Why is school today so utterly stressful?

The concept of school is a good one: a place of shared learning and education, open to everyone. In fact, I'd like to be a teacher (so it's not like I'm super anti-school). But it's changed so much from this original idea.

Students' mental health issues are skyrocketing. There's no longer a healthy balance between work and play, so to speak, since students seem to be spending more and more time working than having time to themselves. We're developing unhealthy patterns, like going to school sick — although I hope the COVID-19 pandemic has changed ideas on this — because you just *can't* miss all that work and then have more.

We're pressured to work ourselves to the bone on every project to get good grades, and if we don't? Society says that we're a failure. That we'll never make it. Your grades define you.

Specifically for high school, the pressure is cranked up to get into a good college and get into a good job immediately. Pick what you want to be forever at age 17, and while you're doing that, you're expected to have a job on the side as well. Every single second must be filled for a good résumé.

It's honestly ridiculous.

School has become something that students just have to "get through" each day. They don't enjoy learning anymore; all they can do is work and hope that's enough.

I won't point out any specifics here, but several studies have shown that giving students more time to rest is actually very beneficial to their learning. We shouldn't be pulling all-nighters that end in frustration, but finishing our

studies early and then going to bed. We need to stop at some point and simply take time for ourselves.

And, hey, since this has been pretty depressing and I want to end this on a good note:

- ***Taking care of yourself and your health is more important.***
- ***Your grades don't define you. You are not a failure.***
- ***It's more than okay to not have every single minute on the calendar filled. You're not lazy.***
- ***You don't have to know anything or plan out everything for fifty years from now. It's okay.***