**Teachers should challenge students more**

**PRO**

**My partner(s) and I affirm the resolution: Teachers should challenge students more.**

**Contention 1: Students Do Better and Learn More When Challenged**

**The world is bad: School is too easy**

* Many students are not challenged in school. The **Center for American Progress** survey says 37% of fourth graders think their math work is too easy. Some studies show students think they need to learn more engineering and technology.
* Students are bored in the classroom. When classes cover only what is on a standardized test, students are bored and think school is easy.
* School should not be boring or feel too easy; students need to be challenged.
* **Bored students do not perform well at school. These students put in little effort and do not pay attention. The Institue for Family Studies finds bored students are also more likely to quit school when they get older.**
* **The Institute for Family Studies says teens and adults who are bored are more likely to have unhealthy habits and emotional problems.**

**The Topic is Good: Students Do Better and Learn More When Challenged**

* **Learning Sciences International says students do well when they solve problems just beyond their level of understanding. Students may not solve the problem at first. With some extra effort, students come up with answers themselves.**
* Students pay attention when teachers make them curious to solve a problem. Students think and pay attention because they are personally interested in the answer to the question.
* A study shows students believe in themselves and their own capabilities more when their teacher believes in them.
* **Student engagement and learning increase when they have harder work to do. Students doing group projects will work together to solve problems when allowed to do so.**

**Impact: Students are much more motivated to learn more when challenged.**

* Once students complete an academic challenge, they want to work harder. Hard work leads to a can-do attitude and critical thinking skills. Students will use what they learned in past lessons and apply their knowledge to future work.
* According to **The Learning Council**, when students are challenged, “they build the confidence to take risks, fall down and get back up, and tackle new content they’ve never seen before.
* **Teachers who challenge and motivate students impact the future. Students will always remember what they learned and remember the teacher’s positive influence.**
* **Motivated learning can also impact communities. For example, students who learn about ecosystems will be eager to learn more about climate change. Students who learn important lessons can make a difference in the future.**

**Contention 2: Students will be better prepared for the future and college**

**The world is bad: Schools do not prepare students for the future and college.**

* **The vast majority of two- and four-year colleges report enrolling college students not ready for college level work, according to a Hechinger Report study.**
* Four-year college across the country have high student numbers who need extra help in at least one subject area.
* The **Georgia Department of Education** says low teaching expectations result in bad teaching efforts for lower achieving students. This is especially true in poor urban schools. Low expectations lead to lower student success and school involvement.

**The Topic is Good: Students more prepared for future and college.**

* Students who are more active in learning and receive higher expectations think school will make a positive impact in their lives. These students will be able to learn new things, create new challenges, and be prepared for college.
* **Being challenged is important. It creates motivation, enjoying learning, and curiosity. These skills and habits set students up to do well in college and their careers.**
* Students who are challenged gain problem solving skills which help in college and their careers.

**Impact: College graduates make more and are healthier.**

* Many people who do not attend college have great jobs and family lives. However, college helps improve lives if you can attend.
* Students who are better prepared for college are more likely to graduate.
* **A CBNC survey from 2021 finds starting salaries for recent college graduates are growing.**
* **The Center for Society and Health finds Americans with less education have worse health problems such as heart disease and diabetes. Diabetes is lower among college graduates.**
* Health problems also lead to rising healthcare prices.

**Contention 3 – Students happier/like school more**

**The world is bad: Students don’t like school/are bored.**

* Students have teachers who “teach to the test” and won’t go listen to student needs. These teachers do not change their teaching style. Students are not engaged.
* Some classes not well organized for learning. Students only review recent work or rush through assignments.
* **Most schools are not set up to motivate students.**

**Topic is Good: Challenged students enjoy school more.**

* **The Learning Counsel** found students challenged at the correct level enjoy learning. Students are busy, time goes by quickly, and they want to jump right into work the next day.

**Impact: Happier students do better in school**

* **Positive classrooms have greater academic achievement, better learning, and students do well.**
* Feeling happy at school is related to doing better at school. A study from the **Journal of Happiness Studies** showed that happy kids perform better at school and that kids who perform better at school are happier.
* **The Harvard Graduate School of Education** finds happier students in grades 4-12 have better GPA’s.

**PRO ANWERS TO CON CONTENTIONS:**

**STUDENT STRESS**

* **Many students actually do better when under a challenging schedule.**
* Parents can help their kids manage stress. **Web MD** experts say parents should talk to their children for at least 20 minutes 4 or 5 times a week. They can work on solutions for stress and other problems.
* **Web MD** says exercise will help student stress. Students already sit too much and need exercise.
* **Psychology Today** says students who are bored in class experience stress too. Challenging classes would help.
* **Students are stressed for many other reasons. Challenging classes is not the only or most important reason they are stressed.**

**LESS TIME FOR FAMILY AND ACTIVITES**

* **Parents needs to make sure their children have good study habits. Students may not have to study as long even if they have challenging classes. There will be time for clubs and activities.**
* Students cannot do everything and need to concentrate on school. Students may need fewer activities so they can do better in school.
* Challenging classes do not always mean more homework. Students will still have time for activities.

**EXTRA STRESS ON PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

* **Teachers should not give homework parents cannot understand. Teachers should make the work doable at home without help from parents.**
* Parents and families can talk to the school. Teachers need to know if their homework assignments are undoable.
* Some parents also help too much with their children’s homework. This is bad because the students will not learn if they do not do their own homework.

**TEACHERS SHOULD CHALLENGE STUDENTS MORE**

**CON**

**My partner(s) and I negate the resolution: Teachers should challenge students more.**

**Contention 1: Teachers challenging students leads to student stress**

**The World is Good: Students and classroom stress**

* Schoolwork already provides enough stress for students.
* Changes to learning due to COVID-19 created more stress for students and teachers.
* **In today’s world, adding more stress to students would be too much.**

**Topic is Bad: Challenging students more would lead to more student stress.**

* **Professor Jerome Schultz fins how a student perceives a challenge can determine the outcome. When the challenge is out of their control, the work seems too hard or impossible to do. The task becomes overwhelming. Students are too overwhelmed to do their schoolwork well.**
* Studies show additional homework can be harmful if it leads to student stress and anxiety.
* Sometimes teachers don’t change how they teach even when told students are stressed. The problem will not end.

**Impact: Stress leads to bad student health.**

* Too much schoolwork can cause digestive issues, sleeping problems, headaches, weight loss, and generalized stress.
* **Stress makes students like school less overall and they have less quality of life. A Stanford University study shows stress creates a lack of balance and physical health problems such as ulcers, migraines, less sleep, and weight loss.**

**Contention 2: Challenging schoolwork takes time away from family and hobbies**

**The World is Good: Students already have enough classroom challenges**

* Most students already have some challenging classes.
* Students also have homework beginning in elementary school.
* **Students are involved in activities important to them – sports, dance, clubs, etc. These interests are also important to student well-being and happiness.**

**Topic is bad: Challenging schoolwork creates more homework.**

* There is not enough time at school to cover all work so additional homework is necessary.
* Students already spend enough time doing daily homework.

**Impact: Challenging schoolwork would overwhelm students and would have less free time.**

* **Experts say students need free time to relax and play. Too much schoolwork leads to worse performance at school.**
* Students are tired after being at school all day. When the school day is over, it is important they have time to rest. Rest is necessary for good health and happiness.
* Overwhelmed students who try to balance homework, free time, and activities can become depressed.
* Students feel lonely and isolated if homework takes over their free time.

**Contention 3 – Challenging students puts extra stress and pressure on parents and families.**

**The World is Good: Parents are able to help their children do schoolwork.**

* Many parents provide an environment where their students can do well at school.
* COVID 19 created challenges to students completing schoolwork.
* **Parents and families cannot take on the additional burden of challenging schoolwork.**
* Schools with less/no homework can have benefits for students especially in the area of educational inequality.

**Topic is Bad: Challenging work needs more parental/family involvement.**

* As students do harder work, more resources are needed to complete homework.
* All students have different family situations. There is not always someone able to help out at home.

**Impact: Parents and families would be overwhelmed when asked to help with additional student schoolwork. The burden is greater on low-income families or parents who did not attend college.**

* **Extra homework cuts down on valuable family time. CNN finds this is especially true in families where parents cannot help with homework. Stress levels and arguments can increase. This takes away from quality family time on school nights.**
* **Professor Joseph Latham** says kids in low-income families may be home without supervision in the evenings. Parents have to work many jobs to make ends meet. No one is at home to help with schoolwork. This creates stress for the student.
* Homework discriminates against students whose parents did not go to college. **CNN** finds it also discriminates against parents who have English as a second language.
* Parents do not feel qualified to help their children especially those who did not attend college. The burden of additional homework adds to the problem.
* Students with fewer resources and help fall behind in their classwork because they cannot complete the assignments.

**CON RESPONSES TO PRO CONTENTIONS**

**STUDENTS DO BETTER/LEARN MORE WHEN CHALLENGED**

* **Students will not do better if they do not understand challenging homework assignments. Students cannot complete assignments if they don’t understand the work.**
* Students can receive extra help if any classwork is too hard.
* **The Learning Council** says teachers can change assignments if many find them too hard. Teachers will find the right amount of challenge for their students.

**PREPARE FOR COLLEGE AND FUTURE**

* School and classes are good now. Students are doing enough to prepare for college and the future.
* Not everyone can or wants to go to college.
* The problem is that schools do not have good funding. **The Edvocate** finds if schools had more money, teachers could create better classes.
* Students may need to take different kinds of classes prepare for the future.
* **People who do not attend college can also make money and be healthy. College is not always the reason why people make more or are healthier.**

**HAPPIER/LIKE SCHOOL MORE**

* **Professor Lee Bartel finds students will not be happier if they are stressed from challenging classes and too much homework.**
* Teachers could challenge some students more than others. It is not fair if some students receive additional work and other students do not.
* Many students already enjoy school.
* Some students who do not like school still make good grades.
* Other things – family, pets, games, friends – that make students happy. School is not the only reason students are or are not happy.