

Laborious Lives

Hectic, Horrendous, and Heroic

The Schedule of a Buckaroo Teen

Students at Monticello High School are blessed with the opportunity to be involved in multiple clubs, sports, and activities. Take Hyrum Johnson for example; he is MHS Student Body President, Hope Squad President, a member of NHS, the football & basketball teams, and he farms & skates in his free time. He is heavily involved in everything and he is still expected to make time to succeed in school. Could you do it?

These days, students are held to an extremely high standard. Not only are they coaxed to become entangled in their society, they are encouraged to have high success rates in all of their activities. Throughout the four years of high school, countless opportunities arise for involvement in the community and school. Various clubs and athletic teams are always looking for participation from students. Sometimes, even the coaches and administrators go out of their way to recruit high schoolers. Are they aware of the impact their activities have on their mentees? Are they trying to initiate the strain and heighten the student's ability to handle stressors later in life? Of course, they know these teens are talented and perfectly capable, but nobody is immune to the stress that comes along with this level of participation.

Margaret Shapiro, a journalist for the Washington Post, stated that "60 percent of teens said that having to manage too many activities was a 'somewhat or very significant' stressor" and, "Just over a third reported 'having lain awake at night' due to stress." Some people have a natural knack for creating balance rather than chaos, but high school students are forced to

acquire that ability. They are constantly bombarded with hefty homework assignments and reading passages - enough to keep them up late at night - and on top of that, their attendance is required at sports practices and club meetings. They are forced to wait until late at night to even *start* school work, which brings along the negative consequences of sleep deprivation.

Our entire generation is growing up chronically sleep-deprived and stressed out, which is a threat to our health *and* our academic success. Going to bed at 2:00 A.M. after finishing homework and then being forced to wake up and be to class at 8:00 the same morning is not an uncommon scenario for today's teens. By assigning homework and expecting students to also be involved in other activities, sleep deprivation causes their grades, mental health, and athletic performance to decline. In an article written about sleep-deprived teens, a quote by William Dement reads, "It's a huge problem. What it means is that nobody performs at the level they could perform,' whether it's in school, on the roadways, on the sports field or in terms of physical and emotional health". Sleep deprivation causes unhealthy amounts of stress and emotional issues.

Aside from the negative effects of the heavy expectations of today's teens, the current high school students will benefit the future society because so much pressure was placed on them growing up. For example, a busy schedule in high school prepares you for real life. Adulthood is no easier than being a teenager. You are still forced to find a balance between your work and home life - maybe even college - plus everything else you have piled on your plate. By being busy, we are forced to be productive. To avoid letting grades slip and athletic performance decline, student's brains are constantly running 100 mph, creating effective members of society. Busy bees get the honey.