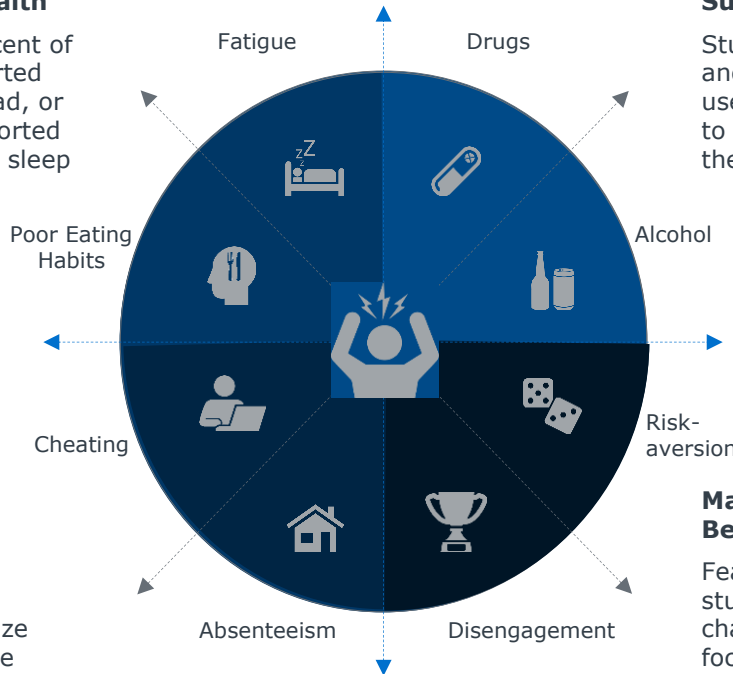
High Levels of Stress Manifest in a Variety of Ways on Campus

Poor Physical Health

Seventy-three percent of students who reported feeling unhappy, sad, or depressed also reported not getting enough sleep

Substance Misuse

Students look to drugs and alcohol to relax; use prescription drugs to focus, work late into the night



Academic Misconduct

Overwhelmed students copy homework, plagiarize online sources; take "mental health days" off from school

Maladaptive Behaviors

Fear of failure keeps students from new challenges; singular focus on grades creates disengagement



External Factors Contribute to Student Stress

Outside of Your Control, but Having a Huge Impact



New Parenting Style

Performance-driven parenting creates busy, failure-adverse, overscheduled students; high level of parental intervention leaves students unable to cope on their own

“You’ve heard of the helicopter parent. What about the snowplow parent, who **plows the path ahead to make it as smooth as possible**? This approach isn’t helping kids any more than a helicopter parent does.”

Head of School



College Admissions Stress

Increased selectivity of elite colleges creates academic, extra-curricular pressure among high school students

“Parents say: ‘I got into Yale; you’ll get into Yale too.’ Well, you got into Yale 25 years ago. Maybe your kid will get into Yale, and maybe they won’t. **But the pressure you’re putting on them is just so high.**”

Jennifer Jones, Director of Counseling and Wellness, John Burroughs School



Social Media and Technology

Increased connectedness eliminates time away from social pressure, exacerbates regular aspects of adolescence

“For kids who are anxious, technology amplifies that. When I was in high school, I went home and watched Miami Vice on Friday night, I may have been vaguely aware people were doing cooler things, but **I didn’t have to watch the pictures unfold in real time.**”

Liz Perry, Head of Upper School, St. Luke’s School



New Parenting Style Having Negative Impact

Over-involvement, Pressure Contributes Negatively to Student Wellness

New Parenting Style Leaves Students...



Overscheduled

41% of 9-13 year olds report feeling stressed always or most of the time because they have too much to do



Grade-oriented

90% of high school students report getting good grades is important, but only 6% say they value learning



Unaccustomed to Failure

"10 or 20 years ago kids were allowed to make more mistakes. Sign up for that course that interests you and if you don't get a good grade that's ok! It's 7th grade. It's not like that anymore."

Helping or Hovering?

"Parents need to understand they're not giving their children a chance to develop competency, a feeling of pride and well-being. Children are not developing the skills they need to become fully functioning adults."

*Holly Schiffrin, Associate Professor of Psychology,
The University of Mary Washington*

Source: The Princeton Review. (2015). "Student Life in America: Teens' and Parents' Perspectives on the High School Experience."; Advocate Health Care. (2013). "Dangers of Overscheduling Your Child."; Schiffrin, H. et al. (2014). "Helping or Hovering? The Effects of Helicopter Parenting on College Students' Well-Being." Journal of Child and Family Studies; English, B. (2013). "Snowplow Parents' Overly Involved in College Students' Lives." Boston Globe; EAB interviews and analysis.

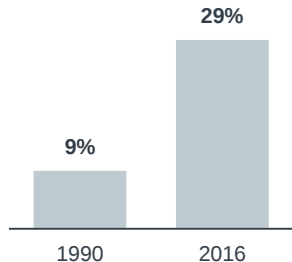


More Applications Increases Competition

More Students Apply to More Schools, Selectivity at Top Schools Increases

Students Expand College Lists to Secure a Spot...

Students applying to 7+ schools



...Making their Targeted Schools Even More Selective

Average admissions rate of top 10 selective colleges



The Catch-22 of College Admissions

"Kids see that the **admit rates are brutal and dropping**, and it looks more like a crapshoot. So, they send more apps, which forces the colleges to lower their admit rates, which spurs the kids next year to send even more apps."

*Bruch Poch, Former Dean of Admissions,
Pomona College*

Too Much of a Good Thing?

Constant Connection has Negative Impact on Kids

In the Past, Students Had Few Options for Staying Connected

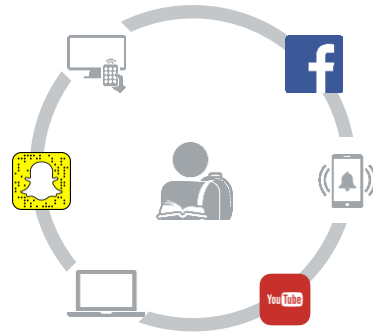


78%

Of high-income teens owned a smartphone in 2014



Today, Students Have Virtually Limitless Options



Increased Technology Use Correlated with Negative Outcomes

25%

Of adolescents report being bullied repeatedly through the internet or cell phone

2.7x

The likelihood of depression among heavy users of social media versus non-heavy users

2.6x

The risk of reporting eating or body image concerns among frequent social media users, compared to less frequent users

But You Are Also Part of the Problem

Internal Processes, Programs Having Equally Negative Impact on Students

Current Practice Contributes to Poor Student Outcomes in Four Areas



Limited Ability to Identify, Reintegrate Students in Crisis

- Current approach fails to connect all students in crisis to necessary support
- Reintegration poses logistical, academic, and social challenges



Schedule Organization Undermining Student Health

- Traditional school schedule keeps students constantly “on-the-go”
- Organization and timing of work often designed with adults, not students, in mind



College Admissions Programming Exacerbating Stress

- High school experience heavily focused on “getting in” to the right college
- Classes and activities geared at college resume-building



Inadequately Preparing Students for Future

- Schools struggle to find sufficient time to develop coping skills, adaptability necessary for future success

Tackling the Student Stress Dilemma

15 Practices for Improving Student Mental Health, Well-being

Opportunities to Better Support Students

Expand the Support Network

1. Faculty-led Crisis Identification
2. Stigma-mitigation Strategies
3. Student-led Peer Support
4. Coordinated Reentry Processes



Deploy Time in Student-centric Way

5. Student-Faculty Homework Load Calibration
6. Homework-free School Days
7. Optimized Final Exam Schedule
8. Mission-aligned School Schedule



Reframe College Admissions

9. Goal-setting for Personal Growth
10. Community-based Career Exploration
11. College-facilitated Application Prep
12. Admissions Officer for a Night



Equip Students with Life Skills

13. Life-long Fitness-oriented P.E. Curriculum
14. Self-regulation through Mindfulness
15. Growth Mindset School Culture



- 1 **Support Students in Crisis**
 - 2 Deploy Time in a Student-centric Way
 - 3 Reframe College Admissions
 - 4 Equip Students with Life Skills
-

Key Lessons for Supporting Students in Distress



Moving from Reactive to Proactive Mental Health Strategy



1

Use entire school community as eyes and ears

Expand the reach of your counseling staff by equipping broader school community (especially faculty, peers) to recognize, describe signs of students in distress, to connect more students with needed care; provide forums for discussing students of concern

2

Normalize mental health issues, help-seeking behaviors

Reduce barriers for students seeking support by increasing awareness and reducing stigma around mental health concerns, empowering students to access support when necessary

3

Create a reintegration blueprint with clear roles, ownership to support all student needs

Design processes, delineate clear roles, ensure accountability to ensure students reintegrating into campus life are supported academically, socially, and psychologically

1

Support Students in Crisis

2

Deploy Time in a Student-centric Way

3

Reframe College Admissions

4

Equip Students with Life Skills

Yesterday's Schedule, Today's Demands

Latest Research Suggests School Day Adding to Student Stress

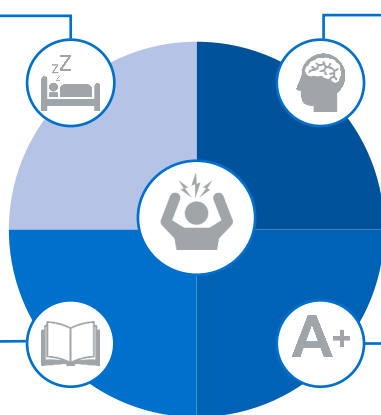
School Day Undermining Student Mental Health

Early Start Times

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends high schools start after 8:30 am; average high school start time is 8:03 am

Homework

Average 1st grader has 28 minutes of homework per night, exceeding the 10 minute per night per grade level recommendation



Class Transitions

Students need on average 13 minutes to transition mentally from one class to another, limiting instructional time, content that can be covered in a typical 55-minute class

Rigorous Curriculum

Percentage of students who completed higher level math, science courses rose from 5% in 1990 to 13% in 2009, resulting in more time spent on homework, studying

Source: Flocco, D. (2012). "Deeper Learning, Reduced Stress." NAIS; National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). "The Nation's Report Card." U.S. Department of Education; Wheaton, A. et al. (2015). "School Start Times for Middle School and High School Students – United States, 2011–12 School Year." Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Rettig, M. (n.d.). "The Effects of Block Scheduling." The School Superintendents Association; EAB interviews and analysis.

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Equip Students with Life Skills

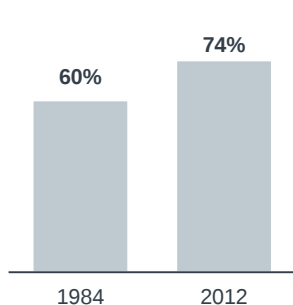
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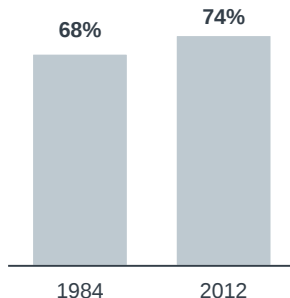
Exceeding the 10-Minute-Per-Grade Guideline

Increased Homework Having Unintended Negative Impact on Students

9-Year-Olds with 1+ Hours of Homework



13-Year-Olds with 1-2+ Hours of Homework



Exceeding the 10-minute guideline

“The data shows that homework over this level [the 10 minute rule] is not only not beneficial to children’s grades or GPA, but there’s really a plethora of evidence that **it’s detrimental to their attitudes about school, their grades, their self-confidence, their social skills and their quality of life.**”

*Stephanie Donaldson-Pressman, Clinical Director
New England Center for
Pediatric Psychology*

Homework and Stress in Elite High Schools¹

68%

Of students report homework often or always prevents them from getting enough sleep

72%

Of students report being often or always stressed over schoolwork

1) The study sampled students from 10 college preparatory schools (4 public, 6 private) in “advantaged, upper middle class communities.”

Source: Galloway, M. et al. (2013). “Nonacademic Effects of Homework in Privileged, High-Performing High Schools.” *The Journal of Experimental Education*; Loveless, T. (2014). “Homework in America.” *The Brookings Institution*; Donaldson-Pressman, Stephanie (2015). interview with Kelly Wallace, “Kids have three times too much homework, study finds; what’s the cost?”, CNN; EAB interviews and analysis.

How Did We End Up With All This Homework?

Multiple Factors Contribute to Increased Homework Load



Curriculum

- Students load up on advance/honors/AP classes, creating workload challenge
- Number of AP exams more than doubled since 2004
- Independent school students take over 50% more per student than public peers

"More is more" mentality



- Faculty, administration, parents see homework as a measure of rigor: more homework, more rigor
- Faculty see homework-achievement link, despite no correlation with grades



Student Distractions

- Social media, multitasking, etc. mean homework takes hours to complete
- Unsupervised students frequently spend 35% of dedicated homework time on digital distractions

Misalignment between Faculty, Students



- Faculty assess difficulty, duration of assignment one way, students experience it in another
- Teachers underestimate homework completion time by as much as 50%

Sources: Dolin, Ann K., cited in "Homework overload gets an 'F' from Experts", Today.; Maltese, Adam V., Robert H. Tai and Xitao Fan (2012), "When is Homework Worth the Time?: Evaluating the Association between Homework and Achievement in High School Science and Math". *The High School Journal*, 96, no. 1; 2004 and 2014 Program Summary Reports, CollegeBoard; "CAPE Outlook 2015", Council for American Private Education; Rosen, Larry D., L. Mark Carrier and Nancy A. Cheever (2013), "Facebook and texting made me do it: Media-induced task-switching while studying; EAB interviews and analysis

Addressing the Homework Load Challenge

University Prep Students Drive Conversation, Solution to Homework Stress



Collaboration Between Students, Faculty Creates Dialogue



Homework Concerns Raised

- Students brought concerns to student government, Assistant Head of School
- Students encouraged to collect data to describe problem



Homework Problem Quantified

- Four 11th grade students create survey instrument in math class to quantify problem
- All 11th grade students surveyed



Misalignment between Faculty and Students

- Data shared with faculty, reveals homework frequently took students longer to complete than faculty anticipated



Homework Rubric Created

- PAWS rating system created, shared with faculty, students
- Faculty rate each assignment in advance, feedback collected from students

Homework Rating System Aligns Expectations

University Prep Uses Rubric to Monitor Homework, Make Adjustments

Jointly Created Rubric Clarifies Expectations for Faculty, Students



Time Expectations

Establishes baseline for appropriate amount of nightly homework

Assignment's Weight

Explains assignment grading in relation to final grade

	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Time on task:	Baseline: task takes less than 30 minutes to complete and can be completed in a single night.	May raise workload slightly above baseline for one day or Would not raise workload above baseline if student worked steadily, but student has several days to complete task.	May raise workload above baseline significantly for one day or slightly for several days.	May raise workload above baseline significantly for several days.	May raise workload above baseline significantly for several days.
How frequently are these tasks occurring?	Daily	Several times a unit / weekly	Once or twice a unit / weekly to monthly	Once a unit / every 3-4 weeks or less frequently.	Once a semester
Will it be assessed in a summative way?	No, not directly.	Perhaps, but as a stand alone assignment it won't influence the grade too much, if at all.	Yes, and as a stand alone assignment it can influence your grade.	Yes, and as a stand alone assignment it will influence your grade.	Yes, and has the potential to significantly change your grade (20% of semester grade or more).
Does it require collaboration?	No	No	Perhaps, but it is minor, optional or can be completed during class time.	Perhaps	Perhaps
Will there be a public component?	No	No	Perhaps	Perhaps	Perhaps
Is revision, rehearsal, or repeated practice an important and integral part of the assignment?	No	Perhaps	Perhaps	Yes	Yes
Examples:	★ Reading ★ Short problem sets ★ Musical practice	★ Vocabulary or reading quizzes ★ Lengthy or graded problem sets ★ Formative quizzes	★ Socratic seminars ★ Convincing arguments ★ Graded quizzes ★ Short papers / responses (1 to 2 pages double-spaced)	★ Unit tests ★ Projects ★ Shorter Research papers (3 to 5 pages double-spaced)	★ Final exams ★ Culminating projects ★ Longer research papers (more than 5 pages double-spaced)

Frequency of Assignments

Defines the number of times per semester each type of homework should be assigned

Common Assignments

Provides representative examples for each rating

A full version of this rubric is available on eab.com

“No Homework Days” Address Student Stress

St. Luke’s Lays Groundwork with Pilot Study



Timeline of “No Homework Days” Pilot



Students Surveyed to Understand Student Life

Academic Council surveys students about high school experience



Pilot Rolled Out After Major Exams

Administration decides to pilot “no homework days” during 4th quarter, after cumulative exams



Council Proposes “No Homework Days”

Wednesday chosen to align with late starts, giving students a break midweek



Data, Pilot Project Shared with Parents

Parents informed of survey results, upcoming pilot project: no homework due on Wednesdays during 4th quarter

Parents Support “No Homework” Pilot

“I appreciate St. Luke’s School’s willingness to buck conventional wisdom, take a step back, and think about the big picture rather than how to accelerate the hamster wheel.”

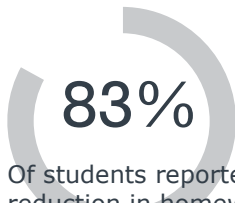
Parent, St. Luke’s School



Finding the Sweet Spot

St. Luke's Balances Faculty Concern about Rigor with Benefits to Students

Pilot Demonstrates it's Possible to Balance Rigor with Stress Reduction...



Of students reported reduction in homework related stress



Of teachers reported feeling they maintained the same level of rigor

...Yet Faculty Wary of Year-long Adoption



48%

of teachers did not believe a similar homework policy should be adopted during regular academic year



St. Luke's Modifies "No Homework Days" for Full Implementation



- In place of weekly no homework day, St. Luke's designates 12 "no homework days" throughout academic calendar
- Days strategically scheduled around vacations, school holidays, school and national events
- Days include:
 - Sept. 27 (day after presidential debate)
 - Oct. 13 (day after Yom Kippur)
 - Nov. 28 (day after Thanksgiving break)
 - Monday, March 27 (day after spring break)

Pre-holiday Exams Allow for Truly Restful Break

Students and Teachers Benefit from Extended Fall Exam Schedule



Berkeley Prep's Pre-holiday Exam Schedule

December						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	Review	Exam	Exam	Off	Exam	12
13	Exam	Exam	Makeup	Makeup	Grades Due	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

1 One Subject Area Per Exam Day

- Subjects with longer exams scheduled early in exam period to give faculty sufficient grading time

2 Built-in Breaks

- Gap in exam schedule allows for make up exams, review sessions

3 Work-free Break for Faculty, Students

- Grading due on last day of exam period
- All student assignments completed before winter break

“Let's have about 18 weeks of uninterrupted instruction, then take two weeks off. Then let's take a major test that covers everything we've learned, and have it count for a major portion of your final grade. Better yet, let's take like five of them all in a row. Whose idea was this?”

Dave Powell, Associate Professor of Education, Gettysburg College

Schedule Innovation Fosters Engagement

Schools Able to Maintain Rigor, Increase Engagement with New Schedules



Immersive Learning

- 1 class per block, immersing students in subjects
- Each semester students complete 4 blocks
- Blocks last 3.5 weeks
- Block breaks give students 4.5 days off between classes

Impact

- Professors cover more material and enhance classes with fieldtrips
- Students take blocks off for independent projects



Longer Block, Late Starts

- Four 70-minute classes per day
- Each semester students complete 5-6 classes
- Schedule has seven blocks, leaving most students with a free block most days
- School starts at 8:30 am

Impact

- No decrease in standardized test scores or college admissions profile
- Allows teachers to be more creative, flexible with pedagogy
- More conducive to field trips, internships, independent study courses



Integrated Extracurriculars

- 8-day rotating schedule
- Four 75-minute classes and 2 common periods: 30-minute extra help period and 30-minute meeting period for advisor groups or club and class meetings

Impact

- 17% more 'A' grades; 45% fewer 'B-' grades
- Student athletes miss less class time because classes end earlier
- New schedule balances out contact minutes lost with gains in instructional time by reducing time students spend transitioning to a new class

Make Time for all the Things That Matter

Pacific Ridge Builds Extracurriculars, Service Learning into Schedule



Pacific Ridge Schedule Basics

- ✓ Eight-block rotation; four 90-minute blocks per day
- ✓ Students take five academic classes, arts, and P.E. annually
- ✓ Lunch period built into each day
- ✓ Block 5 is a non-academic block used in same way for entire grade-level: extra-curricular activities, service learning projects, grade-level projects

Using Block 5 to Support Non-academic Experiences



Extracurricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities scheduled during first Block 5 in rotation
- Provides longer block for activities requiring greater time investment; can also meet after school



Service Learning Projects

- Second Block 5 used for service learning projects
- Required participation of grades 7-10
- Greater variety of projects due to in-school block of time



Grade-level Projects

- Third Block 5 occurs once every other week; used for grade-level project
- Examples include: Building, launching high altitude balloons; writing grant proposals to address local issues

Key Lessons for Optimizing School Time



- 1 Maximize assessment-related time in evidence-based ways**
Ensure timing, amount and structure of assessments creates optimal learning environment for students, where content mastery and deep understanding replace rote memorization
- 2 Make time for academic/non-academic priorities in schedule**
Design a schedule that allows for more meaningful, substantive interactions between faculty and students; consider including time for non-academic activities during school day to alleviate after school time pressures
- 3 Think beyond traditional scheduling confines**
Assess the needs of your students, the goals of your curriculum, and the mission of your school when designing a schedule; do not be limited by previous iterations and priorities



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