

Rethinking the Length of High School Years

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Instead of cultivating students to become self-driven and independent, schools force students to conform to one curriculum, limiting their choices and hindering many students from achieving what they really want to do. Starting and ending high school two years earlier will allow students extra time to explore their interests, providing confidence and direction of what they want to pursue in the future.

According to the New York Daily News, one in four American teenagers drop out of high school. Researchers from the Center of Social Organization of Schools claim that students drop out due to life events such as getting pregnant, arrested or having to support their family. They state that one of the top reasons is when students no longer see a point in going to school or that a GED certification is enough to serve them in life.

High school education should start in the 7th grade and end in the 10th grade. Ending high school education at 16 offers students the choice to work without skipping out on their education. Most of the curriculum taught in middle schools is repeated throughout high school, which wastes students' time. U.S. history and introductory science courses are brushed over in middle school but are once again present in high school curriculum. Instead of repeating these classes, students should take the class once and learn the subject in depth.

Throughout the 9th and 10th grade, students should have the option of learning from professionals such as biologists, physicians, or experienced artists. Students need this time to develop

a greater understanding of math, science, and art as well as become exposed to the works of trained professionals. Some high schools can collaborate with nearby colleges to create classes as part of students' daily schedules. High schools with no nearby colleges can have professionals work with teachers and earn funding through educational grants from states. This opportunity would enable students to experience how it would be like in college and give them the advantage of being more likely to discover what they are truly passionate or interested about.

Starting high school earlier would allow students who already have a deep passion for a certain field to specialize in that subject while those who are unsure will be able to explore different class. After the initial two-year period of high school education in the 7th and 8th grade, students should be able to freely choose the kind of courses they would like to take in their last two years of high school. Once students complete high school by the 10th grade, they can choose to spend time volunteering, travelling and participating in intern-

ships. This period of exploration in several subjects and new environments will give students a better chance at developing their interests and becoming more prepared for the work force.

Education should guide and expose students to a variety of subjects in order to help them gain a sense of confidence with what they would like to do with their lives and how they want to achieve their goals. Allowing students to start and end high school earlier opens opportunities for a greater understanding of what they can do to contribute and impact the world.



SAME SEX EDUCATION:
INEFFECTIVE
&
RESTRICTIVE

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Under the No Child Left Behind Act, the government funded the surfacing idea of same-sex public schools in order to experiment with the potential benefits of it. Since then, a dramatic amount of same-sex schools have opened in the U.S. However, due to possible limitations that they could provide, same-sex schools are not as effective as the government believes them to be.

One argument for same-sex schools is that students are often intimidated by the opposite gender, hindering them from achieving their fullest potential. In same-sex schools, it is argued that students feel more comfortable participating in class if their peers are of the same gender. However, this prevents children from developing the capability to form relationships with the opposite sex. Close to nothing is segregated by gender in the real world, making interaction with the other gender a crucial skill in social success. Upon graduating, alumni from same-sex schools could lack the skills to effectively communicate and work with other genders. Having coed schools allows both genders to learn about one another and how to build long lasting relationships with the opposite sex.

Another limiting aspect of same-sex schools is that they may promote gender roles and expectations. Adults teaching in these schools may feed into gender stereotypes, and pass it onto their students. For instance, upon teaching a room full of boys, a teacher might be more assertive; in comparison in a girls' classroom a teacher might be more empathetic. It is through this generalization that a female could be kept away from pursuing a passion in science and a male would lack creativity and collaborative skills.

Goodbye Paper, Hello Sustainable Classrooms

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With today's emphasis on using technology to streamline even the most mundane tasks, new inventions constantly invade every facet of our daily lives. Each day, individuals brainstorm new ideas to promote efficiency, and from this, stem some of the most influential works of our generation. One notion in particular has the potential to revolutionize the academic realm: paperless classrooms. Currently, websites like Edmodo and Google Classroom provide a digital learning platform for teachers to explore the practice of shifting their entire curriculum to an online world. Making these websites commonplace for classrooms will ultimately be beneficial on a comprehensive level.

Of course, there will always be the environmentalist argument to support this concept. By turning in assignments and taking tests online, less paper will be used, and thus, more trees will be saved. However, underneath this initial benevolence, stands a much more lucrative fact: putting materials, whether they be assessments or

lecture notes, on a website greatly expands their accessibility. Therefore, both teachers and students can take solace in the peace of mind that comes with having all of their necessary documents compiled within a single location that, ironically, can be reached at any time, provided the person

has internet access. People no longer have to be bound to cumbersome textbooks and papers because technology has the ability to condense all of this information to a mere screen.

Hard copies should not become a thing of the past, but people should have the option of carrying out their work online if they so desire. In the case that technical issues prohibit an individual from accessing their information, offering a digital alternative to the traditional learning environment expands its capacity for keeping up with the current

age. After all, paperless classrooms are already in use, so their impact should be extended in order to allow more individuals to benefit from what they have to offer.

MOOR graphics by LESLIE HWANG



THE RIGHT ANGLE(A)
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The Doll (Finally) Evolves

As a little girl, the first thing I would always do in a toy store was run to the Barbie doll section. I still love Barbie to this day: she embodies the very idea that you can have it all. After all, she's been an entrepreneur, a teacher, an astronaut, a doctor and just about anything else you can think of. Except, until recently, diverse and inclusive.

Growing up, I was really only ever exposed to the classic Barbie: blonde and skinny with Caucasian features and some sort of pink accessory. As a young child, I grew to think that classic Barbie was the perfect idol of beauty that I should aspire to, instead of embracing my heritage. Being exposed only to this one Barbie was ultimately harmful to my own self-image — and probably that of many other non-white young girls.

On Jan. 28, Mattel, Inc. announced that three new body types would be added to the Barbie lineup, in addition to new dolls with different ethnic features. While the domination of Disney's Frozen dolls is one factor for declining Barbie sales, Mattel needed to keep in mind that they were inherently dooming themselves so long as they continued to sell their old Barbie lineup. Women with full-bodied figures, such as Beyoncé, are becoming the faces of magazines while songs like Meghan Trainor's "All About that Bass" reach the top charts and minority births increase in the US — gone are the days of idealizing the skinny, white Barbie body.

Mattel still has a long way to go (we can talk about why there's no curvy Asian Barbie later), but I commend them for taking a step in the right direction. It's important for children to see themselves represented in their environment — no representation is ultimately harmful to their growth as they mature and develop their self-image.

CARTOON CORNER

