

Student overload causes collapse

■ CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

West Linn High is known for its high test scores, and college prep curriculum. However, the pressure is building for many students to the point of emotional breakdown, leaving many wondering...can students handle the expectations?

WLHS earned an "Exceptional" rating from the State of Oregon in 2008. Ninety-five percent of the 2008

reasons. Some are very conscientious and put pressure on themselves, while others feel the strain because of parental expectations. When asked who she felt pressure to succeed from, Amanda Rucker, 4.0 sophomore, said, "A good amount comes from my parents, but most of it is from me."

Not only are students spending inordinate amounts of time on homework and

junior, said.

It is also important for students to remember that there is more to life than school. Many students take part in extra-curricular activities to explore their interests, get in shape, meet people and have...fun. Some find that there is no time for these sports and clubs in addition to vast amounts of schoolwork, and instead of cutting classes, cut these leisurely activities.

"I had to stop playing rugby to take care of my horse, but mostly it was because of my grades. I had to fulfill my parents' expectations, and found out the hard way that even as a sophomore, there's not always time for everything," Carly Strasshofer, sophomore, said.

The only solution to this growing problem is for students and parents to ease the load. It is the students responsibility to balance their schedule according to academic and personal needs and preferences—teachers should not be expected to decrease work loads for individuals or students based on their schedules.

"We are trained to help students find the right classes and help to balance schedules. We can also help to alleviate future stress by working with students, their teachers and their families. Communication and acknowledgement is important," Michelle Olson, Guidance Counselor, said.

I am not saying that we should not all push ourselves academically, or take honors/AP courses. Regardless of how well students may think they can budget their time, everyone has a breaking point. When considering your schedule for next year, really think about how much time you can afford to spend on schoolwork, in addition to other activities, commitments and sleep requirements. Once first semester has begun, it is very difficult to change one's schedule.

Dropping an honors course is something that students looking to graduate with honors can only do once. Often, students dropping halfway through the semester will be required to take a D as their grade, and still have to pay any course fees!

"I tried to drop an honors course midway through the semester, and it was very difficult. I would suggest picking a schedule that works for you and sticking with it, especially sophomore and junior year when you have so many requirements," Kaylyn Schaber, junior, said.

Doing well in school is important, but not worth losing one's sanity, sleep and health. It's not too late to switch classes for next year. Talking to your counselor is always an option, simply sign up for a meeting in the office.



Senior Class graduated, with over 80 honors graduates. There are well over 100 Advanced Placement students, with hundreds more students taking honors classes.

Combine this with pressures from parents and student's own expectations, many find (as early as freshman year!), that when perfection seems the only option, the stress can be overwhelming and even debilitating.

Students feel excess amounts of pressure to achieve for many different

studying just to complete a minimum, many are finding that time for friends, family and leisurely activities that we need and thrive on are being lost in the balance.

"My whole life basically revolves around high school, and after that will be college. I don't even know what I want to do in the future, and yet I find myself frantically struggling to be at the top. Colleges, employers, and the rest of them see me as a number. That's all we are, numbers," Neelou Etesami,

affordable. Abby's Closet, a non-profit agency, is one such resource that provides free formal. Thrift stores, outlet stores and discount stores also offer reduced prices for clothing.

Transportation can be the most expensive part of prom, when it could be the cheapest. Limos and party buses are fun, but if it's not in the budget, drive or ride to the dance with friends. Limos are also gas guzzlers, so carpooling or riding public transit is a better choice for the environment too. For dinner, instead of spending money at fancy restaurants, have a potluck dinner, or have a family host the group. It's an easy and enjoyable way to dine with a group of friends.

And maybe, each person who has money to burn on all the extras, could forgo one item and donate it to a prom fund for those who are not as fortunate.

Price of Prom too high

Prom overpriced

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People who want a luxurious prom can spend upwards of \$800 per couple. With the average limo costing \$500, a nice dinner being at least \$75 and then adding a dress or tux, flowers, hair, nails and other items to the equation, it adds up fast. This may intimidate others who don't have the money.

First, scholarships or help should be offered to students, if ticket prices are an issue. That way prom could be affordable for all, not just for those who are well off financially. Second, creativity and knowing what resources are available could make the difference between going or not going.

To make prom fun and an option for all students rather than just some, there are ways to make formal wear, transportation and dinner

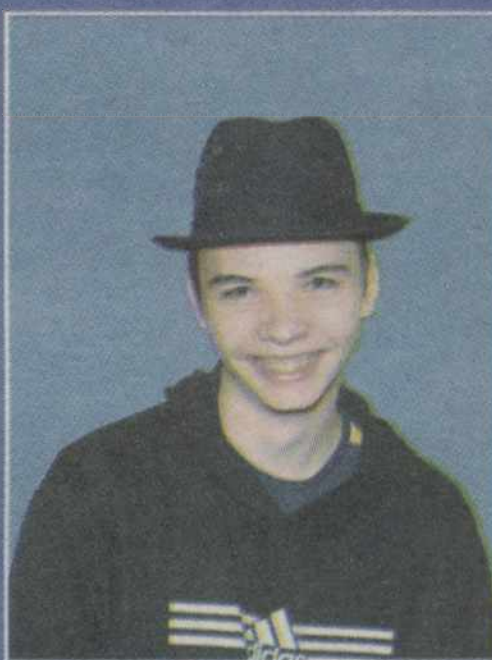


"I think it would actually hurt their grade. They're not ready."

—Wendy Scott, freshman

"It is going to make smart people enjoy their classes more."

—Ryan Cool, sophomore



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

How do you think having more Advanced Placement/Honors classes for freshmen and sophomores would affect students?



"I think it'll give them more stress, but will make their parents happy."

—Katherine Dudley, junior

"It could make it easier for them to get into Ivy League colleges."

—Eric Horn, senior

