

A Student
Mr. Pogreba
English II
09 October 2017

High School: Middle School Treatment for Higher Level Work

When he came to high school, Gary thought everything would be different: no more teachers hovering over him to make sure he turned in his work, more opportunity for freedom, and a greater sense of responsibility. Once he got to Helena High, though, he discovered much of the same babying he'd hated in middle school. Gary's experience is like that of many high school students who find high school to be more of the same. Despite Differences in grading and the amount of homework, high school and middle school are largely the same for students in Helena.

It's undeniable that, once students get to high school, there are higher academic expectations for students. High school teachers almost always expect their students to complete more homework than teachers in middle school. Since I've come to Helena High, the amount of homework I've had to complete has nearly doubled, from one hour to two hours a night. In fact, a study by the National Education Association reveals that high school students often do more homework in a single night that middle school students will do in a week. It's not just homework; teachers in high school have higher expectations for grades, too. In middle school, students can turn in work that is not very well-done and even incomplete and still receive good grades, but in high school incomplete assignments will get an F. Many students are shocked by the grades they receive in their freshman year because teachers expect so much of them. There's no question about it: high school academics are much more demanding than those in middle school.

Despite the increased classroom expectations at Helena High, the truth is that, for students, the experience is almost exactly like theirs in middle school. Most importantly, the increased academic expectations do not come with more respect for students, who are still treated like children. As Ethan Diaz notes, "teachers at high school demand that we do high school work while

A Student
Mr. Pogreba
English II
09 October 2017

refusing to let us act like adults and do basic things like go to the bathroom when we want.” Other students agree with Diaz and often feel like teachers and administrators act like students are children. In addition to feeling like they are treated like children, students in high school often feel like the classes are structured just like middle school, too. Even though students have more freedom to choose electives, they are forced to attend at least six periods a day in subjects they make not care about. If schools really wanted to make high school more like the real world and less like elementary and middle school, they would let students focus on the subjects they care about, not force them to take classes they just don’t care about . Despite superficial differences in place, the sameness of high school and middle school class structures means there’s little real difference between the two.

A close look at high schools and middle school has shown that, despite some important differences in academics, the two institutions are largely the same when it comes to the treatment of students. While high school expects more of students in the classroom, those expectations do not come with increased respect or freedom. If Helena really wants to make the experiences of its high schools better for Gary and all the other students, it’s time for schools start respecting students and acting like the young adults they are becoming.